

Memoirs of Glueckel of Hameln Study Guide

Memoirs of Glueckel of Hameln by Glückel of Hameln

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Memoirs of Glueckel of Hameln Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Book I.....	6
Book II.....	8
Book III.....	10
Book IV.....	12
Book V.....	15
Book VI.....	18
Book VII.....	20
Characters.....	22
Objects/Places.....	30
Themes.....	34
Style.....	37
Quotes.....	39
Topics for Discussion.....	41



Plot Summary

This work, published in 1932, takes place from 1646 through 1724. The book presents an historical, non-fictional autobiography of Gluckel of Hameln as a Jewish mother and successful businesswoman. She bears fourteen children and raises twelve from infancy through betrothal and marriage in adulthood and even endures the death of some. Gluckel is a faithful and fully God-fearing seventeenth century traditional woman who sets the gold standard for contemporary feminism. Gluckel is a world-traveler and successful global entrepreneur. She helps her husband start and run a gold, precious stones and money-lending business in Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Denmark and France. When he dies she takes over the business while she raises his children to become successful businessmen, merchants and scholars. Gluckel's second husband is the foremost banker of Lorraine, as rich and well-connected as she is, but apparently lacking her deep-seated sense of faith and peace.

Gluckel writes the "Memoirs" in 1690 for her children "upon the death of your good father" to distract her soul from the burdens and bitterness of his loss. Despite her moralistic perspective this autobiographical book is not a moralistic work. Gluckel is the mother of twelve children with her husband Chayim. She brings up eight as a widow after his death. Gluckel takes over his business affairs and develops a successful global business in the seventeenth century. She makes recommendations to her children to serve God from your heart, set aside time to study Torah, and be honest with both Jews and Gentiles in money and goods. She offers three "magic herbs" to remember including trust in God, hope, and patience. Gluckel confesses to be a sinner who is asking God to grant her repentance. She summarizes expectations for her children in the story of a bird whose third fledgling promises to do to his children what the bird does for him when he grows up by carrying the third fledgling to safety on shore.

This 295 page autobiographical work is comprised of seven books, plus an introduction by Robert Rosen, illustrations and end notes with historical descriptions and commentary. Each book has numbered subsections to indicate periodic journal entries. These are recollections to her children and other heirs that describe her life, times and experiences. The book is an open window into the soul of this very good woman as she recalls living her life. She is deeply saddened by the death of her husband and her writing is therapy for her soul from burdens and bitterness of losing him. The format of the work is effective to the extent each numbered section presents a thought or group of sensitivities to fit that stage of her life. Books are separated by times in her life with, for example Book Five dedicated to "the sickness and death of your beloved father."

Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

This work, published in 1932, takes place from 1646 through 1724. The book presents an historical, non-fictional autobiography of Gluckel of Hameln as a Jewish mother and successful businesswoman. She bears fourteen children and raises twelve from infancy through betrothal and marriage to adulthood and the death of some. Gluckel is a faithful and fully God-fearing seventeenth century traditional woman who sets the gold standard for contemporary feminism.

Robert S. Rosen notes in his introduction that Gluckel's "Memoirs" are an invaluable reference source for historians and others interested in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Gluckel writes the book as therapy to recuperate from the untimely death of her husband in 1690. She believes writing it can help lessen her melancholy and get her through sleepless nights. Gluckel writes the story for her children to read as a chronicle of her life. However the story of her life as a Jew in Europe also provides a seventy-year portrait of the time she lives in from 1646 through its completion in 1719.

She is born in Hamburg, Germany two years before German Jews are expelled from the city. Her family moves to Altona where they live under Danish rule until 1658 when the Swedes take over. Gluckel's father Lob Pinkerle is the first German Jew who can return to Hamburg. Life there is risky because it is granted at the pleasure of the Town Council. Gluckel is betrothed at twelve and marries Chayim Hameln at fourteen. Her husband comes from a family of nine children whose father is a pious Jew named Joseph. Gluckel and Chayim have twelve children. To ensure quality of her descendants Gluckel takes an active role in promoting desirable matches for her children. She travels widely in Europe pursuing social and business activities in France, Denmark, Holland, Austria and Poland as well as Germany. At the age of forty-four in 1689, she is widowed and left with eight of their twelve children yet to raise at home. Gluckel takes over her husband's business and spends ten successful years providing dowries and matches for all but her youngest daughter. Gluckel remarries in 1700 to a rich banker who goes bankrupt two years later and dies in 1712. She is left poor and forced to move in with her daughter and son-in-law. She finishes the Memoirs in 1719 and dies in 1724 at seventy-eight.

The Memoirs are first published in 1896, by David Kaufmann from a copy of her son Rabbi Moses Hameln. A second copy is made including front and back matter that supports Gluckel's eclectic Hamburg dialect, Hebrew words, Bible and Talmud quotes in her Judeo-German manuscript. Subsequent German translations are made by a Gluckel descendant and the current one that is translated by Marvin Lowenthal into English. The commentator Rosen claims Lowenthal's translation is particularly admirable since it expresses the tone of the original seventeenth century manuscript "without sounding archaic." Gluckel's writing reveals the roots of Jewish materialism formed through the life and death experiences of a limited Jewish European economy. Physical survival requires respect for money amidst taxes levied on Jewish communities

and individuals. Gluckel's relationship with Chayim exemplifies a Jewish woman's role to do "nothing without talking it over together."



Book I

Book I Summary and Analysis

Gluckel introduces "Memoirs" in 1690 to her children "upon the death of your good father." She writes to distract her soul from burdens and bitterness. She does not intend to write a moralistic book since there are many of them already. The Torah provides all we need to find and learn the journey through this world to the next. The core of Torah is to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Gluckel recommends her children serve God from their heart, set aside time to study Torah, and be honest with both Jews and Gentiles in money and goods. They are to remember three magic herbs of trust in God, hope, and patience among others. Gluckel does not write to preach but confesses to be a sinner asking God for repentance. She tells about a bird that carries her third fledgling to safety because the fledgling promises to do to his children what is done for him.

Gluckel is born in 1646 in Hamburg and receives secular and religious training from her father who cares for his family and anyone else who comes hungry to his house. When she is three, her family and other German Jews are forced to leave Hamburg. They settle in nearby Altona with twenty-five other Jewish families under the King of Denmark. After some time Hamburg authorities sell four-week passes so that Altona Jews can do business there again. Chayim Furst is the richest Altona Jew with 10,000 Reichsthalers and Gluckel's father is second richest with 8,000. Regardless of personal fortune, a spirit of love and community assures a good life to all. When Gluckel is ten the Swedes attack Altona. Jewish families run back to Hamburg to join the Sephardim and Christian citizens for defense. Gluckel's father resettles with other German Jews but only at the mercy of Hamburg's Town Council. They have no synagogue and are harassed by the Hamburg burghers although they can pray secretly in private houses. Gluckel's father trades in precious stones and goods "like a Jew who knows how to turn everything to account."

Gluckel's sister Hendele is engaged to Reb Gumpel of Cleves with a dowry of 1800 Reichsthalers that her father can pay since his business is good. He trusts in God that he can do well by his other children. He is a widower with a French-speaking stepdaughter when he marries Gluckel's mother after her grandfather, Nathan Melrich dies. When Nathan moves from Detmold, he is the richest man for a hundred miles. Nathan and several children die from the plague leaving Mata with two orphans, Gluckel's aunt Ulk and her mother Bela. Mata marries off Ulk to a son of the state rabbi of Friesland who gets rich but dies young. Mata and Bela initially live with her daughter Gluck but have differences and move to aunt Ulk's. Bela makes gold and silver lace. Bela's business provides for their needs but makes little profit and keeps Bela trusting in God.

When Gluckel's father Lob Pinkerle marries Bela he also moves her mother Mata into his house and puts her at the head of the table as if she were his own mother. She stays with them for her remaining seventeen years. When Vilna Jews are forced to



leave Poland, Gluckel's father takes ten into his home that are sick. Mata cares for them and contracts the illness. She dies at seventy-four blessing her son-in-law, daughter and grandchildren. Pinkerle leads the community to prosper and grow debt-free. While he is president other officials plot to interfere but God "destroyed their wicked plot" by quashing the matter.



Book II

Book II Summary and Analysis

Gluckel is betrothed for two years and marries at fourteen in the village of Hameln. Her parents and twenty wedding guests travel by peasant wagon from Hamburg to Hanover where they stop to write for transport the rest of the way to Hameln. Gluckel's mother Bela assumes the groom's father will send carriages for the bridal party trip to Hameln. Little peasant carts drawn by horse arrive three days later. Joseph Hameln toasts Bela but she is ruffled by the carts so he claims to be "just plain country folk" and tells about his own wedding to clear the air. Gluckel's parents leave the young girl with her in-laws immediately after the wedding. Gluckel considers Hameln a "dull shabby hole" with only two Jews compared to her birthplace Hamburg. Only the piety of Joseph Hameln sing-singing his morning prayer makes her forget Hamburg.

Gluckel names and describes her new family's brothers and sisters. Eldest is Moses killed by robbers, who are yet not found, on the way to his wedding. Abraham Hameln is a Talmudic scholar and as full of the Torah as seeds in a pomegranate. He has hard times in Poland so Joseph helps him in Hanover until he is enticed by promises that are not kept in Hameln. Yenta is Joseph's third child, a daughter, whom he betroths to a son of the rich Sussmann Gans while they are drinking. Sussmann rethinks it when sober but he dies shortly after and his widow weds Feibisch. Joseph Hameln thinks about thousands of Reichsthalers Yenta can receive from her betrothal and marriage to Solomon Gans. Both parents stay committed to the arrangement but Feibisch has a son they marry off as well. Ironically Sussmann's fortune vanishes from lack of supervision and the once-rich betrothed couple marry disinherited. Joseph Hameln sets up Yenta and Solomon Gans in Hanover where Solomon achieves great wealth but dies young. His widow Yenta marries Leffmann who becomes beneficiary of Solomon Gans' wealth and trouble. Fourth child is Reb Samuel and the fifth is Reb Isaac who dies at fifty, rich and honored in Frankfurt. Esther is the sixth who is troubled, pious and patient to her last breath. Loeb Bonn is seventh and parnas of communities around Cologne but he dies young, rich and honored. Hannah the eighth dies young and ninth child Chayim fathers Gluckel's twelve children.

Gluckel and Chayim spend a year after their wedding in Hameln despite his desire to settle and do business in a trade center like Hamburg. During their first two years in Hamburg they live with Gluckel's parents. Jewels are not as popular and in fashion then as gold chains, despite their being less profitable. Chayim begins business dealing from gold house to house, buying up then fashioning through goldsmiths or reselling to merchants. Every day he studies the Torah and fasts until long travel sickens him. Gluckel considers him the "perfect pattern of a pious Jew" like his father and brothers.

Gluckel gets pregnant upon arrival in Hamburg. Ironically her mother Bela gets pregnant as well. Her first child is a healthy baby girl that Bela helps with until her own delivery eight days later. The two mothers experience a humorous situation when the babies are

mistaken for each other and they consider calling on Solomon to divine the real mother. The house is cramped with two new babies so Gluckel and Chayim set up their own place the next year. Two years after daughter Zipporah is born, their son Nathan arrives.

Book III

Book III Summary and Analysis

Gluckel and her husband take in a boarder named Mordecai to represent them in Poland. He is a Polish native from Danzig where seed pearls for jewelry are plentiful. Mordecai does well there until he is betrothed to marry six months later. Despite Chayim's advice to return to Danzig, Mordecai decides to trade wine on his own in Germany. Mordecai travels on foot from Hanover to Hildesheim and is attacked by a poacher who kills him. Judah Berlin becomes their house-guest. He is a nephew of her brother-in-law Leffmann and related to her husband. Chayim asks Gluckel if he might replace Mordecai. Judah takes the Danzig assignment for two years and their daughter Mata is born. A rumor and fears develop about Sabbatai Zevi who is believed to be the Messiah but turns out to be a Messianic pretender. The people of Israel repent, pray and do charity two or three years awaiting his appearance. Sephardic Jews especially express their hope in dress and dance at the synagogue that attracts Germans. Joseph Hameln sells home and goods to move to Hildesheim where he awaits a signal from Sabbatai Zevi to leave for Israel.

A week after Mata's birth word of the plague is heard in Hamburg. The money-lending business has customers coming to their house that may be infected. They decide to take the family to Hameln after Yom Kippur. They stop at Hanover for the Feast of Booths holy days with brother-in-law Abraham Hameln. Gluckel sees a sore under Zipporah's arm and sends a maid to her husband for advice. An old Polish woman overhears and offers to take a look since she is a healer. She looks at Zipporah and flees screaming she has the plague. The brothers-in-law plan with their wives to send the child and maid to nearby Peinholz during holy days. The old Polish woman and an old "Polack" man take the child and maid for thirty thalers. Gluckel and Chayim weep and pray as they prepare her for the trip and gather food to bring them by Judah Berlin and others. Chayim is held back from contacting Zipporah and food is left for the old man and woman to pick up in a field. The child remains healthy but cannot return for nine holy days. A week later they go to Hameln where they stay until Hamburg improves. Chayim has business to do there with Green Moses who shows up in Hameln to get Chayim to return so he can buy more pearls. Chayim cannot sell at his price so he borrows but later sells for less than offered.

Chayim determines conditions are quiet and Hamburg is safe for Gluckel to return. He sends Bullet-proof Jacob to escort Gluckel and the children from Hanover to Hamburg. Gluckel hires Abraham Cantor to travel with them from Hameln to Hanover where they catch up with Jacob. He hires a coach from the post-keeper on Friday to leave Sunday morning. Gluckel leaves with three children, maid, servant and Jacob with post-keeper on foot alongside the coach. Gluckel tells Jacob to get in so they can reach their night's shelter but Jacob says they have someone to meet in the village and will catch up. They stop at a customs station where the postilion refuses to go on until the post-keeper who is with Jacob arrives. They wait until the customs collector orders the postilion to go on



without a post-keeper. They reach the night's shelter where they rest till midnight when the post-keeper shows up without Jacob whom he leaves drunk along the road. Gluckel has the innkeeper find and bring him in. The next day she makes him sit in the coach but he gets out for beer at every stop on the way. .

Gluckel's husband gets sick at the Leipzig Fair where a rule causes Jews who die there to forfeit all their possessions. Judah Berlin nurses him back to health. Judah suggests he become a partner and travel for them. Chayim discusses it with Gluckel who is urged by Judah. Gluckel and her husband agree to four main provisions but Judah does not bring the agreed amount of money. After one year they dissolve the partnership since it is not working. The next year Judah keeps money due them and uses a rumor to dispute the agreement that defeats fair arbitration at the court of Hildesheim. Gluckel wants to leave it to God but Chayim asks his brother Isaac to recommend a Talmud scholar to arbitrate again in Hildesheim. Isaac suggests he let it pass but refers Reb Ascher since Chayim will not. Ascher works till threatened with prison for not yielding and writes an opinion as he leaves. Chayim's father lives there and begs him to agree. They regain the money within a month of settling.

Gluckel writes to drive away melancholic thoughts and reflects on how things change with time and God's will. Judah brings them nothing but now has 100,000 Reichsthalers and may die the richest man in Germany. Others like Green Moses settle near Danzig or Abraham Cantor who serves as a lad and enjoys business and grows rich in Copenhagen. Mordecai Cohen and Loeb Bischere travel to England but stop to prosper in Amsterdam. Elias Ries lives in Amsterdam with 20,000 Reichsthalers. Many thank God if they are helped or left to God's hands so man remembers the vain world is short. Gluckel laments for treasure and honor that leaves with Chayim's passing but thanks God for his mercy.

Mata is three years old when her hands and feet suddenly swell over four weeks until she dies. Gluckel is pregnant and from grief dangerously ill. She refuses desperate medical measures in favor of God's will to heal. Five weeks later she returns to synagogue to praise and thank God. She tells of Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai losing nine of ten sons. He dotes on his tenth child of three when that son dies, falling in a kettle of boiling water. She writes grief and mourning from bitter loss harms our body and weaken one's soul.

Book IV

Book IV Summary and Analysis

Gluckel tells about two Jews and a burgher, or citizen, in Norway. The burgher has many uncut diamonds from an East Indian ship that the Jews hear about. The Jews discover where he hides his stones, take them and leave in the night. The burgher hires a boat to chase and catch the thieves who toss his treasure overboard to claim innocence. Gluckel exhibits "Thou shalt not steal" by their confession after torture. One thief turns Christian to save his life. The other keeps his Jewish belief and is put to death; this exhibits another commandment to "Love thy God with all thy soul" as atonement for his sin.

Chayim and Gluckel decide to visit his father and mother in Hildesheim since they have not seen them in twelve years. Gluckel still nurses her son Mordechai as they spend three weeks in Hildesheim. Joseph is wealthy with 20,000 Reichsthalers and children married but another five years in Hildesheim costs him 10,000 more Reichsthalers. They move to rich brother-in-law Leffmann Behrens' home in Hanover to die with a good name.

Zipporah is almost twelve when Loeb Hamburger proposes her marriage to Kossman the son of Elias Cleve. Chayim writes the marriage broker in Amsterdam he may be there six weeks ahead of his normal schedule to discuss it. Elias Cleve is a great prince from Israel living in Amsterdam and worth at least 100,000 Reichsthalers. Chayim agrees on a dowry of 2200 Reichsthalers and a wedding in one and a half years. The wedding party sails for Amsterdam to stay with Loeb Hamburger then to Cleves for the wedding where princes and other notables view the ceremony. Gluckel later visits the grave of her sister Hendele who dies at twenty-five. They return to Amsterdam for two weeks and then sail rough seas where they get seasick. They reach Emden for New Years with their relative, Abraham Stadthagen. Gluckel's group leaves the next morning to reach Hamburg by the Day of Atonement. They are warned that privateers block sea travel and soldiers overrun the land so Chayim gets a passport and bodyguard from General Buditz. He cannot find a coach with coachman to make the risky trip so he buys a coach and horses. They dress in rags to discourage thieves and leave at midnight. They arrive safely on Hanoverian soil where the dukes keep better order. Forty miles to Hanover is traveled before the Feast of Booths, which they spend with Chayim's parents and then return to Hamburg and home, safe.

Reb Moses from Helmstadt is expelled for being a Jew. He moves to Stettin and gets letters of protection and a patent to mint coins under government standards. He writes Chayim to provide silver for a share of the coinage and jewels sold. Chayim is interested and unaware of Moses' debts. Chayim and Gluckel send Nathan to watch the business and send silver to Moses that he processes in exchange for Drittel they can sell for two per cent or more along with occasional pearls on the Bourse. Matches are proposed for Nathan with daughters of rich community parnas Elijah Ballin and wealthy



Samuel Oppenheimer. Brother-in-law Isaac Hameln holds the dowries but the Oppenheimer money is not acknowledged so they commit to the Ballin match to exchange dowries of 4000 and 2400 Reichsthalers for betrothal. Isaac receives Oppenheimer's money but Chayim turns it down since it is late. Although Isaac is angry, Gluckel and her husband are happy with the betrothal of Nathan who is also pleased.

They do business with Moses Helmstadt even after they discover he is a faithless man with money in hand. He owes Chayim 12,000 Reichsthalers and Nathan asks for help. Chayim and Issachar Cohen travel to Stettin to settle up with Moses who promises gold, pearls and bills of exchange. Moses is 5500 Reichsthalers short but promises to pay by offering notes for the debt. Chayim is unhappy explaining the situation to Gluckel who is pregnant with Loeb and claims the year cost them over 11,000 Reichsthalers. They keep faith "God would retrieve us our fortunes elsewhere." Gluckel's father Lob falls ill and for three months is confined to his sick-bed till he dies. Within thirty days Gluckel delivers a sickly baby boy she names Loeb who ironically thrives in his honor. Bela is widowed with three children and a meager bequest. She is forty-four and after marrying off all her children gets many offers of marriage that she rejects to live a peaceful, contented life on a pittance in her own home.

Hannah is betrothed to Samuel, the son of Gluckel's brother-in-law Abraham Hameln. A party of five with Chayim, Jochanan and his son Aaron, Mendel and Loeb Goslar travel to Frankfort and then Leipzig Fairs. Jochanan gets sick and stays behind in Fulda with his son. Jochanan dies in five days before Leipzig and another Jew, the twenty-three year-old Reb Mendele, dies in a week. Chayim and Loeb Goslar also fall ill and are taken to Halberstadt where Issachar Cohen notifies Gluckel by letter. She sends Mordecai to bring him home to Gluckel who thanks the "God of goodness." Gluckel recalls three years previous her father-in-law dies in his eightieth year. Chayim travels to his bedside where he stays three weeks until his father orders him home to his family in Hamburg. Within days his father dies. Twelve weeks later the brothers gather in Hanover to visit his grave and settle his will. Chayim begs his mother to move in with him but she does not want to leave her husband. She dies at eighty-two and is buried next to her husband.

Chayim is in Amsterdam when he gets a marriage proposal for their daughter Esther and Moses Krumbach, son of rich Abraham Krumbach of Metz, signed by Elias Cleve who is authorized to sign. Chayim concludes the betrothal but Gluckel is warned about the lad. On his return Gluckel is silent. Days later he is also warned by a friend. They are sad but resigned to the agreement. Gluckel writes Moses' mother to clear rumors about the boy. The letter is received badly and Frau Jachet invites Gluckel to visit. Wars and several weddings take place that leave the matter temporarily unresolved.

Gluckel is pregnant when Chayim returns. She craves a fruit called medlar but does not eat any. Joseph is born and Chayim is happy his father's name lives again. The child has brown spots and is feeble so she asks for medlar. The baby eagerly sucks on the fruit and gets stronger. His spots begin fading and he grows healthy, which teaches Gluckel to act on her craving. Another child is born healthy but dies in two weeks. Within six months of his wedding, Chayim dies leaving Gluckel with eight children and four



already married. She writes "God had seen my sins, and I needs must lose my dear husband, and my children their most excellent father, and we were abandoned like sheep without a shepherd." She prays that because of his piety, God takes him to die in riches and honor, not seeing evil days.



Book V

Book V Summary and Analysis

Gluckel writes about the sickness and death of her husband and father of her children. On January 11, 1689, Chayim is doing business when he stumbles and falls on a sharp stone that makes him return home in great pain. Gluckel helps empty his pockets since he cannot move. He falls on a ruptured spot that twists his bowels. Gluckel wants to call a doctor but Chayim does not want the world to know lest his children be thought to have weak blood. He has her call a Sephardic physician Abraham Lopez, he knows. Dr. Lopez cannot heal him so he brings in a rupture-cutter who cannot help either. Gluckel has two physicians, another rupture-cutter and more doctors but no one can help. His brother Joseph comes to pray and beg forgiveness. Gluckel and Feibisch Levi pray as he dies in purity and holiness. He is buried with honor January 16, 1689. Gluckel is grateful for thirty years with him but is not comforted. She finds they owe 20,000 Reichsthalers but is confident she can pay them and still have enough to provide for herself and her children.

Gluckel asks Joseph her brother-in-law to check her figures for auction so her values are not set too low or too high. Everything sells well and she is paid in six months and her debts paid within one year. Loeb's betrothal and marriage is more immediate with the daughter of Elias' brother Hirschel Ries in Berlin. During the wedding in Berlin, Gluckel asks Hirschel to keep an eye on Loeb since he knows little business. Hirschel agrees, and further agrees to board and house him three years. Gluckel resolves Esther's betrothal by taking her and Nathan to Amsterdam where Abraham Krumbach brings Moses. They all meet and get along well. Gluckel travels to Cleves five days to visit Elias Cleve's widow Frau Miriam and then returns to Amsterdam for the wedding of Esther and Moses.

Gluckel hears from Hirschel Ries that Loeb does well in business. Hendele is proposed for betrothal in Berlin and she relies on Loeb to confirm it. Loeb is not supervised like Hirschel says. He has untrustworthy help in his store and loans thousands to Polish Jews he never sees again. Gluckel sends him merchandise until she attends the Brunswick Fair to discover he has unpaid notes due. Gluckel and Mordecai attend Leipzig Fair to discuss the matter. Loeb invites her to Berlin to see his business. Loeb tells her his mistake is too much inventory which she sees for herself in Berlin. She takes 3000 Reichsthalers in goods for what he owes her. She finds he owes Hirschel Reis for goods too and gives him notes for 2500 Reichsthalers to settle. She finds Loeb may face jail. Hendele's betrothal is questionable because of Loeb and the bridegroom does not fulfill the agreement as the wedding date gets near. After much negotiation she goes to Berlin for her wedding. Gluckel leaves her newlywed daughter there and returns to Hamburg. Seventeen weeks after Hendele's wedding she gets sick and dies. By custom the dowry is returned so Loeb asks Gluckel to get some of it. Loeb and his wife return to Hamburg to stay with Gluckel who does well in business despite personal



sadness. Loeb agrees to work for her since her business is growing too big for her to take care of alone.

Her son Joseph is fourteen and wants to learn the Talmud from a teacher in Lissa. The teacher agrees to board and teach him for two years, but within two weeks Joseph asks Gluckel to send a half-year's payment for his teacher. She is okay with paying him now but six months later gets another letter saying Joseph may be pledged to church powers for ransom unless she sends him money to escape. She tells Mordecai to bring his little brother Joseph home. He meets Joseph on the road and asks about the letter since he is free. Joseph knows nothing about a letter but says the teacher is a scoundrel and takes thirty Reichsthalers to be free. They both return home to Hamburg.

Gluckel recalls when a relative named Abraham Metz moves to Hamburg where he loses all his money before moving to Altona to be a money-changer. One night he disappears and is not seen for three years while his wife, Sarah, lives as a widow with fatherless children. Another money-changer, Aaron ben Moses also disappears. They suspect the wench who works for the son of the Navigators Tavern keeper entices him and the son kills him for his money. The wench confesses that Aaron joins her and he is done away with by the son and his wife. They claim she lies however so they find his body and the son and his wife confess to the murder in Altona. Sarah's husband is still not found when the son confesses to throwing his body in a deep pit and covering it with lime. Sarah is declared a widow to remarry. The murderer is executed and all ends well for the Jews.

Joseph gets many proposals before Gluckel agrees to his betrothal and marriage to the daughter of Meir Stadthagen that "found favour with God." Betrothal is held in Hamburg with the wedding a year later in Copenhagen. Gluckel departs for Copenhagen with Joseph, a son of Meir Stadthagen and Chayim Cleve's son-in-law. She is pleased on returning to hear Loeb's clean report of his business. Gluckel has four children at home including Samuel, Moses, Freudchen and Miriam. Samuel does not like study so she introduces him to business but Moses likes study so she sends him to Frankfort with Samuel and inventory to sell. Her brother-in-law Joseph gets a letter from the rich Moses Brillin of Bamberg about his daughter that will mean Samuel's betrothal. Joseph replies to Chief Rabbi Samson on a match with Samuel and Rabbi writes Gluckel from Vienna that he will care for Samuel when he visits. The wedding is two years later but Samuel's follies in Vienna postpone the wedding another year. Gluckel travels to Bamberg with Moses for the wedding. Gluckel visits Furth and Baiersdorf to confirm Moses' betrothal to the daughter of Samson Baiersdorf. Gluckel does not commit until the sons meet her at an inn and she meets rich Samson Baiersdorf before they return to Hamburg.

Gluckel's cousin Bela gets sick four weeks before she dies after her husband agrees to marry Gluckchen, her niece and orphan daughter. Baer asks release but Gluckchen refuses so he is granted his request by the rabbis and remarries another. In a year she dies and he marries her sister and then marries off his niece to the son of rich Judah Berlin. Freudchen is betrothed to rich and eminent Moses ben Loeb's son. Freudchen is married and Moses' wedding is forthcoming but Samson puts it off to a later date. He is

having trouble with political authorities and it is a full year till the wedding is finally celebrated.

Book VI

Book VI Summary and Analysis

For fourteen years Gluckel avoids remarrying since her business enables her to support herself and her children. However, she has feelings of guilt as a sinner after marrying off all her fatherless children except Moses and Miriam. She reflects on marriage since she could go to the Holy Land to serve God but for her sins that distract her. She has concern for the cares of her children and the large business she maintains. It is successful but she travels and attends to it in all weathers and is anxious something unexpected may happen. She worries about being a burden on her children and regrets missed opportunities for remarriage. In 1698 before Moses' wedding Gluckel gets a letter from Moses Krumbach, a son-in-law, that the excellent, learned and wealthy Hirz Levy is widowed. At fifty-four she is vulnerable to this possibility if her daughter Esther shares Moses' opinion of Levy. Gluckel arranges with Levy to raise eleven-year-old Miriam in exchange for her money.

They make the arrangement in secret to avoid taxation for departing Hamburg and she resolves business matters to become debt-free. Despite relatives and friends' approval the marriage does not go well and her fears are realized. She considers Levy a wealthy, honorable man to safeguard her daughter Miriam and son Nathan's finances. Regardless of assurances, Levy defaults. Gluckel tells about King Jedijah in Araby and his children to explain a man can mean well but end in folly as a parable of her marriage to Levy.

Gluckel is betrothed in June 1699 and sets a wedding for May 7, 1700, in Metz. She gets sick for six weeks and Levy sends consoling letters that she appreciates. She attends Moses' wedding in Baiersdorf in April and stays at an inn hosted by Samson Baiersdorf and wife before traveling to Metz. They stop at Bamberg and Samuel accompanies her on the way to Frankfort where Leser meets them with a letter from Levy and spice-cake. She leaves Frankfort and miles before Metz Levy's secretary meets them by horse to take them to an inn. The secretary rides with them till five miles to Metz. Despite pleasant travel and company, Gluckel is somber and downcast foreboding future events. An hour to Metz the secretary returns with three distinguished women in a coach. Gluckel joins them and is accompanied by wives of the Metz Rabbi, Rabbi Aaron Worms and Frau Jachet, which is a great honor. Nearer Metz, Gluckel's pregnant daughter Esther meets them in a sedan chair. Gluckel stays at Moses and Esther's house where Esther makes soup for Gluckel before Abraham Krumbach and her bridegroom meet the first time. The others go to synagogue while Gluckel stays home to meet stepchildren, rest and brood.

They marry the next week Thursday at noon in the garden. Her new husband shows her a chest full of rings and other jewelry but does not give her any during marriage. His home is full of abundance and everyone honors and obeys him. For a week after her wedding she is welcomed by many guests. The housekeeper in charge unsettles



Gluckel since she can run her own house. Her new husband is a good, rich man with a great business who pays on time but groans in his sleep and eats badly. Esther gives birth within eight weeks and Gluckel is the god-parent along with her husband. Her new son, Elias falls sick in eight days but then begins healing. Gluckel has few friends here but acknowledges God as a righteous judge. Her son Loeb dies before twenty-eight and she is very sad.



Book VII

Book VII Summary and Analysis

Gluckel's son Samuel dies while she is in Metz. Shortly after his wife has a healthy daughter who is now thirteen and lives with her grandfather in Bamberg. Samuel's wife is widowed twice and still lives in sorrow. Gluckel's second husband's business crashes after her first year with him. His creditors press him so hard they get only one-half the debt. Gluckel retrieves Miriam's money and the thousands owed Nathan from him. She suffers much when he disappears and his creditors inventory the goods in their house. She stays under their control till Levy agrees to hold an auction. He cannot pay everything but avoids jail and repays Gluckel what she spends on the household. Moses Krumbach suffers in the crash but helps Levy and becomes the richest man in the community. Esther's son Elias is betrothed in 1712, to wed in four years with dowries of 30,000 Reichsthalers.

Levy's children cannot help since one of them, Rabbi Samuel Levy, is a Talmudic scholar who is being helped by his father and father-in-law Abraham Krumbach. Rabbi Samuel works in service of the Duke of Lorraine and takes over the mint for him but needs more capital for it and his shop in Luneville. He asks his brothers-in-law to help and forms a partnership, even though his father, Levy disapproves of the business. Everything goes well for six months until Moses Rothschild offers to deliver silver to the mint. Hirz Levy keeps warning about the business until the King of France and the Kaiser grow bitterer and the King forbids importing or exporting Lorraine money. The King warns the five Jews in Lorraine they will not be able to return to France and will lose their residence in Metz. Two of them, Isai and Jacob return to Metz while Samuel and Moses stay in Lorraine. Hirz Levy gets sick at this news and worsens despite his son Rabbi Samuel's care for him with whatever he needs, including a physician. He dies leaving Gluckel with her woes.

Gluckel receives less than a third what is due under their wedding contract. She lives in Isai Willstadt's house but when he returns to Metz, she leaves to live in Jacob Marburg's house. She lives in a small room without a hearth but must climb twenty-two steps to her room to sleep. Moses visits her in January 1715 and sees she must climb stairs so he offers her a ground floor room in his house. She initially refuses but as she gets older and needs more help she moves to Moses and Esther Krumbach's house and is treated well. When she first arrives in Metz, it is a beautiful and pious community.

Rabbi Gabriel has a year's leave of absence but stays away for three although they keep his position open till he is named rabbi in Nikolsburg. The community leaders invite Rabbi Broda. When he agrees, Rabbi Gabriel wants his position back but nothing can be done. Rabbi Broda is honored but shortly afterwards he is elected as rabbi of Frankfort which he accepts. Once he leaves, much misery is experienced in Metz. Many are gathered in the synagogue when women in the upper balcony fear the ceiling will fall from a rumbling noise. Six women die and thirty are wounded trying to escape.

Ironically an old blind woman leaves and safely reaches home. Gluckel is rescued by some men who help her reach the street. Nothing is found to be amiss in the synagogue and an explanation for the rumbling is unknown. Gluckel says it is punishment for our sins that they become a reproach to their neighbors.



Characters

Gluckel

Gluckel is author and main character of her autobiographical work named "The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln." Gluckel is born in 1646 in Hamburg, Germany, two years before German Jews are expelled from the city. Her family migrates to Altona where they live under Danish rule until 1658 when the Swedes take over that village. Gluckel's parents follow Jewish customs of the time by betrothing her at twelve to marry Chayim Hameln at fourteen. Gluckel's father is Lob Pinkerle. Her mother Bela has three other children, Hendele, Rebecca and Wolf when she is left a widow. Ironically, Gluckel comes from a small family compared to her husband. Bela has two sisters, Gluck and Ulk. Gluckel's husband has eight siblings. Gluckel and Chayim have twelve children. Gluckel actively promotes desirable matches for her children to ensure the quality of her descendants.

At the age of forty-four in 1689, Gluckel is widowed with eight of their twelve children yet to bring up at home. Gluckel takes over and runs her husband's business for ten successful years securing matches and providing dowries for all but her youngest daughter. She travels widely in Europe, pursuing social and business activities in France, Denmark, Holland, Austria, Poland and Germany. Gluckel gets remarried in 1700 to a rich banker to ensure her own financial security and that of her daughter, Miriam. Ironically, he goes bankrupt two years later and dies in 1712. She is left poor and moves in with her daughter and son-in-law. Initially she lives in a small room without a hearth and climbs twenty-two steps to her bedroom. Moses visits her in January, 1715 and sees she must climb stairs. He offers her a ground floor room in his house. She refuses at first but as she gets older and needs more help she moves to Moses and Esther Krumbach's house where she is treated well.

She finishes the Memoirs in 1719 and dies in 1724 at seventy-eight. Gluckel's writing reveals the roots of her Jewish materialism, formed by her life and death experiences in a limited Jewish European economy. Physical survival requires respect for money with taxes and other measures levied on Jewish communities and individuals. Gluckel shows a sense of guilt at her husband Chayim's death by writing "God had seen my sins, and I needs must lose my dear husband, and my children their most excellent father, and we were abandoned like sheep without a shepherd." She claims that in reward for his piety God takes him to die in riches and honor so as not to see the evil days that follow toward the end of her life.

Chayim Hameln

Chayim Hameln is the name of Gluckel's husband of thirty years who dies in 1689. Chayim is born into a family of eight children where he is the ninth and last child. His father is a pious Jew named Joseph. They live in Hameln when Gluckel marries Chayim. They spend a year after the wedding in Hameln but Chayim wants to settle and



do business in a trade center like Hamburg. During their first two years in Hamburg they live with Gluckel's parents. Gluckel and Chayim raise twelve children.

Chayim begins business dealing in gold houses, buying up then fashioning gold through goldsmiths or reselling to merchants. Every day he studies the Torah and fasts until long travel sickens him. Gluckel considers him the "perfect pattern of a pious Jew" like his father and brothers. Chayim is doing business with a merchant when he stumbles and falls on a sharp stone that hits a rupture and twists his bowels. Gluckel wants to call a doctor but Chayim's pride does not want the world to know because his children might be thought to have weak blood. Instead he has her call a Sephardic Jew Abraham Lopez who is a physician that he knows. Dr. Lopez cannot heal him so he brings in a rupture-cutter who cannot heal him either. More physicians, rupture-cutters and doctors cannot help so he asks Feibisch Levi to pray in his dying hours. He dies in purity and holiness, as he lived.

Hendele

Hendele is the name of Gluckel's oldest sister. She marries Reb Gumpel with a large dowry of 1800 Reichsthalers that her father can pay since his business is good. He trusts in God that he can do well by his other children. Gluckel later visits the grave of her sister Hendele who dies at twenty-five with a son and daughter.

Lob Pinkerle

Lob Pinkerle is Gluckel's father and husband of her mother Bela. Among Altona Jews, Gluckel's father is second richest with 8,000 Reichsthalers. Lob Pinkerle is the first German Jew who can return to Hamburg after being expelled. He arranges to resettle with the other German Jews that are allowed to stay, at the mercy of Hamburg's Town Council. Pinkerle trades in precious stones and other goods "like a Jew who knows how to turn everything to account." His business does so well that he betroths and marries off his daughter Hendele to Reb Gumpel of Cleves with the largest dowry paid. He is proud to pay that much since his business is good.

He is a widower with a French-speaking stepdaughter when he marries Gluckel's mother and moves her mother Mata into his house as if she were his own mother. When the Vilna Jews are forced to leave Poland, he takes ten into his home. He leads the community to prosper and become debt-free. Despite Pinkerle's leadership as president of the community, other officials plot against him but his faith in God "destroyed their wicked plot" through other community leaders quashing the matter.

Nathan Melrich

Nathan Melrich is the name of Gluckel's grandfather and Mata's husband. When he settles in the Hildesheim house from Detmold, he is the richest man for a hundred



miles. Shortly after, Nathan and several of his children die from the plague, leaving his wife Mata in need with two orphans, Gluckel's aunt Ulk and her mother Bela.

Mata Melrich

Mata Melrich is the name of Gluckel's grandmother who is left in need with two orphans, her aunt Ulk and her mother Bela. Mata marries off Ulk to Elias Cohen, the son of Friesland's rabbi, who becomes rich but dies young. Mata and daughter Bela initially live with a married daughter named Gluck. When they conflict Mata and Bela move to live with her other married daughter Ulk. By then Bela is making gold and silver lace which is a business that she develops well enough to provide for herself and her mother Mata. Lob Pinkerle moves Mata into his house to stay for the remaining seventeen years of her life. Mata cares for many Vilna Jews who have contagious diseases. Mata contracts the illness and dies at seventy-four.

Bela Pinkerle

Bela Pinkerle is the name of Gluckel's mother who marries Lob Pinkerle. Ironically her mother Bela gets pregnant at the same time Gluckel has her first child. Gluckel has a healthy baby girl that Bela helps with until her delivery eight days later. The two mothers share a humorous situation in which the babies are mistaken for each other and they consider calling upon Solomon to determine the real mother. Bela is left a widow with three children and bequeathed 1600 Reichsthalers with 1400 each to the children. Gluckel's father's estate is in jewelry that her husband and brother-in-law sell at auction to convert the items to cash for Bela. She is forty-four when her husband dies and after marrying off all her children the widow receives many offers of marriage that she turns down to live a peaceful and contented life on a pittance in her own little home.

Joseph Hameln

Joseph Hameln is the name of Chayim's father. Gluckel's mother assumes the groom's father will send carriages for the bridal party but Joseph sends little peasant carts drawn by horse after three days. Joseph toasts her and claims to be "just plain country folk" to ease the situation. Gluckel's parents leave the fourteen year-old bride with her groom at Joseph and her in-law's house immediately after the wedding. Joseph later believes in Sabbatai Levi and sells his home and possessions to move to Hildesheim where he waits for a sign from the "messiah" to move to the Holy Land. Joseph is wealthy with 20,000 Reichsthalers but staying in Hildesheim costs him 10,000 so he moves to Leffmann Behrens' home in Hanover where he dies at an old age with a good name.

Zipporah

Zipporah is the name of the first child of Gluckel and Chayim. Zipporah is born while they are living with Gluckel's parents. Gluckel's mother Bela also has a newborn baby at



the same time. The house is cramped with two new babies so Gluckel and Chayim set up their own place for the second year. A sore is discovered under Zipporah's arm and she is exiled to Peinholz as a young girl for nine days because they fear she has the plague.

Mordecai

Mordecai is the name of a boarder Gluckel and Chayim take in whom they later agree to send as their business representative in Poland. They send the Polish native to Danzig where seed pearls for jewelry are plentiful. Mordecai does well there until he is betrothed to marry six months later. Despite Chayim's encouragement to return, Mordecai decides to sell wine in Germany. When traveling on foot from Hanover to Hildesheim, Mordecai is attacked by a poacher who shoots and kills him.

Judah Berlin

Judah Berlin is the name of Gluckel's house-guest, nephew of her brother-in-law Leffmann and related to Chayim. Chayim asks Gluckel if he might replace Mordecai in Danzig. She agrees and Judah accepts a two-year assignment to Danzig. Judah accompanies Chayim to the Leipzig Fair where a rule makes Jews who die there forfeit their possessions. Chayim falls ill and Judah Berlin nurses him back to sufficient health to travel. Since Judah is younger he suggests they become partners and let him do whatever traveling needs be done. Chayim wants to discuss it with Gluckel who is urged by Judah to agree. She is fearful when Chayim travels and agrees to Judah's offer.

They agree to four main provisions in writing but Judah does not bring the promised amount of money. After one year they dissolve the partnership that is not working as they had hoped. Judah withholds money due them and becomes hostile. They select an arbiter but Judah claims a rumor voids their agreement. Judah has money due that defeats fair arbitration at the court of Hildesheim. Gluckel wants to leave it to God but Chayim does not. The settlement Chayim accepts costs them over one third their goods. Within a month they recoup the loss and Chayim reconciles with him. Things change with time. Judah brings nothing to the relationship at the start. Later he has over 100,000 Reichsthalers and may die the richest man in Germany if God wills.

Sabbatai Zevi

Sabbatai Zevi is the name of a presumed Jewish messiah. The people of Israel repent, pray and do charity for two or three years awaiting his appearance. Sephardic Jews especially express their hope in dress and dance at the synagogue which also attracts the Germans. Sabbatai causes the Jewish world to speculate about returning to the Holy Land. Joseph Hameln and others sell their possessions to travel to Israel when Sabbatai gives a sign. Sabbatai Zevi turns out to be a Messianic pretender.



Green Moses

Green Moses is the name of a business associate who has 300 ounces of seed pearls he buys for Chayim. While Hamburg is under siege from the plague Green Moses leaves there to show up in Hameln where he encourages Chayim to return with him because he has more opportunities to buy pearls in Danzig.

Bullet-proof Jacob

Bullet-proof Jacob is the name of a sometime travel escort. Chayim hires him, a faithful drinking friend, to escort Gluckel and the children from Hanover to Hamburg. They reach the night's shelter where they rest until midnight when uproar occurs. The post-keeper attacks the postilion for disobeying but Jacob is not with him. The post-keeper leaves him drunk along the road. Gluckel has the innkeeper send two peasants to find and bring him in. The next day she insists he sit in the coach but he gets out for beer at every stop on the way until Harburg outside Hamburg where Chayim catches up with them.

Issachar Cohen

Issachar Cohen is the name of a business associate who replaces Judah Berlin. Chayim and Issachar Cohen travel to Stettin to settle with Moses Helmstadt who promises them gold, pearls and bills of exchange. Chayim goes to the Frankfurt Fair and Issachar accompanies him at a charge of two per cent.

Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai

Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai is the name of a legendary figure that lives around 100 C.E. He is a faithful rabbi who loses nine of his ten sons. He dotes on his tenth son who is a little child of three when that son also dies by falling into a kettle of boiling water. The Rabbi is a scholar who knows Torah, Mishna and Talmud, understands the Kabbala and creation and is pious and patient to death. Gluckel notes that grief and mourning from bitter losses serves to harm our body and weaken one's soul.

Leffmann Behrens

Leffmann Behrens is the name of Gluckel's rich brother-in-law. He is a financial agent who supplies the Hanover dukes and is parnas or president of Hanover's Jewish community. Five years in Hildesheim costs her father-in-law 10,000 Reichsthalers, so Joseph Hameln and his wife decide to move into Leffmann Behrens' Hanover home.



Loeb Hamburger

Loeb Hamburger is the name of a marriage broker who proposes Zipporah's marriage to Kossman, the son of Elias Cleve. Chayim writes the marriage broker in Amsterdam that he may be there six weeks ahead of his normal schedule to discuss it.

Reb Moses

Reb Moses is the name of a questionable business associate who lives in the university town Helmstadt twenty-five miles from Hildesheim, until he is expelled for being a Jew. He moves to Stettin where he acquires letters of protection and a mint patent giving him a right to mint coins according to government standards of fineness and purchase price. Moses writes Chayim, asking if he is interested in providing the silver for a share of the coinage and jewels sold since Moses does not have enough money to finance the venture. Chayim thinks there is a market there as good as there are in other cities so he writes of his honest interest in a partnership but is not aware of Moses' debts from Berlin. Moses processes silver into Drittel coinage that he sends them in return to sell along with occasional pearls on the Bourse.

Moses Krumbach

Moses Krumbach is the son of the rich Abraham Krumbach of Metz. Elias Cleve is his representative with authority to conclude the betrothal and marriage arrangements for Gluckel's daughter Esther and Moses. He is the betrothed that Gluckel has questions about from a "rumor." She writes his mother Frau Jachet to meet the boy. The letter is received badly and Frau Jachet suggests Gluckel visit him there if she is concerned. Gluckel resolves her concern about the betrothal by taking Esther to Amsterdam where Abraham Krumbach brings Moses to meet them. They all meet and get along well and the wedding of Esther and Moses is held. Esther and Moses take Gluckel in after Hirsh Levy dies.

Hirschel Ries

Hirschel Ries is the brother of Elias Cleves' and lives in Berlin. Loeb's betrothal and marriage is with Elias' daughter. During their wedding celebration in Berlin, Gluckel asks Hirschel to keep an eye on Loeb because he knows little about business. Hirschel agrees and offers to board and house him for three years but does not keep his word. He tells her Loeb does well in business but does not watch him like he agrees. Loeb owes Hirschel and Gluckel gives him notes for 2500 Reichsthalers.



Abraham Metz and Aaron ben Moses

Abraham Metz and Aaron ben Moses are the names of two money-changers that both disappear on different nights. Both of them are married and known to drink at the Navigators Tavern. The wench who works there finally confesses that she knows and entices both of them to meet the owner's son who robs and kills them both.

Samson Baiersdorf.

Samson Baiersdorf is the name of the father of Moses' proposed betrothed. Gluckel visits the villages of Furth and Baiersdorf to confirm Moses' betrothal to the daughter of Samson Baiersdorf. Gluckel does not commit to a betrothal till she meets the rich Samson Baiersdorf at an inn on her way back to Hamburg.

Baer Cohen

Baer Cohen is the husband of Gluckel's cousin Bela. Bela dies after getting Baer Cohen to agree to marry Gluckchen, her niece and orphan daughter of the deceased Freibisch Cohen. Baer agrees for Bela's sake but after mourning says it is impossible since they raise her as their child and he is no longer a young man. Baer asks for her release but Gluckchen refuses. Baer Cohen is granted a release by the rabbis to marry another. Within a year and a half his second wife dies and he marries her sister. Baer finally marries off his niece to the son of rich Judah Berlin.

Samuel Oppenheimer

Samuel Oppenheimer is the name of the first Jew allowed to settle in Vienna after 1670. A contemporary portrait of him is shown on page 112 in the text. He is one of two parents offering his daughter for betrothal to Gluckel's son Nathan, including a daughter of the rich community parnas Elijah Ballin. Samuel Oppenheimer grows wealthy from supplying Austrian armies and becomes the court banker to Leopold I. Both dowries are to be held by Gluckel's brother-in-law Isaac Hameln in Frankfort. Since receipt of Oppenheimer money is not acknowledged, they commit to the Ballin match and exchange dowries to bind it. Isaac gets the Oppenheimer money later and requests authorization from Chayim, who turns it down since it is late. Isaac is very angry that the wealthy and influential court Jew's betrothal offer is rejected. Samuel and his son later do business with Nathan until he has bad times. Nathan's business colleague Samuel Oppenheimer and son are put in jail and cannot pay. Nathan's credit is ruined but he believes the Oppenheimer's will not let him down. Gluckel's credibility is hurt as well but when they are freed they pay all their notes as agreed.



Hirz Levy

Hirz Levy is the name of the foremost banker of Lorraine and Gluckel's second husband after he is widowed. She considers remarriage because she is concerned for the care of her children and the large business she runs. Despite her success, she travels and attends to it in all kinds of weather and worries that something unexpected may happen. She does not want to be a burden on her children and regrets previous missed opportunities for remarriage. Gluckel gets a letter from Moses Krumbach, a son-in-law, that the excellent, learned and wealthy Hirz Levy is widowed. She is fifty-four and vulnerable but willing to accept if her daughter Esther shares Moses' opinion of Levy. Relatives and friends all approve the marriage but it does not go well. Gluckel agrees that Levy raise eleven-year-old Miriam in return for transferring all her money to him. They make the arrangement in secret to avoid taxation for departing Hamburg and she concludes her business to be debt-free. She considers Levy a wealthy, honorable man to safeguard her daughter Miriam and son Nathan's finances. Levy defaults and dies, leaving her impoverished and her fears realized.

Rabbi Samuel Levy

Rabbi Samuel Levy is Hirz Levy's son. The Rabbi is a Talmudic scholar who is being helped by his father and father-in-law Abraham Krumbach. Rabbi Samuel works for the Duke of Lorraine and takes over the mint for him but needs more capital for it and his shop in Luneville. He and his brothers-in-law form a partnership even though his father, Levy disapproves of the business. Everything goes well for six months until Moses Rothschild offers to deliver silver to the mint despite Levy's warnings about his business partnership with Moses Rothschild and others. Hirz Levy keeps warning about the business. Finally the King of France and the Kaiser grow bitter and the King forbids importing or exporting Lorraine money. The King warns the five Jews in Lorraine they will not be able to return to France and will lose their residence in Metz. Two of them, Isai and Jacob, return to Metz while Samuel and Moses stay in Lorraine. Hirz Levy gets sick at this news and worsens despite his son Rabbi Samuel's care for him with whatever he needs including a physician.

Isai Willstadt

Isai Willstadt is the name of the owner of the house that Gluckel lives in in Metz. She receives less than a third what is due under their wedding contract. She moves out to live in Isai Willstadt's house. When he returns to Metz, she leaves to live in Jacob Marburg's house till Esther and Moses take Gluckel in to live with them.



Objects/Places

Hamburg

Hamburg is the name of the city that is Gluckel's birthplace and the location of their home and business for most of their married life.

Altona

Altona is the name of the village near Hamburg to which twenty-five Jewish families emigrate when they are expelled from Hamburg.

Torah

The Torah is the name of a Jewish book of scripture. Jews believe the Torah provides all they need to find and learn the journey through this world to the next. The core of Torah is to "Love thy neighbor as thyself" despite desires to the contrary.

Reichsthalers

Reichsthalers is the name of German currency during Gluckel's time. The term "banko" with Reichsthalers indicates currency in Hamburg that is worth one-half of one per cent more than standard Reichsthalers.

Sephardim

Sephardim is a term that refers to the Spanish-Portuguese Jews that settle in Hamburg earlier than the German Jews. Sephardim are recognized as a community and have individual rights. Community members officially represent the business interests of the Portuguese, Swedish and Polish courts as well as being engaged in international trade and banking.

Vilna Jews

Vilna Jews is the name used for a group of Jews that are forced to leave Poland, some of whom Gluckel's father takes into his home. Many are sick with contagious disease that Gluckel's grandmother Mata treats. Sadly she contracts the illness and spends ten days in bed before dying.



Hanover

Hanover is the name of the city near Hameln that Gluckel's wedding party uses as a stopping point on the way to Hameln. They stop there again years later to stay with Abraham Hameln when they return from Hamburg to escape the plague. In Hanover Gluckel finds a sore under Zipporah's arm that is rumored to be the plague. Zipporah is banished to a nearby village of Peinholz for nine days until she returns to Hanover.

Hameln

Hameln is the name of the village where Gluckel is married at fourteen. Her wedding party travels by peasant wagon from Hamburg to Hanover where they stop on their way to Hameln. Gluckel calls Hameln a "dull shabby hole" where the newlyweds spend the first year with his parents after their wedding. When rumors of the plague are heard in Hamburg, Gluckel decides to take her family to Hameln with a stop in Hanover. Green Moses follows them from Hamburg to see Chayim in Hameln because he has 300 ounces of seed pearls to sell.

Betrothal and marriage

Betrothal and marriage are the terms used to describe the process of uniting a male and female in seventeenth century Jewish communities. The process begins with a marriage broker initiating interest between the family representatives of each party to the arrangement. Betrothal is the first level of commitment, followed by the wedding ceremony and the payment of dowries a year or so later.

Frankfort

Frankfort is the name of the city in Germany where the Frankfort Fair is held. Leser meets Gluckel and her party in Frankfort with a letter from Levy and spice-cake. She leaves Frankfort to travel nearer to Metz where Levy's secretary meets them by horse to take them to an inn and later rides with them to Metz for her wedding with Levy.

Danzig, Poland

Danzig, Poland is the name of the city in Poland where Mordecai and other representatives are sent to conduct trade for Gluckel and Chayim.

Hildesheim

Hildesheim is the name of the town where Joseph Hameln moves to wait for the messiah's sign to return to the Holy Land. Chayim and Judah Berlin have a business conflict they attempt to settle before the court of Hildesheim. Chayim does not think he



can get a fair hearing there but he persists. Chayim's father Joseph Hameln lives in Hildesheim and begs him to abandon the dispute and reach agreement. Chayim and Gluckel visit his father and mother in Hildesheim since they have not seen them in twelve years. Gluckel is nursing her son Mordechai when they spend three weeks in Hildesheim. Five years more in Hildesheim costs Joseph 10,000 Reichsthalers, so they move to Leffmann Behrens' home in Hanover.

Holy Land

Holy Land is a term that refers to Israel, which is considered homeland of the Jewish nation. The Holy Land is the goal and destination of Sabbatai Levi's messianic dream.

Leipzig Fair

Leipzig Fair is the name of the market in Leipzig where a rule causes Jews who die there to forfeit all their possessions. Gluckel's husband gets sick there and is nursed back to health by Judah Berlin so he can return to Hamburg.

Copenhagen

Copenhagen is the name of a city in Denmark. Gluckel agrees to Joseph's betrothal and marriage to a daughter of Meir Stadthagen who "found favour with God." The betrothal is held in Hamburg with the wedding a year later in Copenhagen which she travels to attend with Joseph and others.

Amsterdam

Amsterdam is the name of a city in Holland. Chayim agrees on a dowry of 2200 Reichsthalers and a wedding one and a half years later. When the time comes, the wedding party sails for Amsterdam to stay with Loeb Hamburger then travel on to Cleves for the wedding. They leave for Cleves where there are princes and other notable guests to view the ceremony. Despite lavish preparations, the parties forget to write a marriage contract and agree to do so after the wedding that concludes with a happy ending. Amsterdam is a center of much business for Chayim and Gluckel.

Metz

Metz is the name of the town where Gluckel marries Levy. When she first arrives in Metz, it is a beautiful and pious community. Gluckel's son Samuel dies while she is in Metz. Gluckel receives less than a third what is due under their wedding contract. She lives in Isai Willstadt's house but when he returns to Metz, she leaves to live in Jacob Marburg's house. Moses visits her in January 1715 and sees she must climb stairs so he offers her a ground floor room in his house that she eventually accepts.



Baiersdorf

Baiersdorf is the name of the town where Gluckel's son Moses is married in April. She stays there at an inn on her way to Metz. She is hosted there by Samson Baiersdorf and his wife.

Bamberg

Bamberg is the name of a town where Gluckel stops for Samuel to accompany her on the way to Frankfort where Leser meets them with a letter from Levy and spice-cake. She leaves Frankfort to travel miles before Metz where Levy's secretary meets them by horse to take them to an inn. The secretary rides with them till five miles to Metz. Despite pleasant travel Gluckel is somber and downcast, a fact that forebodes future events.

Lorraine

Lorraine is the name of the area where the King warns the five Jews they will not be able to return to in France. Two of them, Isai and Jacob return to Metz but Samuel and Moses remain in Lorraine. Hirz Levy is once the foremost banker of Lorraine. However after his financial troubles he gets sick at this news and worsens, despite his son Rabbi Samuel's care for him with whatever he needs, including a physician.



Themes

Gluckel as feminist

Gluckel learns the fundamentals of independent feminism as a child when she sees her grandmother Mata and mother Bela living together at her aunt's house. Bela is a model of an independent female entrepreneur. Bela makes gold and silver lace that becomes a business she can develop well enough to hire and train other young girls to work for her. Through her business Bela provides for herself and her mother while they are living with her aunt and then when she marries and is brought into Lob Pinkerle's house with Mata.

Following her betrothal and marriage, Gluckel's relationship with Chayim exemplifies a Jewish woman's role to do "nothing without talking it over together." For example they make a mutual decision to hire Mordecai for their business in Poland. When he changes his mind Gluckel and Chayim discuss and decide Judah Berlin may be a good partner to replace him and do the traveling required. When Judah disputes their agreement Chayim wants to pursue the conflict but Gluckel wants to settle and leave it to God. Her business judgment proves more effective since they regain its cost within a month of settling.

To ensure quality of her descendants, Gluckel takes an active role in promoting desirable matches for her children. For example, when Chayim concludes a betrothal and marriage proposal with Esther and Moses Krumbach, Gluckel is warned about the lad and writes Moses' mother to clear rumors about the boy. When Chayim is injured, Gluckel goes along with his concern she not call a doctor since he does not want the world to know lest his children be thought to have weak blood, lessening their chances of desirable matches. When he dies, Gluckel is forty-four and widowed with eight children still at home.

She takes over her husband's business and spends ten years providing dowries and matches for all but her youngest daughter. Gluckel accepts her new role by traveling widely in Europe to pursue social and business activities in France, Denmark, Holland, Austria and Poland as well as Germany. She brings Loeb and his wife back to Hamburg where she is doing well enough in business to hire Loeb to work for her because her business is growing too big for her to take care of alone.

Years later she is concerned about the large business she maintains and is anxious that something unexpected may happen. She worries about being a burden on her children and regrets missed opportunities for remarriage. Moses Krumbach writes that wealthy Hirz Levy is widowed and at fifty-four she might consider marriage to this well-known and honorable banker who can safeguard her daughter Miriam and son Nathan's finances. For the first time since Chayim's death she consents to surrender her independence and freedom. Ironically, Levy defaults and dies. Gluckel is left poor and forced to move in with her daughter and son-in-law, having her worst fears realized.



Arranged marriages

The seventeenth century Jewish community custom of arranging betrothals and marriages is presumably designed to ensure quality of descendants, economic assurance and an orderly process of procreation and family stability. Typically the elder male family member—the father, uncle or patriarch—is contacted by a marriage broker or other intermediary with interest from the male or female intended for betrothal and marriage. If parties are agreeable, depending on competition, the elder males determine the dowry and other costs that may bind the betrothal. If all parties accept then a deal is concluded.

Typically betrothals are made at a young age and parties may or may not meet or know of the other. For example, Gluckel is betrothed at twelve to marry Chayim Hameln at fourteen. There is competition for their son Nathan and Gluckel comments he is pleased with their choice of the Ballin daughter. Widow Gluckel wants Moses Krumbach and her daughter Esther to meet before a wedding despite the betrothal being made years earlier by Chayim. Ironically, Gluckel does not meet nor ever see her second husband Levy till their wedding day. Two similarly aged men enter the room and she does not know which her betrothed is. Gluckel's sister Hendele is betrothed to Reb Gumpel of Cleves in a good year for Lob Pinkerle, who offers a large dowry of 1800 Reichsthalers he can pay because business is good and he trusts God that he can do as well by his other children.

Gluckel and Chayim have twelve children and Gluckel takes an active role in promoting desirable matches for them. Their first child is a daughter Zipporah born in the second year of their marriage while living in Hamburg. Zipporah is almost twelve when Loeb Hamburger proposes her marriage to Kossman the son of Elias Cleve. Chayim writes the Amsterdam marriage broker he may arrive there six weeks ahead of his normal schedule to discuss it since Elias Cleve is a great prince from Israel living in Amsterdam and worth 100,000 Reichsthalers. Their first son Nathan has matches proposed with daughters of rich community parnas Elijah Ballin and wealthy Samuel Oppenheimer. Brother-in-law Isaac Hameln holds the dowries but Oppenheimer money is not acknowledged so they commit to the Ballin match with dowries of 4000 and 2400 Reichsthalers for betrothal.

Hannah is betrothed to Samuel, the son of Gluckel's brother-in-law Abraham Hameln. Chayim is in Amsterdam when he receives a marriage proposal for their daughter Esther and Moses Krumbach, the son of rich Abraham Krumbach of Metz, signed by Elias Cleve who is authorized to sign. Chayim concludes the negotiations while Gluckel in Hamburg is warned about the lad. Loeb's betrothal and wedding is confirmed with the daughter of Elias' brother Hirschel Ries in Berlin. Hendele is proposed for betrothal in Berlin and Gluckel relies on Loeb to confirm it. Seventeen weeks after Hendele's wedding she dies, which by custom requires a dowry be returned. Joseph gets many proposals before Gluckel agrees to betrothal and marriage to the daughter of Meir Stadthagen with the wedding a year later in Copenhagen. Brother-in-law Joseph gets a letter from the rich Moses Brillin of Bamberg about a daughter for Samuel's betrothal.



Gluckel confirms Moses' betrothal to a daughter of Samson Baiersdorf. Freudchen is betrothed to rich Moses ben Loeb's son. Gluckel marries off all her fatherless children but Moses and Miriam. Hirz Levy is widowed and Gluckel is betrothed in June 1699 with a wedding May 7, 1700, in Metz.

Gluckel's Torah-based lifestyle

Gluckel is fully a faith-based and Torah-focused Jewish mother who spends her life believing good things happen from God's blessings and bad things happen because man sins. Her Memoirs are not intended to be moralistic because she truly believes that the Torah provides all we need to find and learn to get from this world to the next. The Torah's fundamental message is to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Gluckel tells her children to serve God, study Torah, and be honest with Jews and Gentiles in money and goods. Her life exemplifies these rules. Gluckel confesses to be a sinner asking God for repentance.

Gluckel makes several observations in her Memoirs that highlight her fundamental beliefs. For example, Pinkerle leads the community to prosper and grow debt-free but when other officials plot to interfere with his good work, she claims God "destroyed their wicked plot" by quashing the matter. Her only bright spot as a newlywed in Hameln that she calls a "dull shabby hole" is the piety of Joseph Hameln sing-singing his morning prayer. She grows to deeply love and respect her husband Chayim and believes him to be a "perfect pattern of a pious Jew" like his father and brothers. When faced with business conflict, Gluckel wants to leave it to God even though Chayim wants to arbitrate.

Her faith and gratitude are incomparable in her comments; while she laments and bemoans the treasure and honor that leaves with Chayim's passing, she thanks God for his mercy. While pregnant and dangerously ill, she refuses medical measures in favor of God's will to heal. Her faith is rewarded five weeks later when she returns to synagogue to praise and thank God. When Chayim dies leaving her with eight children to bring up she writes "God had seen my sins, and I needs must lose my dear husband, and my children their most excellent father, and we were abandoned like sheep without a shepherd."



Style

Perspective

Gluckel writes the "Memoirs" in 1690 to her children "upon the death of your good father" because she wants to distract her soul from the burdens and bitterness of losing him. Despite the moralistic perspective of her life this autobiographical book is not intended to be a moralistic work because she is not trained to make it so. Gluckel is the parent of twelve children with her husband Chayim. She brings up eight as a widow after his death. Gluckel takes over his business affairs and develops a successful global business in the seventeenth century.

Gluckel makes recommendations to her children to serve God from your heart, set aside time to study Torah, and be honest with both Jews and Gentiles in money and goods. She suggests three "magic herbs" for them to remember including trust in God, hope, and patience. Gluckel does not preach but confesses to be a sinner who is asking God to grant her repentance. She summarizes her expectations for the audience of her children in the story of a bird whose third fledgling promises to do to his children what the bird does for him when he grows up. The third fledgling is carried to safety on shore.

Tone

Gluckel's Memoirs are an autobiographical study of her life as a seventeenth century Jewish mother of twelve children. By its very nature, Memoirs has a subjective tone which makes the reader comfortable and understands the challenges Gluckel faces. Despite the four century gap between her time and now, the work seems contemporary, filled with twenty-first century challenges. She does not write this book for publication but for her soul, to lessen the burdens and bitterness of losing her husband. Gluckel provides an intimate look into the heart and soul of her being and by extension to the children, grandchildren and other descendants of her life.

The content of her work is eternal, dealing with life, death, birth and love, faith and trust in a God and fellow man. She is deeply spiritual and fully believes that God is at the center and the prime mover of all things that happen for good. In contrast, man in his vanity brings about the bad that happens by removing his trust in God from his actions.

Structure

This 295 page autobiographical work titled "The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln" is comprised of seven books, plus an introduction by Robert Rosen, illustrations and end notes with descriptions and commentary. Each book has 5 to 15 numbered subsections that may indicate daily or other periodic journal entries. These are recollections to her children and other heirs, describing her life, times and experiences. The book provides an open window into the soul of this very good woman as she recalls living her life. She



is deeply saddened by the death of her husband and her writing is therapy for her soul from the burdens and bitterness of losing him. The format of the work is effective to the extent each numbered section captures a thought or group of sensitivities relevant to that stage of her life. Books are separated by times in her life with, for example, Book Five dedicated to "the sickness and death of your beloved father."



Quotes

"Gluckel, though she would not have known what to make of this, was an artist, and as a true artist, gave more than she knew. In writing of her life, her family and business dealings, she has left us a portrait of an era. Better than any history text she instructs us about what it was like to be a Jew in Europe in her time." Introduction, pg. vii.

"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." Book 1, pg. 5.

"Following the death of his first wife, my father married my mother, who was then a fatherless child. My dear good mother, long may she live! has often told me how upon the death of her father, she and her good mother Mata, of blessed memory, were left alone and in need. I too knew my grandmother, and there never lived a more pious woman nor a wiser." Book 1, pg. 13.

"My father had me betrothed when I was a girl of barely twelve, and less than two years later I married." Book 2, pg. 23.

"After our wedding, my husband and I remained for one year in Hameln. Our business went poorly, for Hameln was not a trade centre; and my husband did not wish to confine himself to money-lending among the country folk. From the outset of our marriage, he had bent his thoughts toward settling in Hamburg. And, as it is said in our holy writings, 'The road a man desires, thereto he is led.'" Book 2, pp. 32-33.

"I was about twenty-five years old. 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." Book 3, pg. 40.

"We remained in Hanover until the beginning of the month of Heshvan, that is, a week after Simhat Torah; then we journeyed with our children and maid to Hameln, where we planned to stay until all went well again in Hamburg." Book 3, pg. 56.

"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 Kossman, the son of Elias Cleve, of blessed memory." Book 4, pg. 95.

"I had always thought I would have the good fortune to be taken first, for during my husband's lifetime I was ever sickly. Whenever I fell ill, the good man used to hope in turn that he would not outlive me. He would say, 'How will I be able to take care of the children?'—for he loved them with all his heart." Book 4, pg. 144.

"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." Book 5, pg. 152.

"My business prospered, I procured me wares from Holland, I bought nicely in Hamburg as well, and disposed of the goods in a store of my own. I never spared myself, summer and winter I was out on my travels, and I ran about the city the livelong day." Book 5, pg. 179.

"Many matches were offered me during this time, among them truly the most eminent in all Germany. But as long as I was able, and as long as I felt I could support myself with what my blessed husband left me, the thought of remarriage never once entered my mind." Book 6, pg. 222.

"For a considerable time, everything went along to my heart's content. I wanted for nothing. My husband gave me all the money needed for maintaining the house. I found, however, that the head-housekeeper was 'lord and master,' and that everything passed through her hands, all the food, whole sugar-loaves, and other stores, so that she never once asked me what to cook or do." Book 6, pg. 243.

"My husband was exceedingly able, and a great business man, and highly esteemed by Jew and Gentile. But the God of goodness had willed otherwise, and his creditors pressed him so sorely that he crashed on the rocks and all was lost." Book 7, pg. 255.

"However, as things went, I could hold out no longer. Life grew very dear that year in Metz, and I had to keep some one to take care of me, so I finally yielded to what I had so long refused, and moved into the home of my son-in-law Moses Krumbach." Book 7, pg. 265.

Topics for Discussion

Identify, list and describe the steps involved in a typical betrothal and marriage as depicted in the seventeenth century Jewish family.

Explain and discuss the significance of the betrothal and marriage process in the seventeenth century, in contrast with the significance of a modern day marriage.

Identify, list and describe at least five siblings of Chayim Hameln.

Identify, list and describe at least ten children of Chayim and Gluckel.

Identify and describe the travel locations throughout Germany and Europe that Gluckel and Chayim visit to secure the marriage of their children and success of their business. How do they manage to connect and transform their family and business affairs into a global enterprise?

Describe and discuss at least five characteristics of the lifestyle of a young person in seventeenth century Germany compared to the contemporary lifestyle of a young person in the twenty-first century. Examples can include communication, travel, and family size.

Describe and discuss the type of business Gluckel and Chayim are in and determine how the same type of business might be conducted in an internet-based world.