

The

**LEHMAN
TRILOGY**

A NOVEL

STEFANO MASSINI

Translated from the Italian by Richard Dixon

The Lehman Trilogy is a work of fiction. While many of the characters portrayed here have some counterparts in the life and times of Lehman Brothers, the characterizations and incidents presented are the products of the author's imagination. Accordingly, *The Lehman Trilogy* should be read solely as a work of fiction.

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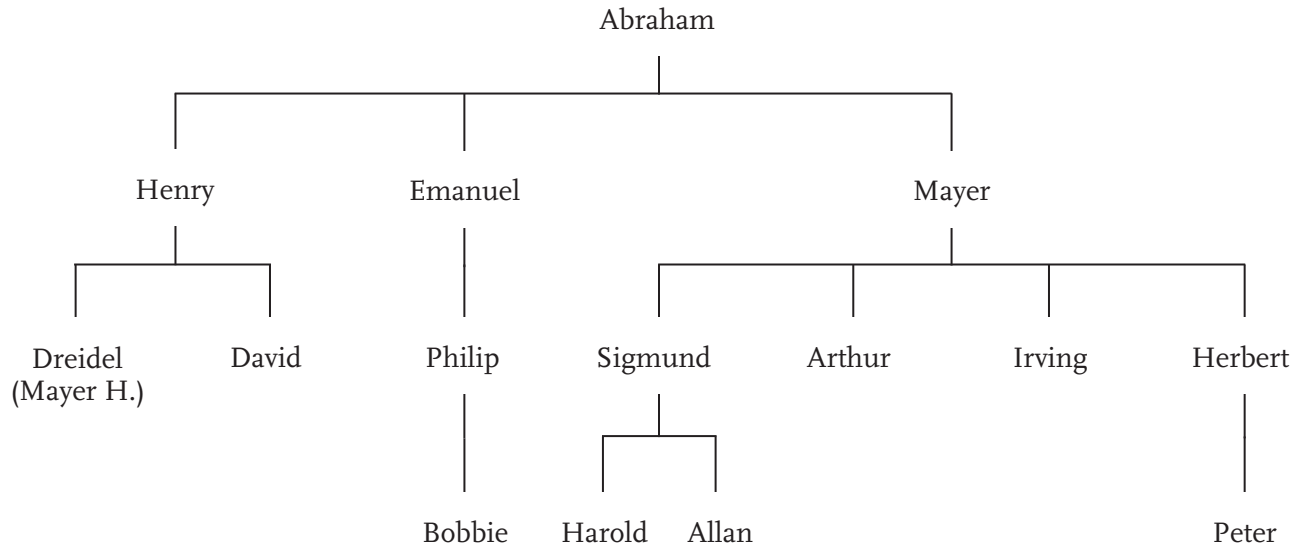
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Family Tree



Glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish Words

ADAR—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to February–March.

ASARAH BE TEVET—festivity in remembrance of the siege of Jerusalem in 588 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar II. Literally “the tenth of the month of *Tevet*,” or the central day in the Hebrew month of *Tevet*.

AV—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to July–August.

AVRAHAM—Abraham, prophet.

(DER) BANKIR BRUDER—(the) brother banker.

BAR MITZVAH—(literally “son of the commandment”). Expression formed by *bar* (son) and *mitzvah* (commandment). This expression refers to the coming-of-age ceremony when an adolescent reaches religious maturity. From that day, the young man is no longer dependent on his father but becomes responsible for his own actions, assuming the rights and duties of an adult and therefore, if he commits a sin, is liable to punishment. The ceremony is conducted on the first Sabbath after the boy’s thirteenth birthday. His family meets at the synagogue, and during the ceremony he is invited for the first time to read the Torah.

BARUCH HASHEM—(literally “blessed the Name”). Thanks to God. HaShem (“the name”) is the reverential substitution for the divine name Jhwh, which cannot be pronounced.

BAT MITZVAH—(literally “daughter of the commandment”). Ceremony in which a young Jewish girl who has reached twelve acquires the status of “woman” and assumes the obligations of religious character.

BEIN HA-METZARIM—festivity to remember the destruction of the First and Second Temple of Jerusalem (586/7 BCE and 70 CE). Literally “three weeks between days of fasting” (of the Seventeenth of Tamuz and the Ninth of Av).

(DER) BOYKHREDER—Yiddish, (the) ventriloquist.

BULBE—Yiddish, potato.

CHAMETZ—Hebrew, leaven.

CHESHVAN—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding with October–November.

CHUPPAH—nuptial canopy under which the wedding ceremony takes place. It is a cloth supported on four poles held by four men. Once the couple leave the canopy they are united in matrimony.

DANIYEL—Daniel, the prophet.

DREIDEL—Yiddish, spinning top. A game traditionally played during the festival of *Hanukkah*. It is a four-sided spinning top on which each side bears a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which together represent the words “Nes Gadol Hayah Sham” (“A great miracle happened there”). These letters also form part of a mnemonic phrase that recalls the rules of the games in which the *dreidel* is used: *Nun* stands for the Yiddish word *nisht* (“nothing”), *Hei* stands for *halb* (“half”), *Gimel* for *gants* (“all”), and *Shin* for *shtel ayn* (“put in”).

DUKHAN—podium of the officiant in the synagogue, placed in front of the Ark/Aron.

EGEL HAZAHAV—the Golden Calf, symbol of idolatry, made by Aaron while Moses was on Mount Sinai.

ELUL—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to August–September.

GEFILTE FISH—Yiddish, fish balls.

GEMARA—(in Aramaic literally “conclusion,” “fulfillment”). Part of the Talmud that collects comments and discussions on the *Mishnah* developed during the fourth to sixth centuries CE. It is also used as a synonym for the Talmud as a whole. These teachings are written in the Eastern Aramaic language, so-called Talmudic Aramaic.

GHEVER—Hebrew, man.

(A) GLAZ BIKER—(a) glass of water.

GOLEM—formless material or mass. In the later tradition it indicates a clay being animated by the name of God and created to defend and serve the Jews of the ghetto.

GOLYAT—Goliath.

HAFTARAH—(literally “separation,” “parting,” “taking leave”). Probably derives from the root *patar*, which means “to conclude,” “to terminate.” Indicates a selection from the books of the prophets or the hagiographies that follow the reading of the passage of the Torah (*parashah*) in the synagogue ritual of the Sabbath and festival days.

HALAKHA—(literally “path to follow”) conduct, behavior. The written and oral prescriptive part of the Torah containing legal material that regulates conduct and daily life. The *halakha* is regarded as the revelation received by Moses on Mount Sinai and is contained in the Torah, both in writing (Pentateuch) and above all orally, later codified in the Mishnah, in the Talmud and in the *midrashim*, known as the *halakhic midrashim*.

HANUKKAH—(literally “dedication”), the Festival of Lights, commemorating the reconsecration (Dedication) of the Temple of Jerusalem in 164 CE by Judas Maccabeus. The festival begins at sunset on the twenty-fourth of the month of *Kislev* (usually in December) and lasts eight days, during which the candles of the eight-branch candelabrum are lit one by one.

HASELE—Yiddish, rabbit.

HASHEM—(literally, “the name”). Expression of reverence in substitution for the divine name Jhwh, used in the Bible and in the Hebrew tradition.

IYAR—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to April–May.

(DER) KARTYOZHNIK—Yiddish, (the) card player.

KATAN—Hebrew, child.

KETUBAH—the marriage contract. The parchment containing the wording of the contract is often richly decorated with designs and symbols. It sets out the husband’s financial obligations toward his wife, seeking to protect her in the event of divorce. According to Jewish custom, the husband alone can request a divorce and has to pay a large sum of money to his wife. The *ketubah* is signed by the husband and handed to the wife; the wedding blessings are then recited.

KIDDUSHIN—the rituals of the wedding ceremony.

KISLEV—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to November–December.

KOSHER—complying with Jewish dietary laws.

LAG BA OMER—religious festival celebrated on the thirty-third day of Omer, the day that marked the end of the plague that killed disciples of Rabbi Akiva. The mourning and restrictions observed during the period of Omer are suspended, and the day is celebrated with outings, music, and various kinds of entertainment for children.

LIBE—Yiddish, love.

LUFTMENSCH—Yiddish, dream man, dreamer.

MAMELE/MAME—Yiddish, Mamma, mom, dear mom.

MAZEL TOV—(literally, “good star”), “good luck, congratulations.” Expression used to convey congratulations and best wishes during celebrations such as *Bar Mitzvahs*.

MEZUZAH—(literally “doorpost”). The word refers to a ritual object, a parchment on which are written the passages of the Torah corresponding to the first two parts of the *Shema*, a prayer of central importance to the Jewish religion. The *mezuzah* is placed on the doorpost, to the right as one enters, at a height of about two-thirds of the door, and in any event at hand height.

MIGDOL BAVEL—Hebrew, the Tower of Babel.

MILAH—circumcision. It represents the consecration of the pact established between the people of Israel and God since the time of Abraham. It is *mitzvah* to subject the Jewish baby to *milah* on the eighth day after birth, even if that day coincides with the *Shabbat*, with holy days, and with *Yom Kippur*.

MISHNAH—from the Hebrew word that means “recite the lessons,” “study and review.” The *Mishnah*, which is the code of oral tradition, the body of teaching passed down by Moses, has become one of the two parts of the Talmud (the second is the *Gemara*). The final version of the *Mishnah* dates from the end of the second century CE and includes sixty-three tractates divided into six orders regarding religious regulations, social relations, civil and criminal law, marriage, etc.

MITZVOT—the commandments that God gives to every Jew. They are contained in the Torah and have the purpose of teaching man to live according to the will of God. There are 613, of which 365 negative and 248 positive. There is another classification of the *mitzvot*. There are horizontal *mitzvot*, which deal with relations with other humans, and vertical *mitzvot*, which deal with relations between man and God.

MOSHE—Moses.

NER TAMID—(literally “eternal light”), oil lamp that hangs from the ceiling of the synagogue, in front of the Aron, and is permanently lit in remembrance of the seven-branch candelabrum at the Temple of Jerusalem.

NISAN—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to March–April.

NOACH—Noah, patriarch.

PESACH—Passover (literally “passage”). Festival that commemorates the Flight of the Jews into Egypt. The main festival of the year.

PURIM—(literally “lots,” “fates”), festival that commemorates the freeing of the Jews from massacre by Haman, principal minister of King Ahasuerus of Persia in the fifth century BCE, as described in the Megillah of the Book of Esther. It is celebrated on the fourteenth of Adar and is the most joyous festival of the Jewish calendar, equivalent in spirit to the Christian carnival. It is customary to wear masks.

QADDISH—(literally “sanctification”), one of the oldest and most solemn Jewish prayers recited only in the presence of a *minyan* comprising at least ten Jewish males who have reached thirteen, the age of religious majority, from which every Jew is required to observe the precepts of the Torah. The central theme is the exaltation, magnification, and sanctification of the name of God.

RAB/RAV/REB—abbreviation of rabbi (literally “great,” “distinguished”), indicating the master, or rabbi, the religious leader of the Jewish community.

REB LASHON—Rabbi Language, reference to a traditional Jewish legend.

RIBOYNE SHEL OYLEM—Yiddish, Master of the Universe.

ROSH HASHANAH—religious festivity that celebrates the start of the year, Jewish New Year, celebrated on the first day of the month of *Tishri* in Israel, the first two days in the Diaspora. Festival of a penitential nature, it is characterized by the sound of the *shofar*, a ritual horn.

SCHMALTZ—Yiddish, from the German *Schmalz*, “fat,” “fatty material.” In the homes of Eastern European Jews, *shmaltz*, made with goose fat, replaced butter on bread.

SCHMUCK—Yiddish, idiot, mad, stupid. Literally, dick.

SCHNORRER—Yiddish, beggar, sponger, freeloader.

SHABBAT—(literally “cessation”), Sabbath, weekly day of rest. Festival that celebrated God’s rest on the seventh day of the creation. Characterized by rest from work activities and by the ritual of the synagogue.

SHAMMASH—attendant, servant, sacristan of the synagogue.

SHAMMES—Yiddish version of *shammash*, sacristan of the synagogue.

SHAVUOT—(literally “weeks”), festival that commemorates the gift of the Torah to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai. It takes place seven weeks after Pesach. Known also as Pentecost, since it occurs fifty days after Passover. In ancient times it celebrated the first fruits and the harvest. During the festival, it is said, the sky opens for a very brief instant, and those who make a wish at that moment will see it answered.

SHELOSHIM—indicates the period of thirty days that follow burial (including the *shiva*). During *sheloshim* those in mourning are not permitted to marry or attend a *seudat mitzvah* (“festive religious meal”). During this time men refrain from shaving or cutting their hair, from wearing new clothes, etc. Since Judaism teaches that the deceased can still benefit from the merit of *mitzvot* done in their memory, it is customary to offer merit to the deceased by assembling groups of people who study the Torah together in their name.

SHEMA—(literally, “listening”). Prayer of central importance in Jewish ritual, is recited twice a day, in morning and evening prayer.

SHEVAT—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to January–February.

SHIVA—(literally “seven”). Indicates the traditional seven-day period of mourning on the death of close relatives. During this period mourners gather in the house of one of them and receive visitors.

Going to visit those in mourning is regarded as a great *mitzvah* (commandment) of courtesy and compassion. Traditionally there is no exchange of greetings or words, and visitors wait for those in mourning to begin the conversation. Those in mourning are not obliged to make conversation and, indeed, can ignore visitors completely. Visitors often bring food and serve it to those present so that those in mourning need not cook or carry out other activities.

SHOFAR—ram horn. The sound of the *shofar* recalls the sacrifice of Abraham (called by God to immolate his son Isaac, substituted at the last moment by a ram) and will announce the arrival of the Messiah. Used in certain religious festivities (*Rosh haShanah*, *Yom Kippur*), it is now also used in Israel for particularly solemn secular events.

SHPAN DEM LOSHEK!—Spur the horse! Reference to a song in Yiddish tradition.

SHVARTS ZUP—Yiddish, literally “black broth.”

SIVAN—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to May–June.

SUKKA—hut.

SUKKOT—Hebrew, huts, plural of *sukka*. A festivity that celebrates and recalls the exodus of the Jewish people into the Sinai desert to reach the promised land of Israel. It is celebrated on the fifth day after *Yom Kippur* during which a hut is built using branches where food is eaten and prayers are offered.

SÜSSER—in Yiddish and in German, means literally “sweetness.”

TALMUD—(literally “teaching,” “study,” “discussion”). It is the sacred, normative, and explanatory text that forms the basis of Judaism, the so-called Oral Torah. It combines *Mishnah* and *Gemara* and brings together rabbinic discussions of the period between the fourth and sixth centuries CE.

TAMUZ—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to June–July.

TEFILLIN—Phylacteries, two small leather boxes that orthodox Jews tie onto their left arm and their forehead. The two boxes contain two sheets of parchment with four passages from the Torah. The *Tefillin* are worn every day during morning prayer except for the Shabbat, festivals, and the ninth day of Av.

TERBYALANT—(literally “turbulent”).

TEVET—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to December–January.

TISHRI—month of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to September–October.

TORAH—(literally “teaching,” “law”). It is the law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Written Torah comprises the first five books of the Bible (Pentateuch): Bereshit (Genesis); Shemot (Exodus); Vayikra (Leviticus); Bemidbar (Numbers); Devarim (Deuteronomy). The Oral Torah is the tradition of the masters collected in the works of rabbinic literature and never completed.

TSU FIL RASH!—Yiddish, literally “too much noise!”

TSVANTSINGER—coins of twenty, or small change.

TU BISHVAT—Festival also called New Year of the Trees. Literally “fifteenth of the month of *Shevat*,” or the central day of the Hebrew month of *Shevat*.

TZOM GEDALYA—(literally “fast of Gedalia”). Festival that commemorates the killing of the governor Gedalia.

V’HAYA—the second part of the *Shema*, a prayer of central importance in the Hebrew liturgy.

YELED—Hebrew, boy.

YITZCHAK—Isaac.

YOM KIPPUR—(literally “day of atonement”). Indicates the solemn day of fasting and prayer for atonement and repentance, celebrated on the tenth of the month of *Tishri* (between September and October). This is the only occasion on which the high priest of the Temple pronounces the name of God inside the Holy of Holies. Currently, in the synagogue, the celebration includes a solemn confession of sins and the sound of the *shofar*.

YONAH/IONAH—Jonah, the prophet.

ZEKHARYA—Zechariah, the prophet.