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The Reaction of Hassidic Sects in Galicia and Bukovina in the Second Half of the 19th Century to the Influence of Modernization and the Enlightenment on Jewish life

The Enlightenment and the Hassidic movement had a great influence on the Jewish life of Eastern Europe. The Enlightenment and modernization on all aspects of urban life in Eastern Europe posed a challenge to Jewish Orthodox society. I therefore see great importance in researching the reaction of Jewish Orthodox leaders to these challenges.

In the second half of the 19th Century the largest and most influential Hassidic groups in Galicia and Bukovina were different branches of '*Hassidut Ruzhyn*' (originating in Ruzhyn, Russia). The aim of this research is to bring to light the ways in which the *Admorim* (the religious and spiritual leaders of the sect) of the 'Ruzhyn' dynasty during this period dealt with the influence of the Enlightenment on traditional Jewish life.

The questions I will examine are the following:

1. How did the Enlightenment spread amongst the Jews of Galicia and Bukovina in the 19th Century?
2. In what ways did the *Admorim* of the Ruzhyn dynasty deal with the increasing influence of modern thought on the Jewish society of their time?
3. Were these ways different and unique in comparison to the methods used in other Hassidic groups in the region?
4. What were the similarities and differences between the different *Admorim* of the Ruzhyn Hassidism in their approach to the Enlightenment?
5. To what extent did the Ruzhyn *Admorim* help shape the face of Galician and Bukovinian Orthodox Jewry through their reaction to the effects of the Enlightenment and of modernization on Jewish life?

Sources: This research is based on historical documents from the period under examination, on the Hassidic '*Torot*' (religious teachings) of the Ruzhyn *Admorim*, and on the relevant academic research on Galician and Hassidic Jewry, which places the phenomenon being researched in its greater political and social historical context. The Hassidic teachings served as the stage through which the *Admorim* addressed their followers, and it is therefore likely that they addressed the pressing issues of their time in them. I believe these teachings are a testament not only to the approach of the *Admorim* to the Enlightenment, but also to the approach of their followers.