

THE SEFORIM BLOG

All About Seforim – New And Old, And Jewish Bibliography
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WHERE'S SHAI AGNON?

📅 October 11, 2007 (<https://seforimblog.com/2007/10/Wheres-Shai-Agnon/>) 👤
Admin (<https://seforimblog.com/author/admin/>) 🗨️

In the latest issue of Yeshurun (a fuller review will be coming shortly), they published a letter from R. Y.M. Gordon to Shai Agnon (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shmuel_Yosef_Agnon). In light of this, an erudite reader, Yisroel Rottenberg, was kind enough to provide another instance where Agnon is quoted and in this instance, where Agnon's name was then removed from a later edition.

In the Pirush Ba'al HaTurim al HaTorah by Y. Reinetz, in his introduction (p. 10) he relates the well-known story that R. Ya'akov composed the portion of his commentary “parparot” – numerologies and the like – in a single night. In the second edition (1971), he includes an endnote (p. 494) where he provides a source for this statement. He says (reproduced below)

בסי' "ספר סופר סיפור" לש"י עגנון דף ס"ח מובא סיפור זה בשם ספר קול דודי וז"ל פעם אחת הוכיח הרא"ש ז"ל את בנו ר' יעקב בעל הטורים על שכל עיסוקיו אינם אלא בתורה שבעל פה בלבד אינו עוסק בתורה שבכתב. נתן הדברים אל לבו ובלייל חמישי יש כל הלילה וחיבר את ספרו על התורה

“in the book ‘Sefer, Sofer, Sippur’ from Sha”i Agnon p. 68 this story is recorded in the name of the work Kol Dodi [and then he provides a fuller accounting of the story]. . . .”



(http://bp1.blogger.com/_Tw42_5chsqg/Rw5bUFR5DjI/AAAAAAAAAM8/l7NtEXKeUsM/s1600-h/Second+edition+with+Agnon.jpg)(second edition endnote – click to enlarge)

In the third edition (1974) of R. Reinetz's book, there is a major change. Instead of relying upon the endnote, he has moved up part of the endnote to the text in the introduction. In this edition, the introduction (p. 10) contains a parenthetical, which reads (reproduced below):

כן מובא בס' קול דודי וז"ל פעם אחת הוכיח הרא"ש זצ"ל את בנו ר' יעקב בעל הטורים על שכל עיסוקיו אינם אלא בתורה שבע"פ בלבד אינו עוסק בתורה שבכתב. נתן הדברים אל לבו ובלייל חמישי ישב כל הלילה וחיבר את ספרו על התורה

“this is brought in the Kol Dodi [and then he provides a fuller accounting of the story].”



(http://bp0.blogger.com/_Tw42_5chsqq/Rw5bT1R5DiI/AAAAAAAAAM0/NuOQs6RiV1Q/s1600-h/Third+Edition+Introduction.jpg)
(third edition introduction – click to enlarge)

While essentially the same, the words “In the book ‘Sefer, Sofer, Sippur’ from Sha”i Agnon” have somehow gone missing when the text appears in the introduction. Perhaps, in the course of the move, like socks, they were lost.



(<https://seforimblog.com/2007/10/wheres-shai-agnon/?print=pdf>)



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Post Views: 355

- Book History (<https://seforimblog.com/category/book-history/>), Censorship (<https://seforimblog.com/category/censorship/>), History (<https://seforimblog.com/category/history/>)
- Literary Forgery (<https://seforimblog.com/tag/literary-forgery/>)

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WHERE'S SHAI AGNON REVISITED

📅 November 21, 2007 (<https://seforimblog.com/2007/11/Wheres-Shai-Agnon-Revisited/>) 👤 Admin (<https://seforimblog.com/Author/Admin/>) 🗨️

You may recall that in a prior post (<http://seforim.blogspot.com/2007/10/wheres-shai-agnon.html>) we noted that in the Reinetz edition of the Pirush Ba'al HaTurim al HaTorah is a victim of censorship. Specifically, Reinetz quotes a story about how quickly the Tur wrote his commentary on the Torah. In the early edition of Reinetz's work, Shai Agnon is cited as the source while in later editions Agnon is removed.

In the comments, however, some (<http://www.haloscan.com/comments/seforim/6933278046480399127/#141948>) took (<http://www.haloscan.com/comments/seforim/6933278046480399127/#141962>) issue (<http://www.haloscan.com/comments/seforim/6933278046480399127/#141988>) with the need to cite to Agnon as Agnon was ultimately citing to another work, Kol Dodi, and thus, according to some commentators, so long as Reinetz cites to the Kol Dodi it is ok. These commentators' opinion is premised on the notion that Kol Dodi is another work. As was noted (<http://www.haloscan.com/comments/seforim/6933278046480399127/#142053>) in the comments there is no such published work. Although there is no published work with that name that contains this story, there is still some ambiguity as it could be Agnon was cited to an earlier work in manuscript. Now, however, we can put that all to rest and conclusively show that the only source is Agnon.

As mentioned previously (<http://seforim.blogspot.com/2007/10/pitfalls-of-disagreeing-with-gra.html>), we hope to provide comprehensive reviews of Y.S. Spiegel's Tolodot Sefer Halvri, in that vein, we came across the following footnote (vol. 1, p. 29 n.8) where Spiegel discusses Agnon's Kol Dodi:

יש לציין לדברי ש"י עגנון בספרו ספר סופר וסיפור, ירושלים, תשל"ח, עמ' ק, בשם ספר קול דודי: "בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל היו מביאין עמהם ספרי תורה שלהם והיו מגיהין אותם מספר עזרא הסופר שהיה מונח בעזרה." פירוש מעניין שלא מצאתיו במפרשים. אמנם כפי שכתבה לי בטובה בתו גב' אמונה ירון, ותודתי נתונה לה בזה, כינה אביה בשם קול דודי את חידושיו עצמו (וראה שם ברשימת המקורות, עמ' תנט, שנאמר על ספר קול דודי שהוא כת"י המחבר). וכן אמר עגנון עצמו לדוד כנעני, כפי שכתב האחרון בספרו ש"י עגנון בעל פה, תל אביב, תשל"ב, עמ' 34-35

I wish to cite to Shai Agnon's statement in his work Sefer Sofer v'Sippur where he cites in the name of the work Kol Dodi . . . this statement in the name of Kol Dodi is very nice, however I have not found it in any other commentaries. But, according to what Emunah Yaron, Agnon's daughter told me, her father used the title Kol Dodi for stories of his [Agnon's] own creation . . . Furthermore, Agnon himself told David Kenanin as much . . .

Thus, there is no doubt that in fact the only source for this story regarding the Ba'al HaTurim is Agnon and Reinetz cannot be absolved removing Agnon's name and citing to Kol Dodi, a fictitious work.

Update:

In the comments (<http://www.haloscan.com/comments/seforim/1321181673321889926/#144223>) to this post Professor Lawrence Kaplan kindly brought to our attention a great article by G. Scholem that appeared in Commentary Magazine titled 'Reflections On S.Y. Agnon' (Commentary Dec. 1967 44:6) where Scholem reviews Agnon the person and his works.

Scholem refers to Agnon's famous anthology, Yamim Noraim and writes "With his caustic sense of humor he [Agnon] included a number of highly imaginative (and imaginary) passages, culled from his own vineyard, a nonexistent book, Kol Dodi ('The Voice of my Beloved'), innocently mentioned in the bibliography as 'a manuscript in possession of the author.'"

Professor Kaplan then adds: It also follows that one cannot excuse Agnon for this (in my view rather innocent) deception on the grounds that he only referred to Kol Dodi in Sefer, Sofer, ve-Sippur, which he did not prepare for publication.

The truth is that Scholem made a mistake as in the bibliography of both Sefer, Sofer, ve-Sippur and Yamim Noraim, Kol Dodi is listed and described as "כתי המחבר" meaning a manuscript of the **author – himself** not as Scholem translates it "a manuscript in **possession** of the author." Scholem's description of Kol Dodi is based on the English version translation! Additionally, in the three places which Agnon quotes from this work in his Sefer, Sofer, ve-Sippur it appears to be a collection of stuff he heard from people on topics similar to the Sefer, Sofer, ve-Sippur. But it do not appear that Agnon was trying to fool anyone to a nonexistent book



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 Post Views: 429

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 Amudim BTolodot Sefer Halvri (<https://seforimblog.com/tag/amudim-btolodot-sefer-haivri/>), Censorship (<https://seforimblog.com/tag/censorship/>)