

The Editor's Column

I would like to open with some words in memory of our member Lucien Harris, who passed away Friday evening, the second day of Rosh Hodesh Adar, 5761, February 24, 2001. I did not have the privilege of knowing him for many years, like the majority of our members, but in the short time I did share his acquaintance, I found him to be a most interesting person, of pleasant demeanor, extremely knowledgeable, always ready to help with a smile and a good heart. His life's work, both in Israel and abroad, is well known to many – service in the British army, in the World Zionist Organization, as the public relations director of Hadassah Hospital, as a journalist, translator, author and researcher of his family's history. He was on the editorial board of our publication, *Sharsheret Hadorot* from its very beginning and all appreciated his articles. May his memory be for a blessing.

This issue of our journal is devoted to a wide range of topics. The first two articles deal with the essence of genealogy - family history. Giora Fuzailoff traces his extensive family in Bukhara and Eretz Yisrael while Michael Kam presents us with the fascinating story of his family research from its very modest beginning to a wide-ranging family tree. Most of the other articles deal with what can be called 'genealogical aids,' and in this respect they are inseparable from genealogy – history, information and sources. Four articles deal with historical topics that are closely connected with genealogy: Benjamin Maierchak tells of Jewish soldiers in Polish armies, Yehuda Klausner discusses the history of European Rabbis and the development of the European rabbinical establishment, Esther Ramon covers the Court Jews of 17th and 18th century Germany, while Moshe Koren reports on a very interesting but not widely known episode connected with the history of 16th century Eretz Yisrael in the days of Don Joseph Nasi. Articles that describe how modern scientific knowledge can help genealogical study are those by Shmuel Shamir on Hebrew paleography and Ya'akov Kleiman on the Jewish aspect in new human DNA studies connected with the Y-chromosomes of Kohanim. The two articles by Israel Pickholtz, one on a little known cemetery in Ashkelon and the other on the important records of the Kolel Galicia in Jerusalem, and the article by Harriet Kassow listing the Internet sites of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs), help us learn more about available sources for researchers. The SIG list is in the English section of the journal. In the realm of information, it is beneficial to read Barbara Siegel's report on the activities of the English language group in Jerusalem and the summary of Baruch Gold on a special Shabbat dedicated to genealogy. Also most informative are the summaries of articles, which have appeared in genealogical journals published abroad in English, German, French and Spanish.

In closing, I want to call our readers' attention to the moving request of Susana Cassuto-Evron. The early history of her family is well known and documented; she is looking for information about the last years of her parents. Her father perished in a death camp and her mother, who survived the Holocaust and arrived in Eretz Yisrael, was murdered in 1948 on the convoy to Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank in the name of the editorial staff, as well as in the name of our readers, Shalom Bronstein, who translates the Hebrew articles into English. He willingly and gladly provides us with proficient translations and I hope he continues to enjoy doing it.

Yocheved Klausner

From the Desk of Hannah Furman
President of the Israel Genealogical Society

There is no one like a person who gains knowledge after the fact. Six months have passed since I have assumed the position of President. At times, it seems as though I have always occupied it and at other times it feels like it was only yesterday.

I would like to point out several facets of the position that cannot be realized without your input and participation. I also urge each and every one of you to take a more active role in our Israel Genealogical Society.

Your support should be evident not only by attendance at our various meetings but can also be demonstrated by sharing your opinions, reactions, questions and suggestions – for I am willing to learn from all of you. For this purpose you can use our website: www.isragen.org.il or write to us at P.O. Box 4270, Jerusalem 91041.

Correct Addresses: Whenever I send a large scale E-mailing there are a considerable number of returns under the following headings (1) Unknown address; (2) This or

that kind of error in address, (3) Instances where the address I have is only temporary. I ask that when anyone changes his or her E-mail address, home address or telephone number, to make sure to send me the update. This especially holds true with regard to mailing our journal *Sharsheret Hadorot*.

Helping Beginners: Among the requests we receive, a large portion come from those who are at the very beginning of their genealogical research. In addition to the support that our longstanding members have been providing for a long time, I urge anyone who is willing and interested in devoting some of their time to help in this area to inform me of their area of interest and of their readiness to lend a hand in this important endeavor.

Thanking you for your help,

Hannah Furman

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Tali Hadar Z"l

Hannah Furman

In memory of Tali Hadar of Kibbutz Mizra who passed away on 26 Iyar 5761 (May 19, 2001). Tali was one of the pioneers of genealogical research in Israel to which she devoted most of her time. Although seriously ill, she continued to help and encourage everyone who contacted her for advice. Her unstinting dedication will continue to inspire all who are involved in genealogical endeavors.

May her memory continue to be for a blessing.

In Memoriam – Lucien Harris

Esther Ramon

Our friend and devoted member, Lucien Harris, passed away the beginning of March. Born in Antwerp, Belgium in 1912, he was raised in Manchester, England. He completed his academic studies in Law and the Classics at the prestigious Oxford University and worked as a journalist. In 1941, Dr. Chaim Weizmann asked him to join his staff in London.

Lucien, his first wife and their three children came on Aliyah in 1948 during the War of Independence. For the first four years, he worked in government service and for the next twenty-five years, he headed the public relations department of the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

He was very interested in genealogy and in 1986, he published a booklet *Our Four Families*, in which he documented his family – the Harris Family, formerly known as Chmelkin in Poland, the Stern Family, as well as the families of his first wife – the Kapelusnik Family and the Polinsky Family. He covered additional details in his book *From Manchester to Jerusalem*.

He was a very active member of the Israel Genealogical Society. For a number of years he was a member of the *Sharsheret Hadorot* editorial staff where he specialized in translating Hebrew articles into English.

May his memory be for a blessing.



The History of the Fuzailoff Family **The Story of the Jewish Communities of Bukhara & Samarkand**

Giōra Fuzailoff

Translated from Hebrew

Introduction

The following deals with the story of one of the most important, prominent and dispersed families active in the Jewish community of Bukhara over the past 250 years. The history of the family reflects very well the history of the Jewish community of Bukhara. It began as a small community located in Central Asia that at the end of the 18th century numbered some three thousand people living under the control of despotic, fanatic Moslem rulers and continued as a society that suffered under the Bolsheviks, and to our own day, when the community numbers some one hundred fifty thousand, spread all over the world, with the majority living in Israel.

The family underwent many adventures, parallel to what transpired for the whole community. From Bukhara and Samarkand, their descendants reached all parts of the earth where they were numbered among the leaders and scholars. Among them were those who were forcibly converted to Islam and those who died for the sanctification of God's name by refusing to change their faith. Many owned large enterprises in Central Asia, influencing the area's economy. Others participated in the renewal of our people and settled in Eretz Yisrael, where they selflessly dedicated themselves to the realization of the dream of redemption. I have only indicated a few events of my family's past. I will trace

generation after generation and will present the main personalities connected with the founder of the family.

The Founding Father – The First Generation: R. Joseph Hacham Chak-Chak

R. Joseph Haham Chak-Chak was born in Baghdad in either 5533 or 5534 (1773 or 1774). His father died eight months after his birth. Joseph moved with his mother to Mashhad, Persia, where he was raised and where he learned how to weave and dye silk. In the 90's of the 18th century, he relocated, for economic reasons, to Bukhara. R. Joseph and his wife, Yeshua, had five sons and some daughters. There are those that believe that he had four daughters, while others believe he had one whose name was Ziba. His sons were Benjamin, known as Mulla Fuzail, Achildi (Abraham), Shimon, and Isaiah, known as Ash-Bai.

Achildi is the founder of the Achildioff - Eshel family. Shimon is the founder of the Shimonoff family among the Jews of Bukhara and Isaiah became a Moslem.

R. Joseph Hacham Chak-Chak, one of the pillars of the Bukhara community, concerned himself with its needs. He served as a much-loved preacher for which he received the name Chak-Chak derived from the term Chacha, meaning preacher. He continued silk

dying in the royal workshop established in Bukhara. His business dealings increased and spread over Central Asia. According to one account, R. Joseph lived a long life and died in Bukhara in 5610 (1850). However, it seems that his death may have occurred earlier, between the years 5590-5595 (1830-1835), close to the birth of Joseph, the son of Mulla Benjamin Fuzail in 5595 (1835). Mulla Benjamin heard of the death of his father in Bukhara and named his newborn son Joseph.

The Second Generation – Mulla (Hacham) Benjamin Fuzail – “The Blessed”

Ziba, the daughter of R. Joseph, married the son of R. Moses Semandar, Jacob, who was the same age and a friend of Benjamin. Isaiah, known as Ash-Bai, associated with Moslem youth. In the end, he became a Moslem known as Challa and married a Moslem woman. His father, R. Joseph, sat ‘shiva’ for him and refused to be comforted. However, his sons, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, maintained contact with the family. There is evidence from the end of the 19th century that they joined with the rest of the extended family at memorial ceremonies, dressed in Moslem attire.

During this time, the Jews of Bukhara were under intense pressure from the Moslems to convert to Islam. Jewish children were kidnapped and forced to accept Islam. The daughter of R. Joseph, Ziba, was murdered when her husband was away from home and her children were seized. Many years later, it was discovered that her daughter, who was at that time about six years old, accepted Islam, while the son Moses, who had studied at a Talmud Torah, was murdered for the Sanctification of God’s name.

Other Jews only outwardly accepted Islam. These Marranos were called *Challa*; that is, ‘neither this nor that’, not Jews and not Moslems. To this very day, there is a special street in Bukhara where the Challa live. They marry among themselves, as neither the Jews nor the Moslems accepted them. Their living conditions are most difficult.

The brothers Simon and Achildi (the name

means ‘open’ or ‘he will open’ and was given to an ill child with the hope that it would open his chances for recovery) joined the family firm and helped their father Joseph in his business. With R. Joseph’s death, they left Bukhara. Achildi, whose wife had died, left the city with his sons Suleiman and Amin, that is Isaiah (Solomon) and Benjamin, and evidence of their lives was found in Tashkent. Mulla Benjamin, the firstborn son of R. Joseph, was the most successful of the sons (‘Mulla’ meaning wise man or rabbi in the Judeo-Persian language spoken in Persia, Afghanistan and Bukhara). R. Benjamin was born in Bukhara around 5554 (1794) and studied in the *Beit Midrash* of Rabbi Joseph Maman. He had a phenomenal memory and was an outstanding student. Concerning his appellation *Fuzail*, which became the family name *Fuzailoff* and was used by an entire ‘tribe’ of Jews in Bukhara, there are a few explanations. The author Betchaieff relates that when Benjamin began studying in the Beit Midrash, he would repeat the lessons word for word to his mother. His mother called him, “My Fuzail.” From this term of endearment, we have the word *Fuzail* meaning a genius. Another version of the story is that the word Fuzail means ‘the blessed’ or indicates a merciful person. Whatever the case may be, after receiving rabbinical ordination this designation became Mulla Benjamin’s name when he was known as Mulla Benjamin Fuzail or Mulla Benjamin. Over time, the Jews of Bukhara spread out among the cities of Central Asia. Many of them moved to Samarkand, where by the 1830’s the Jewish community of some fifty families sought a spiritual leader and Mulla Benjamin Fuzail was sent to them from Bukhara. According to one version, R. Joseph Maman (d. 23 Kislev 5583/1822) sent R. Benjamin to Samarkand, while another story relates that he arrived there later.

Mulla Benjamin, along with the leaders of the Samarkand Jewish community, approached the Emir presenting him with the request to establish a Jewish neighborhood (Mahlalah) since the city’s Jewish population was growing day by day. The Emir issued a special order granting this request, in

recognition of the important Jewish economic contribution to the city. He even ordered the Kazi-Klan (the chief judge) to issue a general "Viska" (Kushan) in the name of the leaders of the Jewish community. The Samarkand Jewish community was established in 5603 (1843).

During the rabbinate of R. Benjamin Fuzail in Samarkand, there were two serious incidents. In 5599 (1839), the Jews of Meshad, Persia, were forced to accept Islam and many of them fled to Afghanistan and Turkistan. Mulla Fuzail worked assiduously with the government to open the city gates and permit them to resettle in Samarkand. He also exploited the fact that they were successful merchants who could make an important economic contribution in the development of the area. In 5617 (1856-7), the Jews of Herat, Afghanistan, were expelled. Many of them immigrated to Russia and settled in the area of Turkistan and in Samarkand. Among them were members of important families who greatly influenced the Jews of Bukhara. Here, he also worked among the officials to have the gates of the city open to them. Mulla Fuzail worked very actively among the forced converts, the Challa. Through his influence, many of these families moved from Bukhara to Samarkand and returned to Judaism. In spite of this, he was unable to rescue his younger brother Isaiah from the talons of assimilation.

Even though Mulla Benjamin served as the rabbi and shohet and directed the Talmud Torah for the children of Samarkand, he received no compensation for this from the community. He earned his living through his workshop where silk was dyed.

Mulla Fuzail had five sons and five daughters from his first wife Bibi Gada. His sons were Reuben, Pinhas (Machsum), Yosef, Barukh (Mulla Golam) and Murad. His daughters were Yaffa, Oikand, Yadgar, Rachel and Malka. Eshel lists six sons and four daughters in this order: Reuben, Pinhas, Barukh, Murad, Baba and Joseph. His wife Bibi Gada died in 5618 (1858). After her death, he married Bibi Leah who bore him twin sons, Sasson and Simha.

Mulla Fuzail died at the end of the Holy

Sabbath, 20 Tevet, 5620 (1860), from a plague that raged in Samarkand. Seven days afterwards, on the eve of the Sabbath, his wife Bibi Leah succumbed, leaving Sasson and Simha, orphans with neither father nor mother. At the end of the Holy Sabbath, the 17th of Tevet, 5720 (January 17, 1960) in the "Ohel Joseph" Synagogue in Tel Aviv a memorial service was held in his memory marking one hundred years since his death.

During his time, the Jewish community in Samarkand grew remarkably. In 5620 (1860), it numbered about 3,000 members, and was the second largest community in Central Asia after Bukhara, but it surpassed Bukhara in its economic importance.

Truly, Mulla Benjamin Fuzail, just as he was called "The Blessed," so he actually was. His many descendants, numbering several thousand, have spread to all corners of the world and are especially in Eretz Yisrael. Yoram Fuzailoff, a member of Kibbutz Sdot Yam, did an exact rendition of the family tree.

The Third Generation

The children of Achildi underwent many transformations. The son Suleiman was kidnapped by Moslems and forced to convert to Islam, until he appeared in 5622 (1862) in the Jewish quarter of Samarkand. At the age of eighteen he married the daughter of the notable Mulla Amin ben_Kandin Khalan who was also a Challa. In 5626 (1866), their firstborn son Ibrahim (Abraham) was born. In 5628 (1868), the Russians completed their conquest of Central Asia and captured Samarkand. The Jews greeted the conquerors with joy and the Russians used many Jewish volunteers in the construction of the fortifications. One of the leaders of the work groups was Suleiman. The talented young man attracted the attention of one of the officers who approached him. The brother of this officer was General Abramov, the Governor of the Samarkand District. He suggested that Suleiman open a factory for tanning sheepskin and promised to purchase what they produced for the Russian army. After his financial position improved, Suleiman looked for other business

opportunities in the Samarkand market in which he also employed members of his family. Commerce in the Samarkand market was open only to Moslems and to the Challa, but not to Jews. The Moslems suspected that the Challa were not true Moslems and felt hatred towards them, since only through their "Moslem" pretensions could they trade in the market, therefore harming incomes. Periodically, there would be violent confrontations between the Moslems and the Challa in the marketplace. In one of these disputes, Suleiman was injured and almost choked to death. His brother, Amin, went for help and approached the governor. He arrived with the police who immediately arrested the Moslem merchants. The Challa forced converts seized the opportunity and petitioned the governor with the request that they be permitted to return to living openly as Jews without having to fear any repercussions from the Moslems. The request was granted. This was a very important event in Samarkand Jewish life and in every home feasts of thanksgiving and joy were held.

Suleiman moved to Tashkent where he opened factories for the production of tobacco and cigarettes and for the manufacturing of silk and textiles as well as wineries. On his initiative, in 5655 (1895) a Jewish-Russian school opened in the Jewish neighborhood of Samarkand. In 5663 (1903) he was chosen as Nasi (K'lantar) of the Jewish community, a position he held until 5670 (1910). In that year, he was chosen as State Rabbi and served in that capacity until 5678 (1918). Suleiman died on Rosh Hodesh Nisan, 5683 (1923) at the age of 77. Many of his descendants settled in Israel and he himself visited Eretz Yisrael in 5650 (1890), helping the Jewish community in Jerusalem with generous contributions.

On the eve of the Russian conquest, the security situation in Samarkand was very unstable. Its Jews were in mortal danger. The head of the community, Moshe K'lantar and Mulla Barukh Gollam (the meaning of the name Gollam is slave or servant), who was the son of Mulla Fuzail and who continued in his father's position as the Rabbi of Samarkand, went to meet on 22 Sivan 5626

(1866) with the heads of one of the brigand groups to plead that they not harm the Jewish community. On their way, they came across a group of hooligans who attacked them. They demanded of them, "Either accept Islam or we will beat you to death with our clubs." Mulla Gollam refused and was murdered on the spot with his killers tossing his body into one of the wells. After the Russians took the city, relatives and friends found his body and he was interred in the Jewish quarter. A monument was erected on the spot, known as Yad Gollam. He was 37 at the time of his murder. He left four sons, Moshe, Solomon, Aaron and Abba and two daughters Tzvia and Esther. Unlike other Jews of his time, he would not convert to Islam. Barukh Gollam, may God avenge his blood, stood up for his Judaism. This strong belief and dedication came from the Beit Midrash of his father, Mulla Benjamin Fuzail.

Simha the son of Mulla Benjamin Fuzail, raised as an orphan with neither mother nor father, was born in 5619 (1859) and died in Moscow in 5653 (1893). He was the first in the family to establish a trading house in Samarkand named *The Fuzailoff Brothers*, and trade was maintained between Central Asia and Central Russia. Simha included his nephews in the company. He took a loan from the Bank of Industrial Development of Russia to buy equipment and to set up factories in Samarkand. He purchased the equipment and machinery in Western Russia, bringing it to Central Asia along with Russian engineers to construct the factories. Simha was a visionary and a promoter with superb abilities in organization and business analysis.

In the month of Sivan 5650/1890, the founding conference for the "Rehovot HaBukharim" was held in Jerusalem. It was decided to gather subscribers for the construction of homes between the neighborhoods of the Bukhara Jews and those of Central Asia. The first months saw few subscribers until the agent of the group, Rabbi Solomon Musaiiff went to Bukhara and approached Simha Fuzailoff for help in organizing subscribers for the group. Within a short time, Simha was successful in collecting 6110 rubles from twenty-five Samarkand

Jews to aid in gathering the sum needed by the organization for completing the purchase of the land for the neighborhood. Simha himself, on the 26th of Kislev 5651/1890, purchased two lots on which to build in the neighborhood. In the reports of the "Rehovot HaBukharim" neighborhood, there are many reports of his periodic contributions of dozens of rubles. This documentation is found in the Archives of the Bukharian Community of Jerusalem. The sudden death of Simha was a serious blow to his brothers who were partners in the family business. After his death, the company was split into two, one being the partnership of the sons of Maxim (Pinhas) and the other the partnership of the brothers who were the sons of Joseph Fuzailoff.

The Fourth Generation

The members of the fourth generation of R. Joseph Chak-Chak and Mulla Fuzail were the builders of the large projects in Turkestan including the synagogue. They were the first to come on Aliyah from Samarkand to Jerusalem and contribute to its institutions, and were the first active Zionists of the Jews of Bukhara.

Malka the daughter of Mulla Benjamin Fuzail gave birth to eleven children in Bukhara and Samarkand. After the marriage of Abigail, the daughter of her old age, she came on Aliyah with her son Aaron, a merchant and industrialist in Samarkand settling in Jerusalem. Aaron returned to Samarkand, but Malka remained in Jerusalem.

The children of Joseph (he died in Samarkand on 18 Nisan 5651/1891) the son of Mulla Benjamin Fuzail, concentrated their efforts in the development of industrial enterprises in Central Asia. The sons Abraham, Benjamin, Raphael and Zebulun were partners in cotton gins that sold their produce to Central Russia as well as in soap, oil and linen factories. The area occupied by their factories covered many acres. A stream ran through one of these areas and they harnessed the water flow to generate electricity for the factory.

R. Abraham (b. 5620-1860, d. 6 Tishrei 5676-1915) stood out in the Jewish community of Samarkand, as he was very talented and

successful in the commercial businesses that he operated in Central Russia. Abraham forged many connections with the Moslem community as well as the rulers and even established a synagogue. In 5650 (1890) he visited Jerusalem and his signature is found on the manifesto calling for the establishment of the "Rehovot HaBukharim" neighborhood. Until the outbreak of World War I, R. Abraham also contributed to the charitable funds of the Jerusalem Jewish community. In a letter from Rabbi Eliezer Pappo to Abraham ben Joseph Fuzailoff in Samarkand, dated 15 Shevat 5661 (1901), he makes the following request: "Please, merciful sir! Send us from your pure spirit [contributions] as Purim and Pesah are approaching and we are in great distress . . ."

One of the brothers, R. Raphael, was known for his courageousness. Before joining his brothers in partnership, he accompanied caravans that brought merchandise from the Afghanistan area, over the deserts of Central Asia, to Central Russia. One of the popular accounts of his bravery was the battle that he fought with one of the groups of brigands in the area, called Diazi Nimaz, meaning the "Praying Robber."

Another notable personality who made a special contribution to the economic well being in the life of the Jewish community of Samarkand is Mashiah Fuzailoff, the son of Maxim (b. Samarkand 5626-1867, d. 11 Nisan 5705-1945).

R. Mashiah established in 5653 (1893) the *Yoma* Company of Commerce together with his brothers Yohanan and Ari. He dealt with the cultivation and sale of cotton and especially the development of an American variant in Central Asia. R. Mashiah was among the leaders of the Jewish community of Samarkand, establishing a synagogue and working in the area of Jewish education. R. Mashiah first visited Jerusalem in 5650 (1890) and in 5684 (1924) he came on Aliyah with his wife and grandson settling in Jerusalem.

Many family members of that time visited Jerusalem as pilgrims. Others contributed to charitable foundations in the Land of Israel through the emissaries who came to Central

Asia. The names of the contributors are listed in the financial statements of income and expenses of these institutions. Among the names mentioned are: Jonah the son of Maxim the son of Benjamin Fuzail, Israel the son of Aaron the son of Gollam Fuzail, Mashiah Fuzailoff, Amin Fuzailoff who contributed to Misgav Ladach Hospital and came on Aliyah in 5684 (1924), Ephraim the son of Machsum who visited in Eretz Yisrael between the years of 5670-5672 (1910-1912), Aaron Baruch the son of Gollam, Benjamin the son of Joseph and others.

In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution, a great deal of Jewish property in Central Asia was confiscated. The factories were closed and confiscated and even the house of R. Raphael Fuzailoff was seized. One of its floors had served first as a Jewish school and subsequently as a Museum of the Jews of Bukhara.

Following these difficult events, many leaders of the community decided to leave Central Asia and come on Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael. In 5684 (1924) R. Raphael along with his wife Zipora, and several of his young children and his grandchildren came on Aliyah. R. Raphael succeeded in leaving the Soviet Union with a small amount of his possessions. In Eretz Yisrael, he wanted to establish the cultivation of agricultural produce required for the industrial production in which he had become expert in his factories in Central Asia. In a letter he sent to the Jewish Agency written with his family and friends, he writes: "We have come from the distant land of Bukhara, the tidings of restoration motivating us, and we have come to our land as the first pioneers to search out the place. A large number of our brethren in Bukhara and Samarkand are ready to combine all their energy and property and come on Aliyah to the Holy Land to work in areas of agriculture that have not yet been attempted here and to do so on a large scale. This includes raising cotton, silk, alfalfa, etc., where over the years some one thousand have gained expertise.

We sincerely request to instruct us in which path to go. Where can we acquire suitable land for our needs and under which conditions? We have no desire for or need of

financial assistance, as each of us as well as those that will follow have adequate resources. We ask from you direction and the easing of conditions. We would you set aside for us some time for a meeting and orally we will be able to further explain our hopes and desires. . . .With great respect, Zion Ashrov, Yohanan Fuzailoff, Raphael Fuzailoff, Mordecai Fuzailoff, Pioneers from Samarkand, Bukhara and Afghan."

The members of the group never received an answer to their letter. Later they purchased several dozen dunams of orchards and agricultural land in Petah Tikvah and built the small Bukharian quarter close to their synagogue. As a result of the financial crisis in 1926-1927, several of the orchards were sold. Some remained in Petah Tikvah, where their descendants still live.

In 5695 (1935) the group purchased 54 dunams in the area of Nebi Samuel, north-east of Jerusalem. The area was called Bukharia and their hope was to build a neighborhood as their compatriots did with the Bukharian quarter of Jerusalem, however, their hopes were never realized.

After he sold his farm in Petah Tikvah, R. Raphael moved in with his family in Southern Tel Aviv where many new immigrants from Bukhara and Samarkand in the early 1930's settled. R. Raphael established a synagogue for them, at first at Rechov Herzl and later on Rechov Zebulon. Other families from Samarkand arrived with the increased Aliyah at this time. They fled in very dangerous circumstances from Central Asia and after a long and perilous journey reached Eretz Yisrael. Among the arrivals were the sons of R. Raphael, R. Rahman, R. Abba Joseph and R. Isaac, and his daughters-in-law, daughters and grandchildren. They were joined by the extended family: Neria Fuzailoff, Hananaiah son of Zebulon son of Joseph Fuzailoff, Judah Ari Fuzailoff, Malkiel Fuzailoff, Nisan Fuzailoff and others. The family and clan grew. R. Raphael as the head of the family searched for a place where they could live as they did in Samarkand, together but not crowded like the living conditions in Central Tel Aviv where the apartments were small and the rents relatively high. In 5696 (1936),

one week before the outbreak of the disturbances of 1936-1939, most of the family moved to Givat Moshe A, which today is near the new Tel Aviv Central bus station.

The family lived in shacks that they bought and set up the 'neighborhood', as the family called it from then on. Here they conducted an intense family life. R. Raphael also established a synagogue, in a portion of his shed, which still stands today. This was a frontier area of Tel Aviv. On three sides it was bounded by Arab orchards (west, south and east) and to the east was Nahal Ayalon. Only from the north, where Tel Aviv's central bus station is now located, did one have access to the center of the city.

At night, one could hear the cry of jackals. During the disturbances and until the end of the War of Independence, there was firing from the orchards on the Jewish sheds. More than once, the residents had to crawl under their beds to find refuge from the Arab shelling. This was a border settlement in every respect and dealing with the dangers was a real challenge every day. From these dwellings the members of the Haganah went to their nearby posts and periodically on counter-attacks against the marauders. At this time, the lot where the magnificent Ohel Joseph synagogue stands was purchased. The cornerstone was set on 26 Elul 5705 (September 1945).

Until his last day, 11 Iyar 5716 (1956), R. Raphael lived in his modest shack. He, who in Samarkand was a major industrialist with a magnificent multi-roomed stone house and large courtyard, in Eretz Yisrael was satisfied with a small dwelling with one of its rooms dedicated as a synagogue. With the rest of his money, he built a splendid synagogue rather than spend it on building an ornate house for himself - a true example of total dedication.

The Ohel Joseph synagogue fulfilled one of the hopes and desires of R. Raphael. The synagogue stood as a singular light house, a shining diamond that illumined the surrounding run-down area. It was the institution that symbolized the family's firm grounding in Tel Aviv after endless years of exile, after a journey full of obstacles and suffering that our forbears traveled imbued

with endless love and yearning to touch the earth of Eretz Yisrael and Jerusalem.

The synagogue served as the center of the community. The neighborhood's atmosphere was warm and loving with available mutual help, a feeling of security that in times of crisis or trouble you knew that you could confide in someone, and the strong sense of family and community unity. The synagogue was renovated and refurbished in 5760 (2000), thanks to the active role and efforts of R. Joseph Fuzailoff, a great-grandson of the synagogue's founder. On the 11th of Iyar 5760, on the 44th anniversary of the death of the founder, R. Raphael, and in the 55th year since it was established, the event was celebrated with the outpouring of feeling of grandchildren and family spanning many generations.

The Fifth & Sixth Generations

The fifth generation of the family included those who worked devotedly to maintain the family after their Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael in the 1930's. Many, who were quite wealthy in Central Asia, did not disdain the hard physical labor required after their Aliyah in order to maintain their families respectfully. Their children, the sixth generation, at early ages joined in supporting their families. Many of them joined the ranks of the Haganah and after the founding of the state, continued serving in the IDF. Among them was Captain Moshe Eshel, of blessed memory, who went down with his plane in the Sinai Campaign.

Some of this generation were involved in the business world, including the sons of Mordecai the son of Raphael the son of Joseph Fuzail, who were involved in the diamond trade and were awarded the prize of Outstanding Exporter in 5728 (1968). Ben Zion the son of Mordecai Fuzailoff served as president of the Diamond Exchange in Ramat Gan for many years and he recently was awarded recognition as an "Exceptional Personage of the Israel Diamond Industry" for the year 2000. His brother Pinhas headed the Board of Diamond Producers in Israel for many years. Until this day, they head the Organization of Bukhara Jews in Israel, which was founded in 5732 (1972) to aid in

the absorption of new immigrants from Bukhara and to participate in charitable activities and deeds of loving-kindness. Recently, they dedicated an impressive synagogue in Herzliya Pituah in memory of their parents.

Others like R. Arieh Fuzailoff and his sons are also involved in acts of assistance and selfless deeds. The crown of their achievement has been the maintenance, preservation and renovation of the family synagogue Ohel Yosef, from which the sound of Torah and prayer has radiated for more than fifty years. They are helped in their efforts by the gabbai of the institution R. Benjamin Fuzailoff.

Currently, the family is spread throughout Israel with some of the families having established themselves in the United States. The family now includes more than ten generations; all of them are deeply involved in every aspect of Israeli society and life, and are found in most of its aspects including the

various political parties. Nonetheless, the unique tendency in the family is its clear aspiration to preserve its Jewish roots and the family tradition.

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See at the end of the Hebrew version of this article.

Giora Fuzailoff was born in Petah Tikvah and is a researcher of the Jews of Bukhara specializing in the areas of history, Aliyah and settlements in Eretz Yisrael, customs, history of religious leaders and the literature of the community. Additionally, he is researching the history of the religious leaders of the Oriental Jewish communities in Eretz Yisrael and in their countries of origin as well as the history of the Jewish community in Jerusalem under Ottoman rule. He has published a number of books and articles in these areas.



My Family I Did Not Know – Halevi Schwam of Miedzyrzec

Michael Kam

In Memory of my Beloved Uncle Moshe Kam (1916-2000)

Translated from Hebrew

Following are the main points I made in my address to the Negev Branch of the Israel Genealogical Society on the eve of Tu Bishvat 5761, after the screening of the film "Little America." The film describes life in the Jewish town of Miedzyrzec Podalski from the days of its greatness before the outbreak of World War II through the days of the horror of the war until the total destruction of the city by the Nazis and their collaborators.

I had the good fortune of spending most of my youth in the presence of both my maternal and paternal grandparents. My first acquaintance with the family of my paternal grandmother, Frieda (Aliza) Kam of blessed memory, was through perusing the family

picture album. As a curious child, the small, yellowed photographs that showed young and old men and women, including children dressed in coats and hats of a style that I had never seen captivated me. My grandmother told me about them, but except for the names, I did not understand very much. My grandmother spoke Yiddish, like most people of that generation, while in my parent's house only Hebrew was permitted. However, they spoke in Yiddish when they wanted to conceal something. I was also aware of the fact that except for my grandmother's sister, there was no trace of our extensive family and from what she said, I was able to understand that they were murdered during the Holocaust in Europe.

My grandparents came on Aliyah from Lublin, Poland around 1922 and thus were saved from the inferno. Many years later, when we celebrated my son's Bar Mitzvah and my grandparents were no longer among the living, I resumed my interest in the family's history. To my distress, it became clear to me that no remnant remained of the abundance of letters and documents from the past. Entrusted to my possession, were only the old photo album and my grandparents' Ketubah (marriage contract) written on parchment. The family elders would recount that my grandmother's father was a *Melamed* (a teacher of young children) in Lublin and died from a disease at an early age. His death left 8 orphans on the brink of starvation. His name was Moshe, and my beloved uncle Moshe Kam who passed away a year ago was named after him. I knew nothing about the family of my great-grandfather Moshe from Lublin. However, some inner force impelled me to embark on research to discover the unknown history of the family.

Following are some key points in the puzzle of rediscovery of my grandfather's family. I hope that this will be helpful to others searching for traces of their families that are lost in the darkness of the past.

I learned the names of the siblings of my grandmother and the family name, Szwohm or Szwom, from the backs of old photographs. One of the brothers, Jacob Szwom who lived in Russia, sent a letter on the back of a picture to his sister in Lublin on August 19, 1913. According to my grandmother's account, this brother joined the communist movement and fled to Russia and his trail was lost. My uncle, who had visited the family in the Lublin area in 1935, brought the rest of the photographs to Eretz Yisrael. They bore messages of greeting to my grandmother and are the last testimony from the family that remained in Poland before the Holocaust and, as it appears, did not survive. One picture shows my grandmother's brother, Hirsch (Zvi), his wife Freidel and their young son Moishelah from Rovno, close to the Ukrainian border. In my opinion, this family could have survived by fleeing to Russia but all traces were lost after

the war.

By reading the old Ketubah from Lublin bearing the date 9 Shevat 5676 (1916), I found my great-grandfather's full name – Moshe Simha Halevi. Thus, Moshe Simha Szwom, my great-grandfather, was a Levite. This name combination plus the fact that he was a Levite increased the chances of locating a family member. At this stage, I decided to post the family name on the Internet in JewishGen's Family Finder. This decision provided a breakthrough.

The flood of letters received during the first months led to nothing and was irrelevant. A year later, I received an uncertain letter from someone named Feivel in Buenos Aires who wrote that his mother's maiden name was Szwom and that his late grandfather, Jacob Szwom, was born in Miedzyrzec. Granted, Miedzyrzec is not Lublin, but they are close enough to each other. Both our electronic communications and enthusiasm increased when I found out that his grandfather was also a Levite. Moreover, Jacob Szwom the grandfather, who immigrated to Argentina in 1928, maintained contact with two uncles, his father's brothers, who had immigrated to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. To add to my excitement, I found out that Feivel had managed to record an interview with his grandfather shortly before his grandfather's death in 1998.

In the discussion, carried on for the most part in Yiddish, his grandfather Jacob, speaking with tears in his eyes, relates the history of his family that perished in the Holocaust. He relates details about his father, Eliezer Menahem Szwom, his grandfather and his great-grandfather and about his relatives who immigrated to the United States and thereby survived. By doing so, he also noted two important facts. He tells of his father's brother who moved from Miedzyrzec to Lublin in order to study Judaism and he describes his own visit to him. This gave me more than a hint of a connection to my great-grandfather in Lublin. By then, it became clear to me beyond any shadow of a doubt that Feivel was my distant third cousin and the emotion deepened. Jacob also states that his grandfather came on Aliyah to Eretz

Yisrael in 1910 in order to be buried in the Holy Land and that his grandmother passed away afterwards. This story was validated by what my father heard from his mother about a relative who was buried in Jerusalem. I contacted the Jerusalem Hevra Kadisha with the names that I had and the very next day I received a positive answer that greatly moved me. To my satisfaction, most of their information is computerized and the exact site of the graves, Warsaw Section A, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, was located. Abraham Isaac, the son of R. Hayim Barukh Halevi from Miedzyrzec died on 2 Heshvan 5673 [October 13, 1912] and next to him is the tombstone of his wife, Esther Leah the daughter of R. Mordecai from Miedzyrzec who died on 11 Kislev, 5675 [November 29, 1914], May Their Souls be Bound Up in Bonds of Life Eternal. The circle was completed and I was privileged to recite Kaddish at the final resting-places of my great-grandfather's parents.

My great-grandfather and his brother, the father of Jacob Szwom of Argentina, had at least five additional siblings. Their sister Sara Shifra and her family perished in the Holocaust, their brother Nahum died from a disease at an early age, their brother Jacob fled to Russia and all traces of the others were lost. The additional brothers left Miedzyrzec at the beginning of the 20th century. With the help of my "new" cousin and through further searching on the Internet, I located the families of two of them in the United States. I introduced myself in writing and received much information and many photographs from them. From the standpoint of researching the family tree, it is interesting to note that one of them, Shlomo (Sam) kept the original family name spelling it Schwam, while the second brother, Hayim (Hyman) changed his family name to Silverstein. Two of his children subsequently changed their name to Stone. The third brother, who it seems also changed his name to Silverstein, immigrated to London and lived in the East End before the War. Evidently, this brother, whose first name is not known, died before the War, but did live to see his grandchildren. One of his daughters married a man by the

name of Milgram or Milgrim and had both a son and a daughter – Bernard and Muriel. I have a picture from 1935 showing the grandfather with his two grandchildren. It appears that the son, Bernard, served in the R.A.F. (Royal Air Force) during World War II. Word was that the parents perished during the London blitz, and after the war contact with the family in London was lost.

In an attempt to solve our 'family puzzle' my 'new' cousin from Argentina, Feivel, checked the LDS material, files containing lists of births, marriages and deaths from the town of Miedzyrzec. Among his finds, he discovered another three key documents in Polish that confirmed our hypotheses.

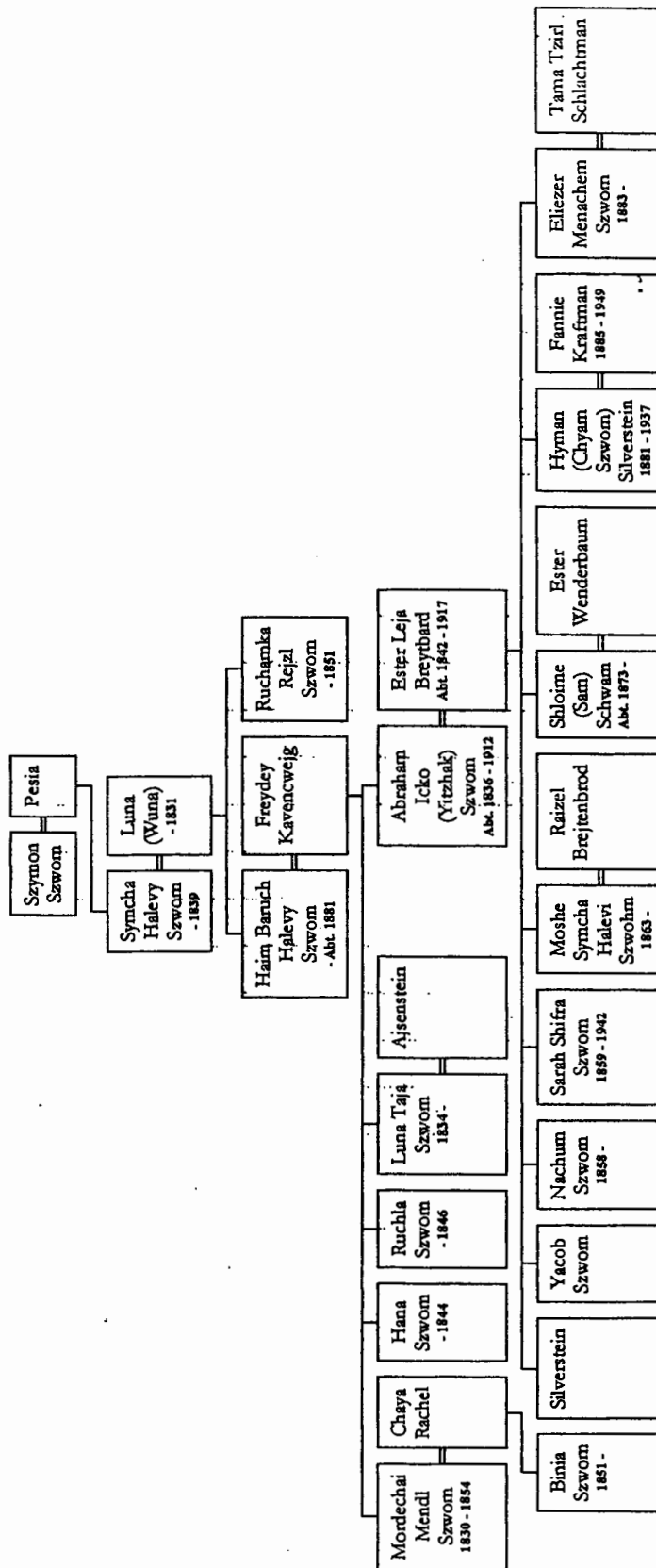
1. A document from August 1859 mentioning the marriage of Abraham Isaac Szwom to Esther Leah, my great-grandfather's parents, in Miedzyrzec.

2. A document from September 1863 that records the birth of my great-grandfather Moshe Simha Szwom in Miedzyrzec.

3. A document from 1831 that reports the death of Luna Szwom, the wife of Simha Szwom, the grandfather of Abraham Isaac. This document was especially moving as it gave the origin of my great-grandfather's name and bore the actual signature in Hebrew of his great-grandfather, Simha Szwom. The family name was written in Polish as Szwom or Szwohm.

The information uncovered in these papers along with family traditions, enabled me to develop the Szwom family tree that spreads over some two hundred years up to my grandmother's generation (see illustration). Of Jacob Szwom's family, only he, who immigrated to Argentina, and his older brother's son who fled to Russia and later settled in Wroclaw, Poland, survived the Holocaust. The rest of the family perished in the Treblinka Death Camp. In a moving addendum, Feivel told me that the members of his family who returned to Poland after the War settled in Israel in the 1950's and lived not far from me. Thus, I discovered a new cousin at a very emotional first meeting. My cousin told me that she had a copy of the recording in which Jacob Szwom tells about his family, but that she had never listened to

Descendants of Szymon Szwom



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it. Perhaps she was waiting for the right moment. Together, we listened to the trembling voice of Jacob as emotional tears filled our eyes.

In the meantime as if previously arranged, my 'new' cousin Feivel arrived in Israel for a visit. After two years of furious correspondence, we were fortunate to meet and together we went to Jerusalem to visit our ancestors' graves. Here in Israel, Feivel met his future wife, became a new immigrant, married and opened a new chapter in the Szwom family saga. And here ends another circle that defies those who sought to wipe us out and is the fulfillment of our ancestors' hopes.

The unknown still is greater than the known and the road to rediscovering the lives and fate of our family members is long. As was to be expected, the journey of discovery answered riddles but also raised new questions. I approach the reader with some of them. Any help or hint of a solution will be gladly welcomed.

1. What was the fate of my grandmother's brother, Jacob Szwom, the communist who fled to Russia?

2. What happened to Hirsch Szwom, my grandmother's brother and his family who lived in Rovno before the War? Did any of them manage to survive?

3. What became of my great-grandfather's brother who chose the name Silverstein and lived in London's East End before the War? The thread hangs on his grandson, Bernard Milgrim or Milgram who served in the RAF. Perhaps they have descendants or maybe Bernard is still living.

Michael Kam was born in Israel. His father's family were early pioneers who made Aliyah from Lublin, Poland in 1921. His mother's family are Holocaust survivors from Novogrudok, Belarus, who arrived as illegal immigrants on the ship Shabbtai Lozhinsky that broke the British blockade a year before the establishment of the State. Michael is a researcher in animal eco-physiology (Ph.D. at Ben Gurion University in the Negev). He began navigating the seas of genealogical study three years ago as a consequence of studying family roots at the time he celebrated his son's Bar Mitzvah.

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The Division of Eretz Yisrael in the 16th Century *

Moshe Korin

Translated from Spanish

On November 29, 1947, at Lake Success, New York, the United Nations General Assembly met, and in a historic ballot voted to divide Eretz Yisrael into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab. On the basis of this decision, on May 14, 1948, the Provisional Government, headed by David Ben Gurion, declared the creation of the independent Jewish state to be known as Medinat Yisrael – the State of Israel.

Four Hundred Years Previously

A far less known historical episode took

place in the 16th century that was also connected with the division of the Land of Israel and the creation of an area under Jewish sovereignty. Granted, there are differences between these earlier events and those of 1947, but the episode from the 16th century offers a tangible precedent for the creation of the State of Israel.

The Initiator

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal took place at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century.

A large number of those expelled found refuge in Turkey, especially during the reign of the Sultan Suleiman I more popularly known as Suleiman the Magnificent who ruled between 1520 and 1566.

Don Joseph Nasi, a Jew, occupied a conspicuous position in the Sultan's court. He was a member of the very prominent family, Mendes, conversos that lived in Portugal whose members continued to practice Judaism in secret. When this was revealed by the Inquisition, the family fled to Holland and from there moved to Turkey, where they could practice Judaism openly. Throughout his travels, Don Joseph developed connections with statesmen all over Europe. The Sultan Suleiman, who recognized Don Joseph's special capabilities, appointed him as his personal advisor and his foreign minister.

In addition to his official duties, Don Joseph Nasi concerned himself with the well-being of his fellow Jews. Through his intervention in European countries, many Jews were spared persecution. In addition, Don Joseph was the patron of Jewish scientists and poets as well as Yeshivot in Constantinople. Local Jews granted him the title *Nasi* (Chief or Head) and the successor to Suleiman the Magnificent, Selim II (1566-1574) bestowed on him the title Duke of Naxos, Naxos being the name of an island in the Aegean Sea. The great esteem and honor in which Suleiman the Magnificent held his minister found their expression around the year 1560, when the Sultan signed an order in which he granted Don Joseph the right to establish a Jewish Dominion in Eretz Yisrael.

Tiberias

According to this order, Suleiman granted Don Joseph Nasi the city of Tiberias along with additional seven villages in the vicinity, that were not enclosed by walls, and, in keeping with Turkish protocol, he was called Al-Frandyi Bey. Don Joseph had to rebuild these communities and preside over them. As the head of the Dominion he had to concern himself with populating them and with the supervision of the residents.

Tiberias, founded in 26 BCE by Herod

Antipas in honor of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, was in ruins 1,500 years later. Don Joseph did not delay and began to transform it in order to make it a desirable place to live. There was no lack of building materials as there was already adequate stone in the ruined city. The adjacent Lake Kinneret supplied water, a source renewed by the flowing Jordan River. The only thing lacking were inhabitants. Tiberias at that time did not have a living soul, only tombstones. Granted, they were the monuments of the giants of Judaism, like Rabbi Akiba and his students, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, Maimonides and others. The Ottoman governors, the Pashas of Damascus and Safed, received orders from the Sultan stating that the government in Constantinople had every intention of carrying out this plan. In the actual event it was only carried out 400 years later.

Don Joseph Nasi appointed Joseph Ben Ardit as his agent in Eretz Yisrael to begin the project. According to the order of Suleiman I, the neighboring governors of Damascus and Safed were obliged to supply Joseph Ben Ardit with all his requirements. It is instructive to note that Joseph Ben Ardit's salary totaled 60 units of the contemporary currency. Four hundred years later, at the same place, the wage of the representative of the United Nations was \$60.00 a day.

The governors drafted all the stone masons and porters in their areas and sent them to Tiberias to construct the city's walls. Similarly, the few residents of the area were also required to report for work preparing and transporting clay for construction as well as other related tasks.

Opposition to the Project

According to several historical sources, the local population increasingly opposed the establishment of a Jewish state. It is related that an elderly sheik in Eretz Yisrael began to foment a rebellion against the projected undertaking. Later he composed a dirge read by the local Arab population in which he calls attention to the danger of a Jewish state in their midst. He added that according to an old tradition, the rebuilding of Tiberias would bring in its wake the decline of the

Moslem faith. Because of this prophecy, the Arabs of Tiberias rebelled and refused to build the wall around the city. Ben Ardit asked the Pasha of Damascus for help. He then sent forces to arrest the rebels and the work in Tiberias was renewed.

The Renewed Building and Development

In one of the excavations where cement to support the walls was to be poured, a stone was found and beneath it the entrance to an ancient underground church. Three brass bells were found along with other items. The bells were melted down to make cannons that would enable the Jewish state to defend itself.

Constructing the wall around Tiberias, which had a radius of 750 meters, took five years. On its completion in December 1564, Don Joseph Nasi arranged a large celebration.

Don Joseph knew very well that the wall in and of itself would not attract people to the city. For that, economic development of the Jewish state was required. In Tiberias and the surrounding villages, 1,000 mulberry trees were planted to raise silkworms and thus develop the production of silk. Don Joseph imported wool from Spain and set up a number of spinning mills.

It is practically certain that Don Joseph Nasi had hidden political agendas. He wanted 'to get even' with the city of Venice, that had recently singled out members of his family, Juan, Francisco and Gracia Mendes, for maltreatment. He was also angry as Venice refused to designate one of its islands for a Jewish national home. Don Joseph took pleasure in the idea of developing a competitor for Venetian producers. Don Joseph also looked into developing agriculture and animal husbandry. To this end, he imported cattle and sheep and the local residents were taught how to raise them. Those expelled from Spain were expert in this field and they taught the others. From one of the volumes of responsa dating from this era we also learn that honey production flourished.

Don Joseph also concerned himself with urban development. Construction continued at a satisfying pace, streets were laid and

future projects were arranged. It is interesting to note that responsa literature from that time report on arguments among neighbors because of the construction, for example problems concerning the location of windows and lavatories. These cases were brought before the local rabbinic court and this indicates the scope of the energetic development of the city.

A Call to World Jewry

The only way Don Joseph could populate the Jewish state was to issue a call to the Jews of the world. According to this appeal, every Jew was eligible to settle in the Jewish state if he wanted to and if he could get there. Word of the reconstruction of Tiberias from its state of ruin and the setting up of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael made a great impression on the Jews of Europe. Enthusiasm increased among the downtrodden masses that up until then had known only repression. Winds of redemption and hope for new life in their historic homeland blew strongly.

Unfortunately, the entire venture was a total failure. The Jewish people were not yet ready to return to the historic homeland. Local Arabs harassed them and the fire of Don Joseph's enthusiasm paled. His practical Messianism failed, but he continued to devote his time to Jewish affairs.

The Last Years of Don Joseph Nasi

When Suleiman the Magnificent's successor, Selim II, died, Don Joseph retired from public life. He spent his last years writing in his rich library and in the company of other scientists. He died in 1579. His widow, Reina, the daughter of Francisco and Gracia Mendes established a Hebrew printing press in Constantinople.

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European Rabbis Throughout the Generations

Yehuda Klausner

Translated from Hebrew

Introduction

In our genealogical searches, all of us, including those who consider themselves secular, soon discover that in most cases our ancestors are Rabbinic families. This study will focus on these families and in particular the Ashkenazic Rabbinic families in Europe.

While a portion of Ashkenazic Jewry traces its origins to those Jews who came from Spain and Portugal following the Expulsion in 1492, with some arriving both before and after the Expulsion, a number of Jews came in the 11th and 12th centuries from the Near East in the footsteps of the Radanites, merchants who brought goods from China to Europe, and some were Khazars who appeared after their defeat by the Russian army. These Jews settled in Western, Northern and Eastern Europe and established communities. Most families who trace their origin to Europe are descended from these Jews and from the rabbis who served them.

The Ashkenazic rabbinate that evolved over time in these communities had its origins in the rabbinic tradition dating from some 300

years BCE. The historic background of the rabbinic establishment and a description of the Jewish home and way of life will be portrayed before discussing the genealogical aspect of the topic.

Historic Background – The Title Rabbi

Over the years, from the time of the revelation at Sinai shortly after our departure from Egypt, our sages, teachers and religious leaders guided the spiritual and physical development of our people. The Mishnah states: "Moses received the Torah at Sinai, he transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly - Knesset HaGdola" (Ethics of the Fathers/Pirkei Avot 1:1). The title Rabbi, whose meaning is teacher, was first given to R. Gamliel the Elder (d. 46 BCE). Neither his father Simon, nor his grandfather Hillel the Elder, were known by this title. R. Judah the Prince (d. 209 CE) was known simply as 'Rabbi.' In Babylonia, the term 'Mar' was added to the

title and in the time of the Geonim the title was "Mar Rabbi." Among Sephardic Jews the title, 'Haham' came into use instead of 'Rabbi,' and in the areas ruled by the Ottoman Empire, the Rabbi of the community was called Haham Bashi.

In the time of the Talmud, the title Rabbi implied community leadership. "R. Yohanan states: 'Who is wise? One who answers any question of Jewish law asked of him,'" (BT Shabbat 114a). The Talmud frequently mentions the word 'Rabbanan' as being equivalent to scholars.

Many of the Talmudic sages were farmers, some were craftsmen and artisans while some were merchants. One third of the day, they worked at their occupations and two thirds of the day they devoted to study. The farmers worked throughout the summer and spent the winter in study.

Throughout the ages, rabbinic ordination required years of study at Yeshivot and guidance from ordained rabbis. At the conclusion of the required studies, the candidate was examined and granted rabbinic ordination – S'mikha. This ordination permitted one to arbitrate disputes between people and resolve matters of Jewish law and religious practices. There were instances, as in many other areas of life, where economic, political or social pressures, and even family connections, paved the way to rabbinic ordination.

Although the rabbinic status is not formally passed down by inheritance, rabbis preferred that their sons receive proper education and be ordained as rabbis. The atmosphere in which rabbinic sons were raised made it easier for them and gave them certain advantages. In spite of the advantages enjoyed by rabbis' sons, and the pressures applied to them at times, they did not always choose to follow in their father's footsteps. Some preferred other trades while others even abandoned the way of life in which they were raised.

Scholars and rabbis enjoyed honor and esteem and their students would rise in their presence. For the most part, they were exempt from the taxes imposed by the government on their communities. The rabbis

headed yeshivot, served as judges and preached to their communities at least twice a year, Shabbat Hagadol – the Sabbath before Pesah, and Shabbat Shuvah – the Sabbath between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The rabbi was also expected to appear in clean and neat clothing.

Maimonides (Rambam) in the 12th century, opposed rabbis receiving payment for performing rabbinic functions, and so many engaged in other work or commerce, or were supported by their wives who ran stores, or received an allowance granted to them by the community. This was not adequate to live on, so they had to find other sources of income. Money changing and loans at interest to gentiles were among the occupations of the rabbis and their families. Some rabbis even amassed wealth and possessions.

In a lecture delivered by the late Dr. Paul Jacobi in celebration of his 85th birthday, he noted that the Jews of Europe were witnesses to a "Holocaust", in his words, that took place over time between the 13th and 17th centuries, when pogroms, massacres, murder and expulsions were the fate of most of the Jewish communities in Western and Central Europe. Entire communities were uprooted as expulsion followed expulsion whether in the Rhine valley, Spain, Portugal, Sicily, Lithuania, Provence and other places. Those who survived the evictions settled, if possible, in new localities close to their original homes, or moved in the direction of Eastern Europe or the Mediterranean Basin. As a result, laws and customs were forgotten or changed, and Jews of the time were not as scrupulous in the observance of the commandments. This trend also changed the function of the rabbis who were needed to support these newly founded communities, to strengthen their faith, and guide them in their careful adherence to commandments and customs. This period, between the 13th and 15th centuries, was when books on customs and laws were written to guide the people. (See list # 1 in the Hebrew Section.) The words of R. Isaac Tirna (b. 1380), in the introduction to his book Sefer HaMinhagim, are instructive: "Since, as a result of our great sins, the numbers of those engaged in study

and the number of scholars has decreased; and because of the drastic reduction of knowledgeable God fearing men and men of good deeds in Austria, to the point that I have seen communities where one cannot even find two or three people who are familiar with the religious practices of their own communities, let alone with the practices of other locations, I take it upon myself . . .” These guides led directly to the great undertakings of the Rema (R. Moses Isserles), Darkhei Moshe and HaMapah on the Shulhan Arukh, that set the basis for the rules, laws and customs of Ashkenazic Jewry.

The Jewish Home

The information we have on the Jewish home at this time and the centuries following comes from rabbinic literature and in particular from the Responsa. There we find individuals named, including details about their lives. The religious requirements of the Jew determined in detail the order of his day, how he was to prepare his food, conduct his table, work, study, the order of the week from Sabbath to Sabbath, and the order of the days of the month and year as well as holidays. The difficulties of life as well as lurking dangers caused the Jews to withdraw into their homes. “The Jewish Home” along with the raising and educating of their children became the ultimate goal of the family. The number of children in the Jewish family was high, 10-12 children or more per family, but the death rate of infants was also high. Duties in the family were clearly defined and divided between husband and wife. The husband, besides being the principal breadwinner, was also responsible for the children’s, especially the boys’ education. Caring for the children rested on the wife’s shoulders, including the preparation of meals, maintaining Kashrut and assuring proper manners at the table. If the husband immersed himself totally in the study of the Torah, the task of earning an income also became the wife’s responsibility, as described above. It is important to point out the great value given to books, as they were considered the glory of the Jewish home.

Basic volumes were not absent even from homes of little means.

Jews were engaged in every line of work permitted them, yet they found time for educating their children including the daily prayers, proper blessings for various occasions, studying the weekly Torah portion, memorizing Psalms or other prayers, and the weekly examination – *Farhehr* – on their accomplishments. Most children did not receive a general basic education, but all knew their prayers, how to fulfill the commandments, and the weekly Torah portion along with the commentators. They also received basic instruction in the study of the Talmud so that they were able to continue in the Talmud Torah or Yeshiva. No one was uneducated or illiterate. The ambitious and the gifted, who had an inner drive or were pushed by their parents, continued their studies in the famous Yeshivot of the major cities. Many brilliant children or geniuses succeeded in their learning even though competition was fierce, and they received rabbinic ordination on the completion of their studies. It was also not uncommon for the head of the Yeshivah to pick out a student as a prospective husband for his daughter, also providing him and his family with financial assistance. The exalted position of scholar was one that many aspired to because of the prestige, the respect and the honor accorded them by the public.

As a consequence of poor living and sanitary conditions, infant mortality was very high. Many children never reached their first birthday and many women died in childbirth. Men with many children, who became widowers, married a second or even third time. An example is R. Akiva son of Isaac Katz (d. 1496) from Offen (Buda) and Prague who fathered twelve sons and thirteen daughters from four wives.

Rabbinic Families

In an earlier article in (Klausner, *Sharsheret Hadorot* 15-1), it was pointed out how the Torah, that is the mass of Jewish literature, attached importance to Jewish genealogy. The Torah and subsequently the Talmud (including the Mishnah, Gemara and

Tosefta), and the Responsa were all transmitted by the rabbis. The rabbis are generally divided into two groups – the Rishonim, that is the early rabbis, those who flourished before the Expulsion from Spain in 1492, and the Aharonim, that is the latter rabbis, those who functioned from 1492 to the present. They all fostered genealogy in that they were careful to record their names and their lineage. The article also mentions that the rabbis valued the importance of family pedigree, as it is written, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God Am holy,” Leviticus 19:2, and they prepared family trees for themselves. Today, we have a vast rabbinic literature that contains a great deal of genealogical information. As was mentioned, today most of the Jews of European origin, religious and secular alike, are descended from rabbinic families active between the 12th and 18th centuries. Because of the burdens of life and the demands made on living according to Jewish law the tendency in the past was to move from a religious to a secular lifestyle, and from there, with all of the pain it involved, even beyond the boundaries of the Jewish people. The opening of the New World to immigration, the development of the emancipation movements in the 18th and 19th centuries along with the various declarations on human rights also led to the crumbling of various Jewish structures. This process accelerated increasing assimilation. From this time forward the careful listing of rabbinic genealogies also declined. There is no scientific proof for the theory that most if not all of us are descended from rabbis or rabbinic families. The only proof would be through the rediscovery of the names of our ancestors dating back a few centuries.

A good case in point of what took place can be seen with the Eskeles Family that was also mentioned in the lecture by Rabbi Meir Wunder at the Israel Genealogical Society, Jerusalem Branch meeting, in January 2001. The family’s founder was R. Gabriel Liva-Eskeles (1655-1718) of Krakow, the great-grandson of R. Sinai Liva, the brother of the Maharal of Prague. One of his sons was Issachar Dov Eskeles (1691-1753), head of

the rabbinic court of Vienna and Nikolsburg whose wife was the granddaughter of R. Samson Wertheimer, the rabbi of Eisenstadt and the Chief Rabbi of Austria. His son Bernard, who was born after his father’s death, was a banker of great wealth who received the title of Baron von Eskeles. While he and his wife remained Jews, their children were baptized and married into the Christian high society of Vienna. His son Dennis Daniel Baron von Eskeles (1803-1876) married the Italian baroness Emilia Bretanno-Cimerli and their six daughters married generals, barons, nobles and titled aristocrats, all of them Christians. Thus, an entire rabbinic family was lost to Judaism in the span of three generations. Comparable events transpired in other Jewish families. It must be pointed out that in the last generations, a number of descendants of this branch of the Eskeles family returned to Judaism and married Jews.

Dr. Jacobi often spoke of between 60 and 80 old rabbinic families, who are the ancestors of all of the Ashkenazic Jewish families of today. In this article, an attempt has been made to create a list of these 80 families (see List # 2 in the Hebrew Section). This list will naturally reflect personal inclinations, but I believe that it is not far from being accurate or from the list that Dr. Jacobi would formulate.

Among these families, there are ‘weak’ and there are ‘strong’ families. Strong families I call those families who had numerous children, married into many other families, produced many scholars and rabbis, were rooted in the community, and preserved their names. In other words, they left their mark and thereby enhanced genealogical study. A short list of these ‘strong’ families would include Katzenellenbogen, Margolis/Margaliot, Horowitz-Segal, Shapiro, Rappaport, Frankel, Ashkenazi, Katz-Cohen, Ginzberg, Jaffe, Halperin, Halevi, Landau, Lipshitz, Zack-Zackheim and Brode. The genealogical ancestry of these families dates between the 10th and 15th centuries, and even before.

An example of a ‘weak’ family is Klausner, whose name dates from the 13th century. It

produced noted scholars and rabbis, but they did not carry on their name and over the years some changed it to Bushke, Lieberman, Witkind, Ellenberg, Finkelstein, Weissbrot, Zeinvirt, Oz and others. They were independently minded. Some of their rabbis corresponded with the false messiahs that developed in Judaism while others joined the Hasidic movement. Still others became scientists and authors. I cannot recall any genealogical literature dating from the 13th to 16th centuries that does not mention members of this family either with the name Klausner or the other family names. Additional 'weak' families include Buchner, Getz, Yallish and others.

As already mentioned, Rabbis' sons were expected to follow in their father's footsteps, continue their studies in Yeshivot and opt for the rabbinate. With all the honor and respect that the rabbinate enjoyed, and on occasion, the economic security that it brought, the sons of rabbis did not always demonstrate the qualifications required or the desire to enter the rabbinate. In the best of circumstances, they chose to enter a profession or go into business, in the worst of circumstances, they distanced themselves to a greater or lesser extent from their father's lifestyle. Occasionally, we find conflicting accounts in rabbinic sources where in one of them some of the sons are not mentioned. The reason was not a lack of correct information in the writer's hands, but the desire not to reveal facts about the children that were not pleasant or desirable to the author.

The Great Rifts

After the great disillusionment from the movements of the false messiahs, Shabbtai Zvi (1626-1676) and Jacob Frank (1726-1791), there were two major rifts, which mostly resulted from the liberation movements, which were nourished by the rabbinic establishment and remain with us today.

The Hasidic Movement. R. Israel the son of Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov (1698-1760) from Okopi in the Ukraine, founded the Hasidic Movement. At an early age, he was orphaned from his father and spent most of

his time in seclusion, in prayer in the bosom of nature, in the study of Kabbalah and the teaching of small children. He settled in Miedzhibozh at the age of 36 after the death of his first wife and his second marriage to Hannah, the daughter of R. Ephraim Ashkenazi of Kutu and the sister of R. Abraham Gershon Ashkenazi of Kutu. Many gathered around him to hear the words of the Torah flavored with the Fear of God, all with a lucidity that they could understand. Initially, his followers were made up of simple people, but over time they were joined by educated individuals knowledgeable in Torah as well as scholars. After he succeeded in attracting the support of R. Dov Ber the son of Abraham Friedman, also known as the Magid of Miedzyrzec (1704-1773), Miedzhibozh became the Hasidic center whose influence reached distant communities including Eretz Yisrael.

The basic principle of Hasidism is that the Divine is found everywhere and in everything, even in matters that seem to be of no importance, and therefore one is able to serve God in many ways. This can fill the individual with hope, optimism and joy in his worldly existence. There is no reason to refrain from joyousness and the enjoyment of the senses, one was to purify and distill them through the service of God with body and soul. Sinners have no reason to despair because everyone is eligible for 'Tikun' – correction. Prayer with enthusiasm is of utmost importance and joyousness is an indispensable component of prayer.

Among the disciples and colleagues of the Ba'al Shem Tov were the following: his son, Zvi of Miedzhibozh (d. 1780); his son-in-law, Yechiel son of Barukh Ashkenazi of Miedzyboz (d. 1783); R. Dov Ber, the Magid of Miedzyrzec, who became his successor; R. Jacob Joseph son of Samson of Polonnoye (d. 1784); R. Pinhas son of Abraham Abba Shapira of Korets, (1728-1790); R. Shabbtai of Rashkov (1655-1745); R. Meir son of Jacob of Przemyslan (1711-1773); R. Tzvi Hirsh son of David of Kamionka (d. 1780); R. Yechiel Michel son of Isaac of Zloczew (1721-1781); Nahum son of Tzvi Twersky of Chernobyl (1730-1797), R. Schneur Zalman

of Lyady (1747-1813) and others. The Hasidic Movement aroused great ferment in contemporary rabbinic circles. Opponents to Hasidism, led by R. Eliyahu the son of Solomon Hasid, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797), were supported by almost the entire rabbinic establishment and became known as Mitnagdim (Opponents). The clash between them became so bitter that in 1772 the Vilna Rabbinate issued a general excommunication edict against Hasidim, which was supported by the Gaon of Vilna. At that time, the Hasidim were subjected to being shunned and driven from communities. Nevertheless, the Hasidic Movement spread rapidly in Romania, the Ukraine, Ruthenia, Hungary, Galicia and other locations, becoming an integral and important part of contemporary Judaism. A separate article on the Hasidic Movement and its various divisions will follow.

The Reform Movement. The second split in Judaism came with the establishment of the Reform Movement. Its path differed from that of traditional and conservative Rabbinic Judaism, known from then on as Orthodox Judaism. Neither of these groups was homogeneous as both had factions with different goals and changing emphases. Reform Judaism has both historic and sociological importance, but in the area of genealogical study, its importance is far less than that of the Orthodox rabbinate. The Reform rabbinate did not associate any importance to the recording of their family lineage.

Until the end of the 18th century, it was clear that the study of Torah was the ultimate value. The 'Enlightenment' and the Emancipation shattered this consensus, and the Reform Movement benefited from this new development. At other times as well, there were sects that were on the periphery of mainstream Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism. The Saducees in the time of the Second Temple (in contrast to the Pharisees), the Karaites in the Middle Ages, and other groups denied the validity of certain aspects of Judaism, for example the authority of the Oral Law. Reform Judaism abandoned large portions even of the Written tradition and

introduced radical changes in the pattern of ritual.

The Rabbinic Establishment was unable to cope in an effective way with the Reform Movement, but there were some rabbis who rallied to the challenge. Among them was R. Isaac Bernays of Hamburg who opposed their liturgical changes and protested their using the word Temple for their synagogues. Together with R. Zecharias Frankel he established the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau to prepare its students to challenge Reform. R. Samson Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt was another of the opponents of Reform.

Rabbinic Genealogical Literature

Rabbinic literature attests to the importance of this genre. It has many facets and expressions such as commentaries on the Torah and Talmud, discussions on Jewish Law and Responsa, Kabbalah, Legends, Musar (Ethical Movement) and more. Rabbinic literature includes genealogical information of all kinds:

1. Some rabbis included in the introduction of their works a detailed genealogical description of their families, including their children, those whom they married, and important dates in the life of the family. Some of this information was included in their commentaries and Responsa, as was mentioned previously.

2. Rabbis, their descendants, historians or researchers wrote detailed genealogical material on rabbis and their families.

3. Family trees of certain rabbinic families were prepared by family members or by others at the request of the family.

Many examples of this type of rabbinic literature can be found over the past 400 years up to our own day. Most of it is in Hebrew and only in the past decades has it appeared in other languages. For a selection of this genre of literature, see List # 3 (in the Hebrew Section).

It was very common for rabbis to be known by the titles of their books: the Noda B'Yehudah is R. Ezekiel Landau (1713-1793); the Tzemah Tzedek is R. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1789 -1866); the

S'mikhat Hahamim is R. Naftali Tzvi son of Isaac Katz (1649-1719); the M'galeh Amukot is R. Nathan Neta Shapira (1585-1633), etc. Some titles give us hints of the author's names, for example, P'nai Yehoshua was written by Joshua son of Joseph (1593-1648), Shaagat Ariele was written by R. Ariele Leib son of Asher Ginsburg (1695-1785), Aderet Eliyahu was written by R. Eliyahu Hasid, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797), and Shearit Yosef of R. Yosefson of Gershon Katz (1511-1591), etc.

Closing remarks

A historical survey has been presented here of the development of the Jewish communities in Europe, the role of the rabbis in these communities and the connecting thread that leads from the sages of the Talmud to the generations of the rabbis of Europe, who were faithful to the study of the Torah and the preservation of its laws by their legal decisions whenever a question arose.

Covered were the changing circumstances, both for better and for worse, as well as the problems confronting Judaism whose origins were in threats that originated among the

people with whom the Jews lived as well as internal challenges and divisions. The rabbinic establishment had to cope with all these dangers and the rabbis had to rise to the challenges.

As rabbinic families married among themselves, even though they did marry other Jews as well, and as rabbinic literature transmitted family pedigrees, most of us can find our ancestral origins among these rabbinic families.

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Jewish Military Casualties in the Polish Armies in WWII

A Lecture by Benjamin Meirtchak

Reported by Ellen Stepak and Jean-Pierre Stroueis

“Who were the Jews in the Polish Army?”

Much has been written and said of the Jews in the Holocaust, both as victims and as partisans. Benjamin Meirtchak spoke to SIG-Poland on October 30, 2000 regarding an important but little-known chapter in the history of the Second World War: Jewish participation in the Polish Armies. These men did their best in spite of the intense anti-Semitism and hostility of their comrades-at-arms.

Meirtchak refers to a five-volume book series entitled *Jewish Military Casualties in the*

Polish Armies in World War II, published between the years 1994-99. An additional volume, *Jewish Officers in the Polish Army*, is currently in the process of being published. It all began with one of the annual meetings with his former soldiers, when they were recalling their fallen comrades. The idea arose to record the names for publication, and the veterans said, “You will write it.” The names of over 8000 fallen Jewish soldiers are included in these books. Benjamin Meirtchak has dedicated six years of intensive and meticulous research to this project.

Historical Perspective

The history of Polish Jewry dates from approximately a thousand years ago, from the time when Jews were being thrown out of Western Europe. During the period of *Vaad Arba Aratzot* (the Council of Four Lands) in the 16th and 17th centuries, Jews enjoyed political, economic and religious autonomy. Jews fought in the wars of Poland against the Swedes and against the Cossacks (which brought on the 1648 massacres led by the Ukrainian Bogdan Khmelnitski).

From 1772 Poland was partitioned three times, until in 1795 it ceased to exist as an independent nation. In the late 18th and the 19th centuries, the Poles organized a series of attempts to achieve independence. In 1794 under Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Jews fought against the Tsar's army in an unsuccessful insurrection for the independence of Poland. Colonel Berek Yoselewicz with his Jewish regiment fought under Kosciuszko. In the Polish Uprising of 1831, Jews fought in large numbers. This attempt to achieve independence also failed. In 1863 there was yet another uprising. The Chief Rabbi of Warsaw, Rabbi Meisels, called for the Jews to support this rebellion.

In WWI Jozef Pilsudski (1867-1935), who was a social-liberal regarding the Jews, organized Polish Legions, in which Jews served. They fought for independence with Pilsudski as Commander-in-Chief. In these legions Jews succeeded in reaching the highest ranks: there were five Jewish generals. Poland finally achieved independence in 1918, which was also when the Polish Army was established.

In World War I Polish units fought under General Haller in the French Army against Germany. Poles who fought in this army were hostile toward the Jews. The new Polish Army formed after the war, included many of these soldiers. In 1919-20 there were pogroms fomented by the army against the Jews in Lvov, Pinsk, Vilna, and other locations.

Sanctions against Jews began. One of the first steps was the cancellation of medals of honor awarded to Jews who served with the Austrian Army. According to Meirtchak,

Pilsudski, who was Head of State from 1918 until 1926, opposed anti-Semitism. When he left the government, discrimination increased. Jews were not inducted into the Air Force, Intelligence, the Armored Corps, or the Navy. Despite a law requiring all who had completed their high school studies to report for officers' training, Jews were excluded, ostensibly for health reasons or because there was "no need" for additional officers. Almost the only Jewish officers were medical doctors or other professional people; in fact, the majority of medical officers in the army were Jewish.

In the thirties the government's attitude towards Poland's Jewish citizens was antagonistic. Restrictions against Jews, including economic sanctions, were introduced. A *numerus clausus* admissions policy was established at the universities. Benjamin Meirtchak himself studied engineering while standing up, as part of a protest against the policy of Jews having to sit at the back of the classroom. Professors did not defend Jewish students when violence was carried out against them.

The Invasion of Poland

Poland was totally unprepared for the Second World War, and there was a concept of depending on its allies, France and Britain, who were also woefully unprepared. In 1939 troops were mobilized too late, and in a disorderly fashion. While Jews were approximately 10% of the population, they comprised about 15% of the army, over 150,000 soldiers in an army of a million.

On the eve of the German invasion of Poland, the attitude towards the Jews changed - "all were brothers." The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact included a secret agreement on the partition of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and on September 17, the Russians attacked the Eastern provinces. Divided between its two enemies, independent Poland ceased to exist on September 28, 1939.

The Jews fought heroically in defending Warsaw. There are differences of opinion as to how many fell. Mr. Meirtchak considers

the estimate of 30,000 to be realistic. The Poles counted only those who were officially buried, so they had no idea of the true number. Sixty years hence, there is no possibility of knowing. There were altogether over 200,000 Polish military casualties including the Jews. An additional 250,000 were taken prisoner. Following the partition the Bug River became the border. Jewish prisoners from West of the Bug, the area of German domination, were sent home - to die in the Holocaust. The Germans also sent thousands of Jewish prisoners from East of the Bug River to a labor camp on Lipowa Street in Lublin, where all of them were murdered.

The fate of the Polish prisoners of the Red Army was no less tragic. Some 11,000 officers, the elite of the Polish Army, were secretly shot to death and buried in mass graves in three locations, in what is well known as the Katyn Murders or the Katyn Forest Massacres. Among those killed were 450 Jewish officers, mostly doctors. This massacre was uncovered after Germany broke the German-Soviet pact and invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 in what is known as Operation Barbarossa. The USSR blamed the Germans and steadfastly denied perpetrating this atrocity until 1989.

After the German invasion of Russia, everything changed.

Polish Involvement in the War after the Defeat

As early as the end of 1939 the Poles realized that it would be to their advantage to be on the side of the victors of the war. To prove that they had contributed to the victory, they formed the *Polish Army* and *Government - in-Exile*. At first they were located in France. Altogether the Polish Army in France numbered some 80,000 men. Over 7,600 were officers and 14,000 Jewish Poles took part. Some of them had remained in France after the Spanish Civil War, while some were university students.

In the beginning the Polish Army refused to draft Jews, but Wladyslaw Sikorski (1881-1943), Prime Minister of the Government-in-Exile, stood firm on this issue. The Jews in

this Army fought heroically, and many were decorated for valor. Meir David, a relative of Meirtchak's, was killed fighting in this army and received the Croix de Guerre, one of the highest French military honors.

A Polish Brigade fought with the French and the British in the naval battle of Narvik, Norway. Norway was invaded by the Germans even before France, in April 1940. Meirtchak has been in contact with the Mayor of Narvik, who identified seven Jewish names among the fallen, including one officer, in the Polish military cemetery there.

Approximately 38,000 members of the Army-in-Exile were evacuated via Dunkirk to England. After the capitulation of France in June 1940, the Government-in-Exile moved to London, and the members of the Polish Army in France dispersed as follows:

(1) Many escaped via Dunkirk to Britain, including about 1000 Jews.

(2) Others joined the Resistance in France, including many Jews.

(3) Some others escaped to Spain and were held in the POW camp of Miranda de Ebro. There, the attitude of the Polish soldiers was unfriendly, even hostile, toward their fellow (Jewish) prisoners.

In the framework of the British forces, Jewish Polish pilots flew with the Royal Air Force. The Polish Brigade went from Syria (1941) to Palestine to North Africa where they fought against Rommel and his Afrika Corps at Tobruk and Alexandria (1942).

Following the German attack on Russia, and because of a request by the British, who had now become allies of the USSR, Stalin released Polish prisoners of war and citizens from concentration camps, and a Polish Army was formed on the Eastern front to fight hand-in-hand with Russians under General Wladyslaw Anders (1892-1970). *The Anders Army*, as it came to be known, was at first underfed, underequipped and undertrained (by the Russians). In these days, relations between the Russians and the Poles reached a new low. Eventually, upon Churchill's intervention, the Anders Army was evacuated to Iraq and Palestine, where they met up with the British Army, and

received regular military training and equipment. This relocation was completed by August 1942.

Not many Jews were accepted in the Anders Army—those who did had a very difficult time. 4,000 Jews reached Palestine with this army via Iran and Iraq. Altogether there were 114,000 men including civilians in the Army-in-Exile. Because of the hostility towards the Jews, some 2,700 left the army while it was stationed in Palestine. Anders understood this, and even expressed his understanding.

Two incidents took place in those days:

(1) There was an appeal (reported by the General in charge of the Polish forces in Palestine) from Jewish representatives to the Prime Minister in Exile, requesting that Mr. Schwarzbart, a member of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London, resign in protest against anti-Semitism in the Polish Army in Palestine.

(2) In Scotland the Polish Army was stationed near Perth. Some Jewish soldiers left the army because of hostility, and reached London. They were to be put on trial for desertation. Parliament interfered to prevent the trial, and eventually these men joined the British Army.

The Anders Army, also known as the Polish Army East, or the Second Polish Corps, went on to achieve glory during the battle for Italy; this army took an active part in the bloody battles of Monte Cassino and Bologna. Nearly 850 Jewish soldiers took part in the Battle of Monte Cassino, among them 123 officers. Twenty-eight died in this battle, while sixty-two were wounded. 136 (!) Jewish soldiers were decorated, including six who received the *Virtuti Militari*, the equivalent of Britain's Victoria Cross.

In the USSR, following the evacuation of the Anders Army, the Polish Peoples' Army (P.P.A.), named for Kosciuszko, was formed. Its political goal was to control the Polish Government after the War. Men came from all parts of the USSR to join the P.P.A. There were limitations on the number of Jews admitted. The P.P.A. was organized according to the Russian system. As in the Red Army, there was a *politruk* (political officer) as lieutenant. Jews were asked to

change their names, so as to sound less Jewish to the Poles. Their Polish pseudonyms helped protect them from anti-Semitism (but also meant that afterward it was more difficult to identify the Jewish fallen). Meirtchak signed a paper volunteering for the P.P.A. but he refused to change his name.

There were some 2,000 Jewish officers in the P.P.A. On Yom Kippur in 1943 there was a battle at Lenino, near Smolensk, where there were heavy losses, 73 Jews killed and 42 missing-in-action. Officially, 1,645 Jews lost their lives fighting in the P.P.A., which participated in battles from Smolensk to the Elba River. The fate of an additional 400 is unknown.

Meirtchak advanced to command a tank battalion. He and his men were not aware of the situation in Poland. The Russians had done their best to prevent information from getting through. Only when the men reached Ukraine, via Zhitomir and Berdichev, did they learn the incredible truth. In Berdichev the Great Synagogue had become a stable for horses. When they reached Poland, everyone looked for survivors, but there were none. Benjamin Meirtchak passed through his home town, but nothing remained. When he received a letter informing him that his sister had survived, he and his soldiers held a celebration.

The Books

The major sources for his work are: the Central Military Archives (Warsaw), the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), the Sikorski Institute (London), the Polish State Archives (Lublin) and the N.K.V.D. archives (Moscow). But Meirtchak also gathered information from a large variety of lesser-known sources (e.g. the City Councils of Narvik and Edinburgh), and from oral testimony (e.g. the chief Rabbi of the Anders Army, and survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto). Volume I (1994) lists 1,596 Jewish casualties of the Polish People's Army, whether killed in action, dead from their wounds or missing in action. Volume II (1995) lists 1,628 Jewish military casualties of the September 1939 Campaign and of the Polish Armed Forces in Exile, including men killed in France,

Norway, North Africa and Switzerland in 1940; soldiers of Anders Army killed in the Soviet Union and Iran (1940-1942); soldiers of the Polish Army East who fell in Italy and the Middle East (1942-1944); soldiers of the Polish Army West who died in the United Kingdom, the Normandy landing, France, Germany, Belgium and Holland (1942-1945). Volume III (1996) lists 3,200 Jewish Prisoners of War murdered by the Germans in the Lublin District (Lipowa labor camp, Majdanek, Belzec, and on death marches from Lublin to Biala Podlaska, 1939-1943). Volume IV (1997) lists 456 Jewish officers, prisoners of war, murdered between March and May 1940 by the Soviets in the camps of the Katyn massacres: Kozielsk (Katyn forest), Starobielsk (Kharkov), Ostashkov (Miednoye), or exterminated by the Ukrainian NKVD. It lists 286 Jewish military casualties from the Polish Resistance in Poland or in France (1943-1944), as well as another 664 men, in an addendum to the earlier volumes. Volume V is a supplement of another 283 names, from all campaigns. All of Benjamin Meirtchak's books include a bibliography, footnotes, useful maps, and historical reviews. They are being translated

into Polish by the publishing house of the Polish Ministry of Defense, Bellona. He asked the Poles "Why do you need this?" The response was that there is a vacuum regarding Jewish Polish history. They will publish the five books as one volume.

An impressive monument, constructed by the Association of Jewish War Veterans of Polish Armies in Israel under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense of Israel, is located in the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem and memorializes the fallen Jewish soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces. The Polish Army contributed an eagle, and the memorial bears the inscription: "For Your and Our Freedom". All Polish officials who come to Israel visit this monument.

Benjamin Meirtchak is Chairman of the Association of Jewish War Veterans of Polish Armies in Israel, and Chairman of the Central Committee of the Israel Association of Disabled Veterans of the Fight against Nazism. He is also Secretary General of the World Federation of Polish Jews and Secretary General of the Association of Israeli Immigrants from Poland. An engineer, he lives in Tel Aviv.



A monument memorializes the fallen Jewish soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces Mount Herzl Military Cemetery, Jerusalem

**Confirmation of Torah Tradition
Via a Common DNA Signature of Kohanim -
Links with the Ancient Hebrews
*Yaakov Kleiman***

Attending synagogue can be an uplifting spiritual experience that acts as a catalyst for a scientific breakthrough. Such a breakthrough may also result in the sanctification of God's name.

While Dr. Karl (Kalman) Skorecki was attending services one morning, the Torah (Scroll of the Law) was removed from the ark and a Kohen was the mandatory first of those men called for the reading of the Law. He was a Jew of Sephardic background, whose parents had been born in North Africa. Skorecki is also a Kohen, though of Ashkenazic background, his parents having been born in Eastern Europe. Skorecki compared the physical features of the Sephardic Kohen with his own. Stature, skin coloration and the color of hair and eyes were significantly different. Yet both men bore a tradition of being Kohanim (plural of Kohen) - direct descendants of one man - Aaron the High Priest (Aharon HaKohen).

Jewish tradition, based on the Torah, is that all Kohanim, or members of the priestly caste, are direct descendants of Aaron, the original Kohen. Their line is patrilineal, having been passed from father to son without interruption for 3,300 years, i.e., for more than 100 generations. Dr. Skorecki considered, "According to tradition, this Sephardic Kohen and I have a common ancestor. Could this line have been maintained since Sinai, throughout the long exile of the Jewish people?" And as a scientist, he also wondered, could such a claim be tested?

As a nephrologist and senior researcher at the University of Toronto and at the Rambam - Technion Medical Center in Haifa, he was involved in breakthroughs in molecular genetics, which are revolutionizing medicine and the study of the life sciences. He was also aware of the newly developing

application of DNA analysis to the study of history and population diversity.

He considered a hypothesis: if the Kohanim are descendants of one man, they should have a common set of genetic markers - a haplotype - that of their common ancestor, in our case, Aharon HaKohen. A genetic marker is a variation in the nucleotide sequence of the DNA, known as a mutation. Mutations which occur within genes - a part of the DNA that has a code for a protein - usually cause a malfunction or disease, and are lost due to selection in succeeding generations. However, mutations found in so-called "non-coding regions" of the DNA tend to persist. Since the Y chromosome, in addition to the genes determining maleness, consists almost entirely of non-coding DNA, it would tend to accumulate mutations. Since it is passed from father to son without recombination, the genetic information on a Y chromosome of a man living today is basically the same as that of his ancient male ancestors, except for the rare mutations that occur along the hereditary line. A combination of these neutral mutations can serve as a genetic signature of a man's male ancestry. Maternal genealogies are also being studied by means of the m-DNA (mitochondrial), which is inherited only from the mother.

Dr. Skorecki then made contact with Professor Michael Hammer, of the University of Arizona, a leading researcher in molecular genetics and a pioneer in Y chromosome research. Professor Hammer uses DNA analysis to study the history of populations, their origins and migrations. His previous research included work on the origins of the Native American Indians and the development of the Japanese people. Researchers at University College London were also contacted.

A study was undertaken to test the following hypothesis. If there was a common ancestor,

the Kohanim should have common genetic markers at a higher frequency than the general Jewish population.

In the first study, as reported in the prestigious British science journal, *Nature* (2nd January, 1997), 188 Jewish males were asked to contribute some cheek cells from which DNA was extracted. Participants from Israel, England and North America were asked to declare whether they were Kohan, Levite or Israelite (those Jews who claimed neither Kohen nor Levite ancestry) and to identify their family background.

The results of analysis of the Y chromosome markers of the Kohanim and non-Kohanim were indeed significant. A particular marker, (YAP-) was detected in 98.5% of the Kohanim, and in a significantly lower percentage of non-Kohanim.

In a second study, Dr. Skorecki and associates gathered more DNA samples and expanded their selection of Y chromosome markers. Reinforcing their hypothesis of the common ancestor of the Kohanim, they found that a particular array of six chromosomal markers was found in 97 of the 106 Kohanim tested. This collection of markers has come to be known as the Cohen Modal Haplotype (CMH) - the standard genetic signature of the Jewish priestly family. The chances of these findings happening at random are less than one in 10,000.

The finding of a common set of genetic markers in both Ashkenazic and Sefardic Kohanim worldwide clearly indicates an origin pre-dating the separate development of the two communities, around 1000 C.E. Date calculation based on the variation of the mutations among Kohanim today yields a time frame of 106 generations from the ancestral founder of the line, some 3,300 years - the approximate time of the Exodus from Egypt, during the lifetime of Aharon HaKohen.

Professor Hammer was recently in Israel for the Jewish Genome Conference. He confirmed that his findings are consistent in that over 80% of self-identified Kohanim have a common set of markers. The finding that less than one-third of the non-Kohanim

Jews tested possess these markers does not surprise the geneticists. Jewishness is not defined genetically. Other Y-chromosomes can enter the Jewish gene pool through conversion or through a non-Jewish father. Jewish status is determined by the mother, while tribal (Kohen, Levite, etc.) membership follows the father's line.

Calculations based on the high rate of genetic similarity of today's Kohanim resulted in the highest "paternity-certainty" rate ever recorded in population genetics studies - a scientific testimony to family faithfulness.

Wider genetic studies of diverse present day Jewish communities show a remarkable genetic cohesiveness. Jews from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, North Africa together with European Ashkenazim, all cluster together with other Semitic groups, with their origin in the Middle East. A common geographical origin can be seen for all mainstream Jewish groups studied.

This genetic research has clearly refuted the once-current libel that the Ashkenazic Jews are not related to the ancient Hebrews, but are descendants of the Kuzars - a pre-10th century Turko-Asian population that reputedly converted en masse to Judaism. Researchers compared the DNA signature of the Ashkenazi Jews with those of Turkish-derived people, and found no correspondence.

In their second published paper in *Nature* (9th July 1998) the researchers included an unexpected finding. Those Jews in the study who identified themselves as Levites did not show a common set of markers as did the Kohanim. The Levites clustered in three groupings, one of them the CMH. According to tradition, the Levites should also show a genetic signature from a common patrilineal ancestor.

It is interesting to note that the tribe of Levi has a history of a lack of quantity. The census of the Torah reading *BaMidbar* shows Levi to be the smallest of the tribes. After the Babylonian exile, the Levites failed to return en masse to Jerusalem, though urged to do so by Ezra the Scribe. They were therefore punished by losing some of their exclusive

rights. Though statistically the Levites should be more numerous than Kohanim, it is not unusual to find a *minyán* (quorum for prayer) with a surplus of Kohanim yet lacking even one Levite. The researchers are now focusing effort on the study of the Levite genetic make up to learn more about their history in the Diaspora.

Using the CMH as a DNA signature of the ancient Hebrews, researchers are searching around the world for Jewish genes. The search for lost tribes, whether the ten lost tribes uprooted from Eretz Yisrael (the Holy Land) by the Assyrians, or other would-be Jews/Hebrews, is not new. Using the genetic markers of the Kohanim as a yardstick, these genetic archaeologists are using DNA research to discover historical links to the Jewish people.

Many individual Kohanim and others have approached the researchers to be tested. The policy is that the research is not a test of individuals, but rather an examination of the extended family. Having the CMH is not proof of being a Kohen, for the mother's side is also significant in determining Kohanic status. At present, there are no *Halachic* (Jewish legal) ramifications of this discovery. No one is certified nor disqualified because of their Y chromosome markers.

The research, which began with an idea in the synagogue, has indicated a clear genetic relationship amongst Kohanim coupled with direct lineage from a common ancestor. The research findings support the Torah claims that the line of Aharon (Aaron the High Priest) will last throughout history. That our Torah tradition is supported by these findings should be a reinforcement for Kohanim and for all those who know that the Torah is truth, and that promises of the Almighty are kept. May we soon see Kohanim at their service, Levites on the Temple platform and Israelites at their places.

A Blessing Forever

Just as the Kohanim's lineage spans more than 3,000 years, so the Blessing that they deliver spans Jewish history. Since its inception at the inauguration of the *Mishkan* on Rosh Hodesh Nissan, 2449 CC (1311 BCE), the Blessing of the Kohanim has been

recited daily by descendants of Aharon HaKohen somewhere in the world, everyday. It is a remnant of the Temple service that was never lost. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the *mishmarot* - family service groups of Kohanim - kept their tradition of knowing the week of their particular watch at the Temple. From the time of the Babylonian and Persian exile, Jewish communities have included the Birkat Kohanim (Priestly blessing) in their communal service.

Sefardic custom, as written in the Shulchan Aruch, is for the Kohanim to bless the congregation every day. Following the Rema (R. Moshe Isserles), the Ashkenazi custom became to perform the Blessing only on Holidays. Presently in Eretz Yisrael, following the students of the Vilna Gaon, the custom has been restored to recite the Blessing every day and twice on Shabbat (the Sabbath), Rosh Hodesh (New Moon) and Yom Tov (Festivals).

Also interesting is the fact that the oldest archaeological find of Biblical text is that of the Birkat Kohanim. Two small silver scrolls were found near the Old City of Jerusalem in the area of burial caves from the First Temple period with the three-phrased blessing inscribed in ancient Hebrew script. They are currently on display at the Israel Museum.

Acknowledgement

Professor Edward Simon, microbiologist at Purdue University, lecturer and board member of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists, for his expert input.

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Hebrew Paleography

Shmuel Shamir

Translated from Hebrew

Writing has accompanied mankind from the very beginning of humanity. We find it at the pyramids, on walls, in caves, in papyri, in newspapers, as mourning notices pasted on walls and in handwritten letters.

Deciphering handwriting, identifying it, determining when and where it was written is one of the most difficult challenges facing the genealogist, archeologist and historian. The genealogist deals with complex problems and in reality confronts many riddles. Deciphering and identifying handwritten items are the most complicated parts of his work.

The history of mankind on earth shows that many materials at hand were used for writing: stone, wood, twigs, bones, ivory, skins, metal and cloth, tin sheets, pottery, papyrus and paper. Some of the writing methods utilized were engraving, carving, stamping and painting.

Cuneiform writing is among the most ancient forms. The Sumerians developed it around 3000 BCE from pictographs inherited from a people that preceded them in Mesopotamia.

The Arameans, residents of Syria and Aram-Naharaim, in the area northeast of Eretz Yisrael, during the time of the First Temple, conceived their own style of writing. Based on the Phoenician, it was an alphabetical style similar to Hebrew. The Assyrian rulers chose the Aramean language and transformed it into the official language of communication and commerce among the peoples of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Subsequently, it became the language of the Babylonian Empire and its script replaced the Assyrian cuneiform writing, which was more intricate and complex. Its existence was made known in Europe in 1602 by Antonio da Goviah, the

Spanish and Portuguese ambassador to the court of the King of Persia, and was only deciphered in the 19th century.

The decoding of cuneiform writing, in the framework of the study of the linguistics, literature and history of ancient Babylonia and Assyria was accomplished by the German philologist G. F. Grotefend, 1775-1853. He was followed by a group of scholars who continued the study of ancient civilizations.

Hieroglyphics were the style of writing in ancient Egypt. Its pictographic writing was suitable for etching or carving on stone or drawing on wood, pottery or other substances. Educated priests used it for more than 3,000 years until the beginning of the middle ages. It was written with reeds that were used for etching or writing raised characters. Jean-Francois Champollion, a captain in the French army of Napoleon, deciphered hieroglyphics when the Rosetta stone was discovered at the mouth of the Nile in 1799. The stone written in Egyptian and Greek, included inscriptions in hieroglyphics, Demotic and Greek. Its decoding was the key to being able to learn about the history and culture of ancient Egypt.

Ancient Egyptian writing, hieroglyphics, was written with signs and letters that built a writing system based on pictures, syllables and consonants. The rapid handwritten script used for daily purposes, known as hieratic, utilized ink with a pen made of a sharp reed on sheets of papyrus. This writing was different from the pictographs of cuneiform. The development of alphabetical writing where each letter represented only one sound, in contrast to pictographs and syllables, was one of the greatest innovations in human

cultural development. From then on, every individual could acquire wisdom and knowledge for himself in contrast to the previous period when only the privileged classes and scribes knew how to write.

The alphabet was developed in Eretz Yisrael and Syria by the Canaanites. Their language was very similar to Hebrew. The Israelite tribes that settled in Eretz Yisrael adopted the Canaanite script around the 12th century BCE with Hebrew employing 22 letters. The residents of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel used the ancient Hebrew letters for some 500 years, from the time of the Judges until the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE. The earliest Hebrew inscription that we know of is the Gezer Calendar, dating from the time of Solomon that was found by the archeologist McAllister in 1908 near the ancient Tel Gezer. This inscription, scratched on a small potsherd, contains a list of seven lines with the months of the year. The seasonal agricultural activities for each group of months are indicated. Today, the Gezer Calendar is in the Department of Antiquities in Istanbul, Turkey. (cf. *The Guide to Eretz Yisrael* by Vilnai, page 228 and the book by Naveh, pages 20-21)

An inscription recently found in excavations at Katef ben Hinom in Jerusalem contains the Priestly Blessing. Inscribed on an amulet, it is on display in the Israel Museum.

Another famous inscription is from the Pool of Shiloah. Dating from the end of the 8th century BCE, it was carved in stone on orders from King Hezekiah, in the tunnel under the walls of the City of David during the siege of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, on Jerusalem the capital of the Kingdom of Judah (cf. Vilnai, page 125 and Naveh page 4).

In this inscription, the letters are perpendicular and sharp. The ancient style of writing Hebrew is known as "Da'atz" or "Ra'atz," as most of the letters appear as though they are broken. Later the letters were written in a more cursive style flowing in the direction of the writing. The Lachish ostraca, dating from the eve of the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah, are written following this pattern.

The exiles in Babylonia became accustomed to the Aramaic used in the areas where they now lived. Those who returned to Judah after the Edict of Cyrus brought with them both the Aramaic language and the style of writing that they had adopted. Thus, we find that in the last centuries before the destruction of the Second Temple, two styles of writing were in use: *the ancient Hebrew script* as well as *the square Aramaic variety*. The Aramaic design of writing eventually displaced the ancient Hebrew until it completely disappeared from use. The residents of the Judean state initially used the Aramaic script as it was recognized in all areas of the Persian Empire. Its use as an international language declined with the defeat of the Persians and Greek began to take its place. Various nations began adapting the Aramaic pattern for their own national uses. The Hebrew script was one of these and it crystallized and spread between the years of the Hasmonean dynasty and Herod. Thus, the *Aramaic or square* style of writing came into use.

The most important documents we have from the days of the Second Temple are the Dead Sea Scrolls that were discovered in the area of Khirbet Qumran near the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. While the vast majority of them are written in square Hebrew script, there are some that are written in the ancient Hebrew style. (cf. the section on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Naveh, page 43)

As is well known, these documents were discovered when a Bedouin shepherd gathered goats that had wandered off from the flock and found refuge in a cave. There the shepherd found clay jars containing parchment scrolls. He took them to Bethlehem where he sold them as raw material to make shoe liners. The clever merchant sold some of these leather scrolls to Professor Eliezer Lipa Sukenik and others to the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem who, in turn, brought them to the United States. Over time, it was revealed that the scrolls from Qumran were written in book script. For the most part, the scrolls were written on parchment and only a few on papyrus. Reeds were used for writing in ink made of powdered charcoal, though a

metallic ink was also utilized. After the Six-Day War in 1967, there was a concerted effort to explore the Judean Desert and uncover its hidden treasures. This campaign, under the supervision of the IDF, included the top historians and archeologists of Israel. A great deal of material was discovered in the Qumran caves, in Wadi Murba'at and Nahal Hever. Some of the material was studied and the rest was transferred on microfilm to researchers in various universities and is not available to the general public. In recent times, there has been considerable academic controversy over that decision.

For many years, a great treasure of manuscripts was preserved in the attic of the synagogue of Fostat, ancient Cairo. Known as the Cairo Geniza, only at the end of the 19th century did serious study of its contents begin. The noted scholar Dr. Solomon Schechter, who at the time was a lecturer of Talmud at Cambridge University, identified some pages as being the lost Hebrew text of the Book of Ben Sira. As a result of his visit to Cairo, he was able to remove some 100,000 items from the Geniza that were brought to Cambridge. From the time of its discovery, many scholars have devoted themselves to the study and publication of the Geniza documents, but the study of them is still not finished.

The final accepted form of Hebrew script achieved approval towards the end of the period of the Second Temple. Since then, there have only been minor changes in the letters. Now we have only various styles of lettering with no real differences between them.

After the Bar Kokhba rebellion (135 CE), the ancient Hebrew script was never used again and only the square Hebrew lettering was utilized. Professional scribes using an elaborate and exact calligraphy wrote sacred texts and mezuzot. This was referred to as '*Ktav Hasefer*.' This style was sometimes used for the Mishnah, Talmud, Pesah Haggadah, Book of Esther, prayerbooks for Sabbaths and holidays and for Marriage Contracts.

In every Diaspora country an ornate scribal calligraphy that meticulously preserved the

conformity of the lettering developed. This reached its climax in the 9th and 10th centuries. Beginning with the 12th century, the distinctive Oriental style made its appearance. It spread throughout the Middle East, from Babylonia to Egypt, Eretz Yisrael, Syria, Lebanon, to North Africa and Spain, to Italy and the Ashkenazic areas. By the latter Middle Ages, a separate and distinctive style for Hebrew calligraphy developed in Spain, Italy and the Ashkenazic areas as well as in other places.

Commentaries on the sacred texts were written in a less formal rounder script that was known as the '*Rabbinic script*'. Cursive writing was simpler and more flowing.

After the invention of the printing press, the Sephardic rabbinic style was called '*Rashi script*'. It got that designation because the first text using this style was Rashi's commentary on the Torah printed by Abraham the son of Isaac Garton in 1475 in the town of Reggio da Calabria in southern Italy.

Religious poetry, letters and other personal correspondence was written in an Oriental cursive style known as '*Hatzi Kulmus*.' This developed as early as the 11th century under the influence of Arabic script. Throughout the ages, there was a cursive style of handwriting that was used in contrast to the square printed letters. While the square lettering did not vary greatly from the time the Dead Sea Scrolls were written, cursive writing underwent many changes. In every location, the local pattern of writing influenced the style of handwritten Hebrew. The gap between handwritten and printed letters widened. In handwriting, the tendency was to continue the letters in a leftward direction, the way Hebrew was written and even to connect two or three letters.

The Ashkenazic style, which is half-flowing, developed in Germany and Northeastern France in the 12th and 13th centuries and was influenced by the Gothic style. From there it was brought to Eastern Europe. Around the 15th century, a cursive script, which is the style we now use, began to develop.

The two great discoveries of modern times, the Cairo Geniza and the Dead Sea Scrolls,

gave impetus to the study of Hebrew script. Studies done since then have increased our understanding and continue to advance our knowledge of Hebrew lettering. As of yet, a unified approach of study that would be acceptable to most academics as being objective and scientific in contrast to the subjective judgment of the human eye has not developed.

The Jewish genealogist who comes across old inscriptions and letters from the past that were exchanged by family members in the various styles of Hebrew writing, including the Rashi, Oriental type known as *Hatzi Kulmus* or Ashkenazic forms, should seek guidance in Hebrew paleography and in this way he will be able to close the distance between generations.

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Shmuel Shamir (Mizrahi), a Jerusalem native (b. 1923), was a member of the first graduating class of the Law School of the Hebrew University. An active attorney, his many outside interests include genealogy. A proficient journalist, he has published in numerous newspapers and journals including Haaretz, Davar, Haboker, Yideot Aharonot, Et-Mol, Bama'arakha, Karka, Lebeit Avotam and others. He has researched and traced his family's roots in Jerusalem from 1643 to the present day. Married to Marta, he is the father of Irit, Yael and Zvi.



Mishpachology – In the Full Meaning of the Word

Esther Ramon

Translated from Hebrew

While I was reading the book, *The History of the Jews of Germany in Modern Times*, Volume I, edited by Michael Mayer, I encountered a phenomenon that may interest many genealogists.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, Germany was divided into many principalities that were governed by kings, barons, dukes and so forth. Each one of them hoped to increase his stature and enhance his lands by increasing his income. Many of them chose Jews to supply them with the required funds to maintain their elaborate court life and to supply their army's needs during the many wars that they conducted. Thus, the institution known as the Court Jew came into being.

They chose Jews as they had ready cash, and

thanks to their connections with their co-religionists wherever they lived, they were able to supply whatever was required. The Court Jews enjoyed special privileges as they were exempted from many of the restrictions imposed on all other Jews. They were able to travel freely and were even permitted to live with their families and servants in cities that were closed to Jews. Their loyalty was unquestionable as their life style and achievements depended on the rulers they served. They were also required to supply everything, from beef to jewelry, wine and fruit.

During that period, there were several thousand Court Jews, and some of them served several rulers simultaneously. Frequently, the position was passed on as an

inheritance from generation to generation. Among the families who served as Court Jews were the Gumpertz, Oppenheimer, Wertheimer, Bernad, Lehman and others. Some achieved prominent positions in international diplomacy acting as intermediaries between foreign countries such as France, Holland and England and their own rulers who hoped that those countries would make their armies available to them in exchange for substantial payments. Thus, the Jewish middlemen grew wealthy and established workshops, ran lotteries, were involved in silk and lace production and leased royal monopolies. Many of them were noted for their charitable deeds and acted as advocates for their people. Thanks to their intervention, Jewish communities were able to develop in additional towns. At this time, they carefully observed the religious requirements of Judaism. Including their aides, they accounted for between 2% and 3% of Germany's Jews.

Now for the genealogical aspect - in order to accomplish their tasks, the Court Jews needed to have trustworthy people in quite a number of places. To this end, they developed an elaborate strategy regarding the marriage of their children. In reality, all the families of Court Jews were connected through marriage and many of their family trees were carefully documented. Studying them today would, certainly help those interested.

In contrast, during the 18th century the

possibilities of making a living through commerce decreased. Rulers set up local factories and prohibited Jews from engaging in trade that had until then been exclusively in their hands. Rights of residency in many places were granted only to the first-born son and in consequence, there were many Jews who were forced to wander from place to place without a steady income. Refugees from Poland fleeing from the Chmelnitzki pogroms of 1648 joined them. Thus, a class of Jewish beggars developed. There were cases where some of them joined gentile groups of brigands while others established independent Jewish bands of robbers. A special secret slang developed that included Hebrew and Yiddish words also used by non-Jews. The most prominent of these words was *ganovim*. These Jewish outlaws maintained their Jewish lifestyle, observing kashrut, the Sabbath and other religious requirements and married mostly among themselves.

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The History of the Jews of Germany in Modern Times, Volume I, edited by Michael Mayer: The Zalman Shazar Center for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, 2000.

Note: all 4 volumes have appeared in German and English, while to this date, two Hebrew volumes have been published.

The books are very well written and although I am very well acquainted with this subject, I read them carefully from beginning to end.



The "Adivi" Cemetery in Ashkelon

Israel Pickholtz

Translated from Hebrew

According to all the usual sources, there are two cemeteries – the old one and the new one. That's what the maps show. That's the way the Department of Burial services at the Ministry of Religions has it. That's what they will tell you if you call the local religious Council. But there is another cemetery in Ashkelon and a few days after Purim, I visited it.

As part of the Pikholtz Project to identify and reconnect all Pikholtz descendants, I found a Page of Testimony submitted by Zygmunt Migden for his father Gustaw (Gedalyahu). Gedalyahu's mother was Yaffa Pikholtz. Zygmunt lived in Beer Sheva at the time, but I had found no trace of him there or anywhere else. Nor did Batya Unterschatz have any success. The Ministry of Internal affairs (Misrad HaPenim) told me that his last address was Ashkelon.

I phoned the Chevra Kadisha in Ashkelon and learned that Zygmunt Migden is indeed buried there – but not in an ordinary cemetery. It seems that Rehavia Adivi – Mayor of Ashkelon 1965-1972 – had a private cemetery for family and friends, carved out of an orange grove, not far from the Old Cemetery.

You get there by going past the gate of the Old Cemetery and taking a dirt road along the wall and turning right. A bit further, in the orange grove on the left, you can see the graves of the Adivi group. The place is quite neglected – no fence or sign. I found Zygmunt Migden very easily. Along side him were his wife, their fourteen year old son and Zygmunt's brother Dr. Meir Migden. Four graves in a row, in a similar style. After I copied their inscriptions and took photographs, I walked around the rest of the cemetery – all forty-one graves. There may have been another one or two in the underbrush, but I think not.

I present here the list of all the graves –

names, dates of death and ages. On some, there are Gregorian dates, but I noted them only when there was no Jewish date. There are several graves that seem to be too early and I do not know what to make of them. The inscriptions are almost exclusively in Hebrew, so there may be some inaccuracies in the names in this list.

Rehavia ADIVI ben Yaakov Israel FEINSTEIN, of the first settlers in Rehovoth, Mayor of Ashkelon 1965-1972, 29 Iyyar 5734, age 74
Lina ADIVI bat Shemuel BALSAM, 16 Tishrei 5736, age 73
George ASHKELONI, 6 November 1980, born 3 June 1919
Pinchas Paul BACHLER ben Zadok, 8 Tammuz 5754, age 71
Zadok BACHLER ben Nahum, 4 Shevat 5738, age 87
Karsel BACHLER bat Shemuel Zvi, 21 Tishrei 5731, age 79
Amram BAR'AD ben Max, 8 Tammuz 5734, age 48
David BERGER, 2 Shevat 5724, born 17 Iyyar 5654
Malka COHEN from Liverpool England, 28 July 1966, age 63
Zeev Ilan ben Binyamin DUBINSKY, 14 Teveth 5728
Hermina bat Nathan EISLER, 26 Iyyar 5727
Yaakov ben Raphael FEDERMAN, 26 Heshvan 5728, age 71
Rosa FEDERMAN bat David, 7 Elul 5744, age 86
Aryeh FEIGEL ben Avraham, 22 Nisan 5728, age 53
Bat-Sheva GARBOVY bat Mordecai, 11 Tammuz 5729, age 61
Avraham GARBOVY ben Shemuel, 22 Shevat 5739, age 82
Paula GITENBERG?? bat Yaakov, 31 January 1967

Rivka Yaakoba GOLDBERG nee ADIVI,
1929-1953
Mordecai ben Israel GORELICK, 27 Second
Adar 5714
Rachel ILAN bat Rivka and Aharon, 4
Teveth 5733, 1898-1972
Miriam MARGALIT bat Moshe, 28 Kislev
5724, age 57
Aviva MARGALIT bat Avraham
ROSENBLATT from Piotrkov, 20
Heshvan 5732, age 40
Paul MARGALIT, 17 Tammuz 5751
Helena MIGDEN, bat Ester and Yitzhak
HAMMERSTEIN, 24 Av 5751, age 67
Zygmunt MIGDEN ben Freida and
Gedalyahu, 15 Av 5746, age 73
Gedalyahu MIGDEN ben Helena and
Zygmunt, 26 First Adar 5727, age 14
Dr. Meir MIGDEN ben Gedalyahu, 18
Heshvan 5724, age 47
Sarah PUTERMAN nee ZAMONSKY, 10
Heshvan 5725, age 63
Chana RAPHAEL bat Avraham, 21 Av 5730,
age 72
Moska REICH, 5 Heshvan 5730, age 42
Yitzhak SHAMIR ben Yehoshua, 27 Adar
5727, age 51
Yocheved SHAMIR bat Tamar and Yitzhak,
8 Kislev 5751, age 36

Henrietta SHAPIRA nee PISER, 1 First Adar
5727, born 28 First Adar 5646
Dr. Yosef M. SHAPIRA, 14 Tammuz 5722,
1887-1962
Zeev SIEF ben Yaakov ("one of the first
paratroopers"), 11 Av 5728, age 41
Raphael SONABEND ben David and Freida,
2 Sivan 5746, age 65
Genia STARMAN, 1968
Yosef Sefi VARDI ben Aryeh, 20 Kislev
5750, 1960-1989
Sidonia WASSERMAN, 10 November 1974,
born 21 March 1878
Avraham YOCHNOWITZ ben Yosef, 14
Elul 5722, age 63
Sarah YOCHNOWITZ bat Yehiel, 26 Av
5754, age 88

May their memories be blessed.

*Israel Pickholtz was born in Pittsburgh, has
been in Israel since 1973 and is a member of
the Negev branch of IGS. He and his wife
Frances (of the London Silbersteins) live in
Elazar, Gush Etzion. The URL for the
Pikholz Project is
www.geocities.com/pikholz.*



Kollel Galicia Records

Israel Pickholtz

Many of us tend to think of Eastern Europe before WWII as a place of poverty from which our ancestors were fortunate to escape. Although that was largely true, those same European ancestors played a large role in supporting the truly impoverished Jews here in Eretz Israel. In at least one case, some records have survived – records which can be of use to the genealogist.

Some time ago, I saw a reference on JewishGen to "Kollel Galicia" in Mea

Shearim (the reference came from David Gurtler) and I have since paid several visits to their offices. They go under the name "Kollel Hibat Yerusalayim" and are at 120 Mea Shearim, phone 628-8016 or 628-5575. Their organization received money collected in Galicia from the early or mid-1800's until 1939 and distributed it to needy Galizianers in Jerusalem. In fact, they continue helping the needy to this day. The collections were recorded by the gabbaim in each town, often with house numbers. Unfortunately, most of

these records were lost, either when the Old City fell in 1948 or in Galicia itself, but the records from about 1925 until 1939 survive in the original handwritten form.

They also have computerized records of disbursements – I'm not sure how far back. They did have one person I was looking for who received money in the late 1980's and they were able to give me his mother's first name. But I was more interested in the collections from Galicia.

They will not do research for you. You have to go in and it is wise to phone in advance, as their hours are not regular. But I found that once I had been there a couple of times, they were willing to let me work even when the "man in charge" was not there. The staff seems to be all male, so I'm not sure how they would react to a woman researcher. In any case, dress appropriately. Even a man would probably get little cooperation if bare-headed and wearing shorts.

The records are in office files ("classerim"), arranged by town. Their definition of Galicia is somewhat different from ours, at least in the east. Although Tarnopol, Zbarazh and Rohatyn are included in their version of Galicia, Skalat and Buczacz are not. Not all towns are listed on their own – I guess it went by the territory of each individual gabbai.

Collections were sometimes made several times a year – depending on the size of the community – and records of each collection are made individually. The typical record will include name (given and surname), house number and amount. If there is more than one person with the same name, the wife's name or the father's name will be used in at least one instance to differentiate between them. The records are in Hebrew script – some more legible than others. Many of the pages are in very poor condition and must be handled with great care. As there is minimal supervision, you must take into account that some previous researcher may have returned pages to the file out of order.

Some examples of what I learned:

1. We knew that David Shemuel Pickholz of Stryj died about 1937. He appeared in

the Nisan 1937 collection but in Tammuz only his wife appeared, so we were able to narrow down his date of death.

2. We learned that his wife was Toiba Leah – we only knew Toiba.
3. The descendants of Hersch Leib Pickholz (who died in 1880) were of two minds about his "proper" name – some said Zvi Aryeh and some Zvi Yehudah. We found contributions by one of his sons, listed as Avraham ben Zvi Yehudah (interestingly it is Avraham's descendants who thought it was Aryeh.)
4. Ephraim Pickholz wasn't sure when his parents left Perehinsko. There is a contribution from his father in 1925 and none thereafter.
5. Gerson Schaffel "knows" that his family lived in Zalosce, yet several people who seem to be his relatives appear as contributors in nearby Zbarazh.
6. Abba Pickholz was listed in Zurawno – we weren't sure he lived there. Moshe ben Yitzhak Pickholz is also listed there and these two triggered forgotten memories of a niece living here in Israel.
7. A completely unfamiliar Feige Pickholz was listed as a regular giver in Stryj. Later we made contact with her surviving grandchildren and great-grandchildren here in Israel.

I didn't realize that house numbers were listed until I was nearly done with my notes, so I did not make full use of this information. In certain cases, it can help determine relationships.

It was interesting to note the amounts of money listed, often confirming what we knew about so-and-so's being very well off. In Rozdol, where we expected to find the largest Pickholz concentration, my first look found almost no entries and the ones that were there were listed as "Pik Holz." Only at a second look did I realize that the gabbai had listed them all as P'H.

A particular piece of good fortune was a series of brief letters from a generous donor, asking that prayers be said for particular family members. These letters mentioned the family members by name, together with their

parents' names.

The files are all in what seems to be a conference room and I had the large table to myself most of the time. That made working much more pleasant than say the crowded facilities at Yad VaShem.

The folks at the office didn't really understand what I wanted there to begin with, so I felt more comfortable with making notes than with making photocopies. I would really like to have made dozens of copies, but that was just not feasible.



Shabbaton on Genealogy

Baruch Gold

On the Shabbat of 19-20 January, 2001, the Blechner Chair in Jewish Values of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev sponsored a weekend of study entitled, "Jewish Genealogy: Names, Roots and Identity." Speakers included: Prof. Aaron Demsky of Bar-Ilan University, Rabbi David Gorlin, Dr. Ida Schwarcz and Dr. Yosef Schwarcz.

Prof. Demsky delivered two lectures. In his first lecture, "Jewish Names, a Cultural Code" he analyzed the phenomenon and significance behind specifically Jewish names. He showed how these names can be classified in various ways: into colors, occupations, residences. In his second lecture Prof. Demsky demonstrated how genealogy works within the biblical text itself.

Rabbi Gorlin presented a talk, entitled,

"Genealogy and Halakha" in which he showed both how Jewish law impinges on the family and how issues of Jewish law inter-connect. He covered diverse issues which have arisen on questions of Jewish identity, surrogate motherhood, artificial insemination, and patrilineal and matrilineal descent.

Drs. Ida and Yosef Schwarz presented a practical session of genealogical investigation called, "It's All in the Family." Participants were divided into three mini-groups in which a pot pourri of information on the subject were discussed.

In all, the Shabbaton was extremely well received and prompted many of those present to take an even closer look into their family history.



IGS Jerusalem Branch/English Speaking Section

Barbara Siegel

English speakers in Jerusalem and surrounding areas now have an alternative programming option within the IGS framework. At this time the new venture has a mailing list of over 150 interested persons. In June 2000 the English section got off the ground with an introductory, informational meeting geared to meeting the needs of the

many Anglos who are interested in family research, but are more comfortable with English language programs. This group has expanded to include bi-lingual and multi-lingual persons who have been interested in the program offerings.

As of now, our relatively small group (20-25 attendees) usually makes it possible for us to

all sit around a large table where we have eye contact with each other. This promotes interaction; a sense of community, helpful exchanges, and enables us to respond to individual needs. Sometimes we grow quite large, as was the case with the Yad Vashem visit where we had to cut off the group at 45 persons due to space restrictions.

Regular programming began on Jan. 20, 2001 with a presentation of genealogical holdings and facilities at Yad Vashem by Dr. Alex Avraham. This was followed by the field trip to Yad Vashem on Feb. 20. On March 20, we held a personal research workshop including an introduction to the holdings of the IGS Library. On March 29, we were privileged to have a group meeting with Sallyann Sack, editor of Avotaynu, who spoke about the International Tracing Service records at Arolsen and recent indexing projects. On

May 15, the English section will hear about the research adventures of Leo Laufer who will share with us how he began his quest with very little to go on, and ended up with 2 trips to Poland and a treasure trove of data.

All English speakers from Jerusalem, other areas in Israel, and visitors from abroad are always welcome to attend our meetings. Also, we invite suggestions for program topics that might be of interest to our members.

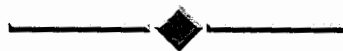
The English section will have no activities during the months of July, August and September 2001.

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It Is My Parents I Seek An Appeal for Information from the Time of the Holocaust

Most genealogical searches generally look for information from the distant past. I am investigating the recent past, as the early history of our family is well known to me. I was born in Florence, Italy in 1936, the oldest daughter of Nathan (Aminadav Yona) Cassuto, Rabbi and ophthalmologist, and Anna (Miriam Rachel) Di Gioacchino, a language teacher. My brother David (Moshe Nathaniel) was born in 1937, my other brother Daniel (Saul Elia) was born in 1941, and my sister Eva, of blessed memory was born in 1943.

My parents were apprehended by the Nazis and sent to Auschwitz while we children were hidden. Our father did not return. After the war, our mother came back, rehabilitated herself and joined us in Eretz Yisrael, as we were already here from March 1945.

She changed careers and worked as a laboratory technician at Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus. She was in the Hadassah convoy that was attacked by a frenzied mob near the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood on 4 Nisan 5708, April 13, 1948. Our mother was among the 78 who perished.

Between 1945 and 1948, our mother told us nothing of her experiences; we were young and her decision was perfectly understandable. She told only the adults in the family very little, perhaps not to add to their grief over our father not returning.

We are now mature adults and we want to learn more about what our mother experienced during those difficult years. There are few people that we know who were with her "there" and even they do not wish to recall those painful memories. They continually tell us, "Anna Cassuto was a righteous woman, a saint, a good soul and we only survived because of her." This is the type of

statement we get, but it is devoid of detail. We want to know what was so special about her. What did she do? How did she inspire courage in their pained hearts? What did she go through? Remember, we hardly knew our mother. We lost her in 1943; in 1945, she returned only to be lost to us forever in 1948.

Our father, Nathan Cassuto, was an eminent ophthalmologist when the racial laws forced him to give up his practice. Since he had been ordained as a Haham, the Sephardic equivalent of rabbi, he began to work as an educator and teacher. Initially, he was the assistant rabbi in Milan and he was subsequently called to return to Florence, where he as well as his forebears was born, to serve as the chief rabbi of the community. This was in July 1943. Very shortly thereafter, the Nazis entered Italy and the fate of her Jews was sealed. In his role as community leader, our father concerned himself with all of his flock. He urged them to go into hiding and then concerned himself with every one of their needs - such as appropriate hiding places, forged documents, money, etc. Most of those from our community who survived, owe their lives to him. His actions seem to have been natural for one called upon to head the community. We know that our father assisted many other Jews. They came from various other countries in Europe, first found refuge in France, later in Free France and afterwards streamed into northern Italy. These people moved southward to Florence when word was out that in the city there was a young, dynamic, resourceful rabbi who was able to help them. Accordingly, our father, who could have gone into hiding, concerned himself with the needs of the members of his community. Along with associates on the committee that worked with him, he continued to save Jews as much as he was able. An informer denounced him to the Nazis and he was arrested. Our mother attempted to help him while he was still in the jail in Florence and sought to bribe the guards. The same informer also turned her over to the Nazis.

The story is long and painful. Now we are searching for those people who found their way to Florence during the Holocaust and were aided in their survival by our father. Only in the past few years we have discovered several families, but we know that there are many more. We would also like to learn more about our father's days in the death camps. We have a fair number of testimonies sent to our late grandfather, Professor Umberto (Moshe David) Cassuto, but we would like to know about our father Nathan Cassuto in greater detail. What did he go through in those difficult days? Why is it that people who knew him in the camps believed that "he must have survived as death could not overtake a man like him," a comment that unfortunately proved to be incorrect.

In conclusion, I seek to connect with my past. I would like to know my parents as they existed in the most difficult time of their lives. What did they endure and in what ways did they manage to help their friends in the inferno? How is it that everyone who encountered them felt that they radiated an aura of holiness? We are now mature adults, if not yet old, and we are able to cope with any information that will come to us. My brothers and I thank you for any information that you can provide.

Susanna Cassuto Evron, Kibbutz Sa'ad

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Jewish Genealogical Websites – SIG's

Harriet Kasow

SIG's or Special Interest Groups – what are they? Descriptions include the following geographical or historical entities: countries of origin (depending on the date), landsmanshaften, gubernias, provinces, districts, shtetlach, empires and the all “exclusive” Pale of Settlement. These groups were formed to gather and share information in researching Jewish family roots.

An adjunct group would be the family associations, which have produced newsletters, WebPages, and have held reunions. Examples of these are the Horowitz or Jaffe families. Another type would be the Community Research Groups that concentrate on a particular area or district.

The components of the SIG's can include newsletters, online discussion groups, links to places, databases, reports etc. In the case of the Israel Genealogical Society's SIG's, meetings are held on an irregular basis and the programs include lectures, films, and/or discussions. The SIG's currently active in the IGS are Eretz-Israel, Germany and Austria, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and the Sephardim of the Mediterranean Basin.

The JewishGen online resource provides a home for SIG's. These discussion groups provide an address for answering genealogical questions of a more localized interest. They provide resources and the reports, both good and bad, of the experiences in researching archives or using professional genealogists that can aid in avoiding mistakes. There is an ever-expanding group of SIG's as the interest in Jewish genealogical research increases by leaps and bounds.

The following is a list of SIG's appearing on the JewishGen website which can be accessed at: www.jewishgen.org/listserv/SIGs.htm

I include several examples of places having links or being researched. They are not all at the same level of development but they are wondrous to behold expressing the desire to research the places from where we came. By publicizing this list we would hope to

introduce our researchers to JewishGen in general.

Belarus SIG: Has links to Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev, Vitebsk and the Lida District.

Bohemia-Moravia SIG: Includes parts of Austria.

Denmark-SIG: Includes Danish West Indies and other Scandinavian countries.

Early American SIG: Jewish immigrants to the United States before 1880.

French SIG: Includes French colonies such as Algeria and Tunisia as well as other French speaking countries.

Galicia SIG (Geshet-Galicia): Former Austrian province now Southern Poland and Western Ukraine.

German-Jewish SIG (GerSIG): German-speaking countries and areas such as Alsace, Lorraine, Bohemia and Moravia.

Hungarian SIG: Greater Hungary that includes parts of Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, Serbia and Romania.

Latin America SIG: Central and South America.

Latvia SIG: Latvia

Litvak SIG: Lithuania

Romania SIG (Rom-SIG): Includes the Banat, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Dobruja, the Maramures, Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia.

Sefard Forum: Descendants of Jews from Spain and Portugal.

Southern Africa SIG: Includes: South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, Mozambique and the former Belgian Congo.

Ukraine SIG: Includes the following Russian Empire Gubernias: Podolia, Volhynia, Kiev, Poltava, Chernigov, Kharkov, Kherson, Taurida and Ekaterinoslav.

In addition to these there are Community Research Groups which include: Bobruisk, Borislav, Ciechanow, Courland, Drogobych, Ekaterinoslav, Keidan, Lida, Lodz, Lviv, Motol, Nesvizh, Polonnoye, Pultusk, Sambor, Warsaw.

JGS Journal Abstracts

Compiled by Harold Lewin

In this somewhat eclectic guide to JGS literature, space limitations have excluded many interesting accounts of journeys to ancestral villages, parochial news and individual success stories. Readers finding something useful herein must locate the original article, for abstracts can be misleading and merely point one in the right direction. We hope to be forgiven for any changes of title and missing credits. **Explanation:** Such a note as **3pp. (4)** at the end of an abstract indicates an article length of about **three pages**, with its location in **Ref. No. 4** (see **Key to Journal References**).

BALTIC STATES

Missing Lithuanian Vital Records Found!

Howard Margol describes the discovery of hitherto unknown vital records of the Panevezys district including birth records for the period 1884-1921. **1p. (1)**

A New Belarus Surname Index Online. The location is:

www.jewishgen.org/belarus/static_index.htm
This site indexes surnames that appear in small databases not yet included in the "All Belarus Database". It comprises over 13,000 unique surnames from 44 different databases. **1p. (4)**

CANADA

Indices to Jews in Canadian Censuses, 1851-1901 are listed by Hal Bookbinder and first appeared in Jewishgen. All indices are available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. **1p. (16)**

FORMER SOVIET UNION

Ships Missing from *Migrations from the Russian Empire* reports an omission rate of about 30% in the manifests of ships carrying Russian immigrants (and known to have docked in New York), in the reference work

known as Glazier's *Migrations from the Russian Empire*. **1p. (1)**

JRI-Poland Expanding into Ukrainian Galicia. Many areas of Western Ukraine will now be covered by the AGAD (Archiwum Główny Akt Dawnych = Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw) project. This will mean genealogists will have easy access to the vital records from a host of towns in the East Galician area (now part of Ukraine). A comprehensive listing of towns complete with the old Polish name, together with periods of birth, marriage and death records that will be available, is included in the article. **4pp. (8)**

GREAT BRITAIN

21st International Conference on Jewish Genealogy 8-13 July 2001. The International Conference, called **London2001**, will take place at the Inter-Continental Hotel, Hyde Park Corner. There will be a platform of 150 speakers from all five continents and the Conference promises to be the most ambitious Jewish genealogical event ever to be hosted in Europe. Full information can be obtained at: www.jewishgen.org/london2001

Mid-19th-century Immigration Records at Kew. Petra Laidlaw destroys the myth that there are no records of immigration to the UK before the 1890s. **4pp. (12)**

Jewish Burial Sites In and Around London. This is a useful article by Rosemary and Derek Wenzel listing all Jewish Burial Grounds in and around London from about 1796, together with visiting information and location of burial societies. **4pp. (13)**

Tower Hamlets Local History Library. A description by Cyril Fox of what is probably the most useful library in London for persons researching the East End, the first area of Jewish settlement. **3pp. (13)**

The Role of Shelters in Jewish Migration via the UK by Nicholas Evans is a description of the temporary shelters provided in England for part of the 2.4 million Jews who emigrated from the Pale of Settlement en route for the United States, Britain and other countries. A useful database containing many of the registers is quoted. **5pp. (13)**

HOLLAND

History of Jewish Communities in Leiden and Rotterdam. One article by F. de Beer, covering the period 1700-1722, provides data on the Jewish community in Leiden, while another, by Bart Wallet, describes two small Jewish communities in the rural surroundings of Rotterdam during the 19th century. Lydia Hagoort writes about problems caused by mixed marriages between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in 18th century Amsterdam. **28pp. (11)**

POLAND

JRI-Poland Expanding into Ukrainian Galicia. Many areas of Western Ukraine will now be covered by the AGAD (Archiwum Główny Akt Dawnych = Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw) project. This will mean genealogists will have easy access to the vital records from a host of towns in the East Galician area (now part of Ukraine). A comprehensive listing of towns complete with the old Polish name, together with periods of birth, marriage and death records that will be available is included in the article. **4pp. (8)**

Maps of Poland

Daniel Kazez announces that an extremely detailed map of Poland is available from LDS at the following web address: www.familysearch.org/Search/searchcatalog.asp Relevant film No.: 6,312,622. Title is Mapa Polski (Taktyczna). The set comprises 483 maps of Poland as it existed between WWI and WWII (1918-1939) **1p. (9)**

TURKEY

Russian & Romanian Jews of Aidin

(Turkey) in 1889. Laurence Abensur-Hazan provides details of a kind of census, listing the surname and first names of family members with indications of the family relationship, age, country of origin and comments. The documents originate from the Alliance Israelite Universelle Archives in Paris. **2pp. (12)**

UNITED STATES

Genealogical Resources in New York comprises a very useful list by Steven Siegel of genealogical holdings at major repositories, including addresses, lists of vital records, naturalization records and census records. **6pp. (2)**

Indexing of Brooklyn Naturalizations. The second phase of the project of computerizing the index to the Kings County Clerks Office naturalizations has been completed. There are over 240,000 names in the database, which represents 97% of persons naturalized in the State Supreme Court in Brooklyn. **1p. (3)**

A Primer on Census Research. An informative article by Lillian Faffer and Roger D. Joslyn providing much information on basic research, methodology and interpretation of the U.S. census. Includes a list of census finding aids. **5pp. (3)**

Heritage Quest Completes Digitization Project of U.S. Federal Census Records. The census records cover the period 1790-1920 and comprise enhanced digital images of over 12,000 rolls of census microfilm. **1p. (5)**

Jewish History Resources in NY State has been recently published as an online guide and in the format of a 28-page print. The printed version is available from the New York State Archives in Albany. **1p. (7)**

GENEALOGY SOFTWARE & THE INTERNET

Using the Internet to Build Your Family Tree. Although this article by Elias Savada

comprises an account of a search into the history of a specific family, there are so many useful guidelines and source references that it is recommended reading for every family history researcher. **3pp. (1)**

GenealogySpot.com Web Site is a recent addition to online resources and offers a variety of links to databases, reference sources, genealogical resources and advice, how-to-sites and special genealogical topics. **1p. (3)**

A New Genealogical Search Engine located at the following address: www.GenDoor.com **1p. (4)**

The Internet Beyond JewishGen compiled by Rodger Rosenberg is a listing of very many websites of interest to genealogists. **3pp. (15)**

JEWISH GENEALOGY – GENERAL

Ellis Island Passenger Arrival Database 98 Percent Complete is excerpted from a talk given by Jayare Roberts at the Jewish Genealogy Conference of July 2000 at Salt Lake City. This database is now (from 15th April 2001) available for public use and is the result of volunteer effort by thousands of members of the LDS Church. The period 1892-1924 is covered. **3pp. (1)**

European Emigration and Its Mark on Genealogical Research is the title of a symposium held in October 2000 and sponsored jointly by the City of Hamburg and its city archives. Salient points of the Symposium are described by Sallyann Amdur Sack. **2pp. (1)**

A Translation Guide to Polish, German, Latin and Russian Documents. Vol.1: Polish. This useful 392pp. reference work by Jonathan Shea and William Hoffman is reviewed by Bill Gladstone. **1p. (1)**

What Did My Ancestor's Ship Look Like? describes the ShipsList at Rootsweb and gives info on subscribing. A list of sources of pictures for ships and maritime museums is

included. **1p. (6)**

21st International Conference on Jewish Genealogy 8-13 July 2001. The International Conference, called **London2001**, will take place at the Inter-Continental Hotel, Hyde Park Corner. There will be a platform of 150 speakers from all five continents and the conference promises to be the most ambitious Jewish genealogical event ever to be hosted in Europe. Full information can be obtained at: www.jewishgen.org/london2001

Using Computer Spreadsheets to Solve Problems of Shtetl Locations. Donald Solomon describes an original and erudite graphical solution to the problem of dealing with the locations of a multiplicity of shtetls. **3pp. (10)**

HOLOCAUST-RELATED GENEALOGICAL SOURCES

International Tracing Service: Mother Lode of Holocaust Information by Sallyann A.Sack describes the history of the tracing service that contains 18 million names and 47 million files. ITS justifies its refusal to post the Central Index of Names on the Internet. **5pp. (1)**

Dachau Records at the United States National Archives. Peter Lande's article focuses on one portion of a collection, comprising 158 reels of microfilm, from the U.S. National Archives, including unpublished info on the fate of hundreds of thousands of Jews and non-Jews on deportation lists and at various camps. **1p. (1)**

My Attempts to Settle with Generali by Claire Bruell tells an interesting story of an insurance policy taken out by her late father in 1927 and of her efforts to obtain information on the disposal of that policy from the Assicurazioni Generali insurance company. **2pp. (1)**

Useful Websites for Study of the Holocaust are compiled by Kenneth Waltzer. **1p. (14)**

KEY TO JOURNAL REFERENCES

Ref No.	JOURNAL	GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	ISSUE	YEAR	VOL	No
1	AVOTAYNU	International	Winter	2000	XVI	4
2	THE CLEVELAND KOL	Cleveland	June	2000	13	1&2
3	DOROT	New York	Winter	2000/1	22	2
4	ETZ CHAIM	Greater Orlando	Spring	2001	11	3
5	GENERATIONS	Michigan	Summer	2000	15	3
6	ILLIANA	Illinois	Spring	2001	-	-
7	JGSLI LINEAGE	Long Island	Summer	2000	XII	2
8	JGSLI LINEAGE	Long Island	Winter	2001	XIII	1
9	J.GEN. DOWNUNDER	Australia	August	2000	2	3
10	MASS-POCHA	Greater Boston	Summer/Fall	2000	IX	2&3
11	MISJPOGE	Holland	Spring	2001	-	-
12	SHEMOT	Great Britain	December	2000	8	4
13	SHEMOT	Great Britain	March	2001	9	1
14	SHEM TOV	Canada	September	2000	XVI	3
15	SHEM TOV	Canada	March	2001	XVII	1
16	ZICHRONNOTE	San Francisco	November	2000	XX	4

