



שרשרת הדורות

SHARSHERET HADOKROT

FAMILY ROOTS RESEARCH PERIODICAL

Vol.10 No.1

Published by the ISRAEL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Jerusalem, January 1996

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THE SOCIETY AND ITS PUBLICATIONS

EDITORIAL

This issue inaugurates Volume 10 of Sharsheret Hadorot, and readers will find a wealth of interesting and informative articles within. When we look back to our first issues - a few pages mainly devoted to information about the Society - we can justifiably feel proud of the progress we have made over the years, both in number of members and in quality of research.

You, our devoted members, continue to contribute to our progress and to the furtherance of genealogical research in Israel and the world.

We look forward to many more years of fruitful joint endeavour.

Esther Ramon, Joachim Eilon and Ruth Rigbi

Sharsheret Hadorot is published three times a year by the Israel Genealogical Society,
Harav Uziel 50, 96424 Jerusalem, Tel: 02-424147.
ISSN 0792-5751

Previous Publications

"Sharsheret Hadorot"		Regular Price	Members
Each issue	1-2	8.- NIS	5.- NIS
Each issue	3-7	15.- NIS	12.- NIS
Each issue	8-9	20.- NIS	15.- NIS
Key to volumes	1-7	18.- NIS	15.- NIS
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"שרשרת הדורות", ינואר 1996, כרך י' מס' 1

Forthcoming Lectures

- Wednesday 24.1.1996 **Dr. Shimon Rubinstein**, Director of Yad Ben-Zvi Archives:
Following the Greenberg and Rubinstein families from Russia
to Romania, Turkey, Egypt and Eretz Israel.
- Wednesday 21.2.1996 **The Shealtiel Family** - Unexpected Family Research
- Wednesday 20.3.1996 **Prof. Menashe Harel** - On the Jews of Bukhara and their
connections with Eretz Israel.
- Wednesday 17.4.1996 **Len Yodaiken**, Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi - A Baltic Trip in Search of My
Roots

The lectures begin at 19.30 and the library is open from 18.00 at "Mevakshei Derech",
22 Sderot Shai Agnon, San Simon, Jerusalem.

Important Notices

- A. All members who have leaflets, booklets or books from the library are requested to return them to the library at the next meeting.
- B. Any question to our society or request for genealogical information has to be accompanied by three stamps for local use (for Israelis) or three international coupons (requests from abroad).
- C. Any application from non-members to publish a request in "Sharsheret Hadorot" requires payment: From abroad \$5.-, from Israel 15.- NIS.

IN MEMORIAN

We mourn the death of our member Shalom Goldschmidt

Shalom was very interested in Genealogy and helped us much in the work in our society as the treasurer and the auditor.

He was born in Hamburg in 1916 and came to this country in 1935.

He tried to research the Goldschmidt Family in Hamburg and the Wigdorowitz Family on his mother's side who believed that they were descendants of the Baal Hatanya.

Our sincere condolences to Shalom's family.

We express our condolences to **Dr. Sallyann Amdur Sack** on the death of her father.

FURTHER TO LECTURES WE HAVE HEARD

Names and Identity Among the Bene Israel¹

by Shalva Weil

The Bene Israel are a group of Indian Jews, the majority of whom have emigrated from India to Israel since 1948. They represent one of Israel's more unusual immigrant groups both because of their continued cultural distinctiveness in Israel and because of their past history in India.

According to their tradition, the Bene Israel were shipwrecked off the Konkan coast of India in 175 B.C.² For centuries the Bene Israel were isolated from the mainstream of Judaism. When first 'discovered', probably in the eighteenth century,³ the Bene Israel were found to be practising circumcision and to be observing the Jewish dietary laws and many Jewish festivals, although certain of their religious practices were alien to Jews in the rest of the world. This led the 'Baghdadi' Jews who moved from Iraq to India in the nineteenth century to question the 'Jewishness' of the Bene Israel, a question which was only finally resolved by a motion in the Israeli Parliament in 1964 in favour of the Bene Israel.⁴

Bene Israel immigration to Israel began after the independence of Israel in 1948 and the independence of India in the previous year. There are 40,000 Bene Israel living today in Israel whilst 5,000 remain in India, in the Bombay region. The vast majority of the Bene Israel in Israel are settled in 'development' or 'immigrant towns', the largest concentrations being in the towns of Dimona, Beersheba, Ashdod and Lod.

The Bene Israel are both physically and culturally distinctive in Israel. They are dark skinned and have black hair. Many of the women wear saris and even the teenage girls (many of whom may have been born in Israel) wear saris on ceremonial occasions. Bene Israel spend their leisure time in group activities, visiting kin or attending community meetings. Marriages are largely contracted within the group, the wedding being an elaborate affair involving large numbers of people. Names, too, distinguish the Bene Israel from other *'edot* in Israel, as they often select particular names which automatically indicate their ethnic membership.

Every Bene Israel has at least 3 names, although not all of these may be in constant use.

A. Personal Names

A personal name is given to a person at birth by kin at a special ceremony. In the case of a boy, the name is declared publicly as is common among other Jewish groups, at the Brith. In the case of a girl, the 'naming ceremony' is traditionally celebrated on the fourteenth day after birth, although a name may not be given until the purification rite on the eightieth day after birth or even later.

A child is usually named after a grandparent or other close kinsman now deceased but occasionally he may be named after a living relative. The Bene Israel are traditionally called by

popular Biblical names of the Patriarchs, some of the twelve tribes of Israel and favourite prophets. As with other 'edot, certain Biblical names are more popular than others. Among males, the names of Ezekiel, Daniel, Benjamin, Moses, Samuel and Elijah are most conspicuously common whereas among the females the names of the matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachel) are the most popular.

Certain Biblical names were avoided in the past because of negative connotations Bene Israel attributed to them. Thus the name Judah was not popular among males because the Bene Israel wished to stress their descent from the tribes of Israel rather than from the tribes of Judah. Similarly, the name Esther was not adopted by females because Esther married a non-Jew, the Persian King Ahasuerus, and the Bene Israel were keen to express their disapproval of marriage with non-Jews.

B. Second Names - Patronymy or Andronymy

A person's second name is usually a patronym in the case of a male and an andronym in the case of a female. In the latter case the andronym confirms the incorporation of the wife into the family of her husband and her implicit acceptance of the conjugal rights and duties associated with that role.

Although patronyms together with personal names were a recognized means of identification in India, patronyms were not in the past used as surnames *per se*. These were the function of -kar names which are to be discussed in the next section. However, upon contact with the British and later, upon immigration to Israel, patronyms were often adopted as surnames. In some cases a grandfather's name was assumed, particularly if it was a more popular name such as Daniel or Ezekiel.

It is not uncommon, therefore, for the surnames of brothers to differ, one brother having selected his patronym as surname and the other brother having selected his grandfather's name as surname.

C. Traditional Surnames or 'Kar Names

The surname of the Bene Israel is traditionally his -kar name which relates him to his village of origin on the Konkan coast. There are over 100 known Bene Israel -kar names representing the villages with which the Bene Israel have been associated since their arrival in India. Thus if a Bene Israel family lived in the village of Ashtame, they were called Ashtamkar or, if a family lived in the village of Rohe they adopted the surname Rohekar. In many villages which embody the -kar name root there is clear evidence today of Jewish settlement. In Pen, for example, a Bene Israel synagogue still stands and prayers are held on Jewish High Holidays.

Surprisingly, perhaps, -kar names do not reflect special status on the basis of internal social ranking in terms of prestige, wealth, education or other criteria employed to order and categorize members. Certain -kar names evoke particular associations for the Bene Israel but this relates to outstanding historical events or personalities rather than to ascriptive social characteristics. The Doodkars, for example, are traditionally associated with the sale of milk (Dood = milk in Marathi) whilst the Killekars were commanders of a fort in pre-British days (Kille = fort in Marathi).

Three Bene Israel families were granted Sanads (Royal Edicts) to act as Kajis (ritual leaders) from the Mogul rulers and then from the chiefs of Angria and Janjira (the Shapurkar, Rajpukar and Jiradkar families were responsible for the religious instruction of the community in the past).

-Kar names serve two functions. On the one hand, they differentiate Bene Israel from other Jewish communities. On the other hand, -kar names act as individualizers, endowing the individual with identity in a situation where his personal name and second name give little clue as to individuality. (The superimposition of a -kar name, however, identifies him for members of the community as a particular Abraham Benjamin such as Abraham Benjamin Dighorkar or Abraham Benjamin Bhonkar.

The Bene Israel do not always posit a genealogical link between -kars of the same name. A Dighorkar does not address another Dighorkar by a kinship term unless the two can actually trace a kin connection. Nevertheless, a vague kin bond unites two people sharing the same -kar designation: they will state that "they must be related somehow".

In Israel the fictive kinship ties established by Bene Israel sharing the same -kar name (but who cannot establish a real genealogical link) are of significance only in limited social situations. These are best exemplified in the Bene Israel prescription that when a man dies who has no kin, a man with the same -kar as the deceased is called upon to recite the Kaddish (prayer memorializing the dead) for him. Where no such man is available, a Nowgaowkar must say the Kaddish. In this simple rule fictive kinship links are established in a ritual situation between Bene Israels originating in the same village. A Nowgaowkar is called upon in the last resort because Nowgaow is the village where the Bene Israel arrived on the Konkan coast after the shipwreck in 175 B.C. which brought them to the shores of India.

Our first written records of the Bene Israel extend back only to the eighteenth century when we encounter documents mentioning Bene Israel males with Hindu personal names such as Alloba, Sukoba, Rowji, Dhumbaji, Bhikaji, Nuthu, Bapu and so on and Bene Israel females with names such as Ranu, Byna, Maka, Dadibai and Sonabai.

The assumption of the Bene Israel is that Biblical names preceded these Hindu names and remained constant from the time they left the kingdom of Israel until this period.

After the advent of the British in Bombay in 1661, British influence in the region extended to the Konkan villages where the Bene Israel lived. The first Bene Israel recruit to the British Armed Forces is recorded as 1760, to be followed by many other Bene Israel who distinguished themselves in the Native Regiments. Bene Israel began to move from the villages to the city of Bombay where the British guaranteed freedom of religion. The 'Gate of Mercy' synagogue which was established in 1796 in Bombay lays testimony to the fact that a community of Bene Israel were living in the city by that date.

This period of social change was accompanied by rapid name changes as greater numbers of Bene Israel spoke English, attended British schools and higher institutions of learning and identified themselves with their British rulers. By the twentieth century and the subsequent termination of

British rule in 1947, nearly all Bene Israel had modified their personal names to the British equivalents calling themselves Ezekiel instead of Hassaji or Abraham instead of Abaji. A small proportion had innovated and assumed British first names like Emma, Flora or George. With respect to village surnames the transformation took one of several courses. In some cases the -kar name was modified to come in line with British surnames, that Ashtamkar became Aston, Bastekar became Best or Walwatkar became Walter. More commonly, -kar names were replaced by Biblical surnames, a Bene Israel being known in the wider society as Ephraim Daniels or Reuben Enoch. Among a small minority, the "Madrasa" form of names was adopted, whereby the order of names was inverted and the -kar name initial alone was used. A person with the names Moses David Ashtukar would by this system be known as A.M. David.

By the end of British rule, the non-employment of -kar surnames in the non-Bene Israel world was associated with a high level of secular education and prestigious mode of occupation.

In Israel two major patterns in name-changing can be discerned among the Bene Israel. The first pattern is the substitution of Israeli personal names for traditional Biblical personal names, and the second pattern is the substitution of Biblical surnames for village surnames.

The two changes are related to an internal desire to identify as 'Israelis' and to an external pressure to conform. Among other doctrines, Israeli ideology in the early years of the State advocated integration as stated in terms of *kibbutz galuyot* ("the ingathering of the exiles") and *mizug galuyot* ("the blending of the exiles"), doctrines which continue to influence public policy and popular belief today.

In conclusion, it can be said that name-changing is one of the easiest methods of demonstrating national loyalty. It requires no sudden break with tradition and it emphasizes an immediate attachment to a different order. On the basis of the material I have presented, the reader can detect both the striving of a minority to be accepted as national equals and the continued attachment of the group to the symbols of ethnic identity. The material presented in this paper shows, I hope, that ethnic and national identity need not conflict and that the relationship between the two is more complex than is commonly portrayed.

Notes:

1. This paper is a revised version of a paper presented to the 3rd annual meeting of the Israel Anthropological Society, Haifa, March 20, 1975. I should like to express my appreciation to Shlomo Deshen, A.L. Epstein, Michael Weil and Alex Weingrod for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. The fieldwork on which this study is based was carried out from 1972-1974 with the generous support of the Social Science Research Council, England and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, U.S.A.
2. Kehimkar (1937:15).
3. The earliest evidence I can find of a Bene Israel community in the Konkan area comes from the discovery by an Indian forestry officer of an ancient cemetery near Pen about 60 miles north-west

of Bombay. The cemetery, which is estimated to be 200-300 years old, is situated near one of the battlements of Maharashtra State's warrior hero, Sivaji, who lived from 1627-1680 lending support to the view that Bene Israel lived in the area and served in local armies. The black rocks used as tombstones had inscriptions in English, Marathi and Hebrew. (Jewish Chronicle 27 March 1970, p.15).

From 1962-1964 the Bene Israel intermittently held sit-down strikes in Israel in order to demand equality with other Jews in all matters, including matrimonial matters since several Rabbis in Israel had refused to marry Bene Israel to other Jews on the grounds that the Bene Israel were not 'full' Jews. In 1964 the matter was finally solved after a motion in the Israeli Parliament called upon the Chief Rabbinate not to extend any type of special treatment to the Bene Israel who were "Jews in every aspect...equal in their rights to all other Jews in every matter, including matters of matrimony".

For an interesting enquiry into the isolation and peculiar cultural traits of a group of Jews from Tripolitania see Goldberg (1974).

See also: "Digging into One's Roots in India" - Isaak Saul Sankar, Sharsheret Hadorot 9/2.

A NAME WITH TWO MEANINGS

Mathilde Tagger

Jamila - (Djamila) is a woman's name in Arabic meaning: beautiful. It was popular amongst those expelled from Spain and dispersed from Morocco to Bulgaria.

It has synonyms for example:

Yafa in contemporary Hebrew

Bella - of Latin origin

Hermosa - in Spanish

Scheine-in Yiddish

Hoping for a son after three or four daughters, when yet another daughter was born, Moroccan Jews would call the baby Jamila.

It is explained thus: *Ja* means "come" in Arabic and *Mila* = Brit Mila in Hebrew. In other words - put an end to the birth of girls, let sons arrive.

1. Gorr, Shmuel: Jewish Personal Names. Teaneck, N.J. Avotaynu 1992, p.112.

2. Laredo, Abraham: Les Noms des Juifs du Maroc. Madrid 1978, p.1161.

**THE HISTORY AND MANUSCRIPTS OF
THE PHYSICIAN-WRITER,
PROFESSOR SIGNIOR CHAIM ISRAEL MEIR MIZRACHI
SEPHARDIC RABBI AND EMISSARY
FROM THE DYNASTY OF THE "JERUSALEM MIZRACHI LIGHTS"**

by **Shimon Aplatony**

My Research Path

The personality of **Signior Chaim**, my late father's grandfather, and his manuscripts were what first attracted me to the fascinating research, which gradually ramified and at times seemed to take over my life. Already as a child I was told by my father about the manuscripts. He used to tell me also with pride, that his father was a known surgeon who had received a royal rank of general, in Persia, and that his grandfather Signior Chaim was a distinguished physician and surgeon, who once with his children headed a 600-strong medical expedition which set out from Persia to treat an epidemic in a neighbouring country... However, it was only in 1984, after 10 years abroad in various countries, that I began to study the manuscripts and to investigate our family roots.

With my father's help I learned to read Sephardic Rashi script and tried to understand what was written in Judeo-Arabic and in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish). Having lived in Mexico for a short time I knew a little Spanish. I found book dedications in which Signior Chaim recorded his family origins and his pedigree. From notes and dates in various manuscripts, I learned the story of his life, the lands in which he lived and travelled, his status, the greatness of his personality, his knowledge, his intellectual and religious world, his feeling of belonging to a distinguished dynasty, his love for Judaism and for Zion, and his national pride. My early childhood studies as a pupil at "Beth-Yaakov" school assisted me.

From my father and mother I collected details on the life of Signior Chaim, as they had passed down in the family. I learned of his fate, and the fate of my grandfather Shimon. My father helped me a great deal with his extensive knowledge, and put the written material at my disposal. Searching through library catalogues, I found books that were written by Signior Chaim's ancestors in Jerusalem and were published, and additional manuscript works by Signior Chaim, in libraries in Israel and abroad. I gradually built a family tree of ten generations, beginning in 1644, date of the will of Rabbi Baruch Mizrachi, the first one known to me in the dynasty. From letters that I found among the manuscript pages it became clear that the family of Yitzhak Navon, fifth President of Israel, are the great-grandchildren of Signior Chaim's sister Sara Mizrachi, who was married to R. Rachamim Navon. I also got to know the family of Mr. Shmuel Shamir-Mizrachi, the scholarly researcher upon the recommendation of Prof. Meir Benayahu. Our meeting was exciting... Mrs. Mazal Linenberg-Navon was very sympathetic, warm and helpful to me in my first efforts to learn Ladino. In time I learned to read fluently in Signior Chaim's great manuscript 'Tzitz Rephua' ("Blossom of Medicine") written in Ladino - a massive work on medicine and its history.

I recorded my researches in writing and in numerous photocopies of material. Signior Chaim's writings covered more than 50 years. When I showed my father the design (from a manuscript) of Signior Chaim dressed in uniform of a high officer mounted on his horse, as it appears on the front page of "Tzitz Rephua", first edition of 1845, he asked me in wonder: "Where did you find such things?" My mother was an active partner in advancing my research, contributing acute observation, historical memory and good advice. From my parents' reminiscences I collected fascinating facts about Jewish community life in their towns of origin. In writing the material I was aided by experience (I had written since early youth), and by my university studies in Hebrew literature.

Research into family roots and the manuscripts brought about a revolution in my life. I began to acquaint myself with Jewish thought, Chassidic literature, liturgical poetry and the Jewish "wisdom and morality literature". Emotionally, I felt a growing attachment to my birthplace in Persian Azerbaijan and a growing desire to learn about the old Jewish life of the town.

I searched at the Mount of Olives cemetery for my ancestors' graves, but without success. Then, a few days after my lecture to the Society, I searched again and was deeply moved to find the grave of the 'Rishon le Zion' (Sephardic Chief Rabbi) Moshe Mizrachi and the grave of Signior Chaim's father - Rabbi Rachamim-Pinchas, and of his mother - Luna Mizrachi, not far from the grave of the late Rabbi Chaim Ben-Attar.

In the course of my research I was sometimes faced with difficulties which were unexpectedly and movingly resolved after years. For example, in discovering the grave of Signior Chaim's mother, I found that he named his daughter Luna after his mother, on whose tombstone is inscribed - "Luna de Mizrachi".

For generations members of the dynasty of "The Mizrachi Lights" (in Hebrew - "Ha-Nerot Hamizrachiot") were heads of the 'Yochanan Ben Zakkai synagogues' in the Old City of Jerusalem, and especially of the 'Istambulis', cantors and writers.

I will briefly describe the outstanding personalities of the dynasty, and then in more detail, describe Signior Chaim Mizrachi in the light of his achievements, and will reproduce the family tree and a number of illustrations and dedications from his manuscripts.

Members of the Dynasty of "Jerusalem Mizrachi Lights"

Rabbi Baruch Mizrachi

Made a will in 1644, ordering his heirs not to sell his house in the Old City of Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah, when the dead would rise again and he would return to live in his old home... Meanwhile he permitted the house to be used by Jewish scholars for study purposes. His will appears in the book - "Pri Haaretz" (The Fruit of the Land) by Rabbi Israel Meir Mizrachi (one of the two "Mizrachi Lights"), brother of Rabbi Moshe Mizrachi the 'Rishon le Zion'. The will is also printed in 'Nitzotzot Geulah', a book by Heyman Hayerushalmi, published in 1949.

Rabbi Abraham ben Baruch Mizrachi

"Expert Shochet and Dayan (judge) in the Holy City of Jerusalem", according to the title-page of his book 'Zicaron Le Bnei Yisrael', which deals with the laws of ritual slaughtering and kashrut. The book was printed in Amsterdam in 1697.

Rabbi Joseph Mizrachi - Was the Father of the "Mizrachi Lights". A Jerusalem sage, whose death is mentioned on the title-page of 'Zicaron Le Bnei Yisrael', his father Abraham's book. The publisher notes there that R. Joseph's two brilliant young sons, Moshe Chaim Nissim Mizrachi and Israel Meir Mizrachi, have taken their late father's place. Comparing the date of this note with the subsequent dates of death of the two, I realized that they lived to a ripe old age.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Nissim Mizrachi, the Rishon le Zion, (Head of Jerusalem's Rabbis).

He appears as first in the list in the booklet 'Rishonim Ke-malachim', 'Geonei Aretz, Rashei Rabbanei Edat Hasepharadim beYerushalayim, Menuchotam al Har Hazetim' ('The First Like Angels', The Erudite of the Nation, the Head Rabbis of the Sepharadic Community of Jerusalem, buried on the Mount of Olives) by Pinchas Grayevsky, (1928).

He was one of the two brilliant brothers known as the "Jerusalem Mizrachi Lights". He was the author of a book of responsa called 'Admat Kodesh' (Holy Land) in two parts that was printed in Salonika and Istanbul, written in Hebrew with scattered interpolations in Ladino. In his last years he was crowned as Rishon le Zion in the Yochanan ben Zakkai synagogue in the old City of Jerusalem. After 5 years in this position, he died at an old age in 1749, and was buried on the Mount of Olives. His tombstone inscription praises him and laments his passing. He was famed for his piety and humility, as is written in the foreword to his book: "The rabbi was humble as Moses, resembling an angel of the Lord, in his days peace and truth". He never left the Land of Israel but spent his days in prayer. On the High Holy days he led the services. He taught at the 'Beth Yaakov Pereira Yeshiva', where his brother Israel Meir Mizrachi and 'the Hida', (Rabbi Chaim Israel David Azulai) both studied.

Respected and esteemed as he was, head of the community and head of the Yeshiva, he was arrested more than once by the authorities and imprisoned in shackles, in order to extract a ransom (as recounted in the foreword to his book), until the community paid the ransom and freed him. He was renowned far and wide for his learning: even in the Beth Midrash (Center for Religious Studies) of the "Chacham Bashi" (Chief Rabbi of the Turkish Empire) in Istanbul, his judgments were respected. I found various dedications on the title pages of Signior Chaim's writings emphasizing his pedigree as "the great-grandson and grandson of the Rabbi of 'Admat

Kodesh', the brilliant scholar, head of the community and head of the Yeshiva, Moshe Mizrachi, may his memory be for a blessing..."

R. Pinchas Joseph Mizrachi

Was the son of Rabbi Moshe Mizrachi. He wrote a preface to his father's book 'Admat Kodesh' (Holy Land). I do not have much information about him, except that he was a learned scholar.

Rabbi Israel Meir Mizrachi

Brother of R. Moshe Mizrachi, was the second of the "Mizrachi Lights" and famed for his brilliance. He composed a noted book of responsa, 'Pri Ha-aretz' (The Fruit of the Land) in three parts, the third of which was published many years after his death by one of his descendants. The book contains the 1644 will of R. Baruch Mizrachi. Israel Meir was close in age to his brother Moshe, and died not long after him in 1749. Unlike his brother, Israel Meir travelled the world. He was an emissary in Turkey and other countries, and in 1714, during a stay in Corfu, he founded a model 'mutual aid society' there. His name appears in history books as a semi-legendary figure. His tombstone is on the Mount of Olives.

Rabbi Rachamim Pinchas Mizrachi

Known as **Bechor**, was the father of Signior Chaim Mizrachi. He was scribe and head of the Beth Yaakov Pereira Yeshiva, according to Frumkin, and he signed important regulations and documents. He is described on the title-page of 'Sepher-Likutim-Or Chaim' by Signior Chaim from 1872 in the most glowing terms as 'the holy Rabbi', 'the excellent judge and writer', a Rabbi in Israel, a holy Chassid, an excellent judge, leader of the community and head of the Yeshiva...". His tombstone on the Mount of Olives, from 1850, uses the same terms, adding that he would rise early to the Beth Midrash and leave late from the synagogue. In the Montefiore censuses there is a note that he is "more than six generations in Jerusalem" - which indicates that there were earlier members of the dynasty in the city before R. Baruch Mizrachi mentioned above.

Professor-Doctor Signior Chaim Israel Meir Mizrachi

Signior Chaim Israel Meir Mizrachi Ha-Yerushalmi ('the Jerusalemite', as he used to sign himself) was a physician, surgeon, pharmacist, chemist, botanist, medical author, researcher, philosopher and cabbalist, poet and sweet singer, anthologist of Jewish liturgical poetry and thought, Jewish historian, rabbi and leader. He was a son of Jerusalem, as he emphasized proudly his connection on the title-page of 'Tzitz Rephua' where he wrote: "the youngest and smallest of all the sons of my city Jerusalem". He was born about 1800 and died in 1879 in the city of Urmia in Iran (Persian Azerbaijan, Turkish-speaking area).

The name of Signior Chaim Israel Meir contains the names of the two brilliant brothers, the "Mizrachi Lights" - Chaim and Israel Meir, who were his ancestors. His son Shimon wrote about the pedigree in a dedication to his father's book 'Or Chaim' (The Light of Life): "A high family in Jerusalem, great-grandson and grandson of the great Rabbi and Talmudist Moshe Mizrachi..." Signior Chaim himself wrote longingly at the end of the first part of 'Tzitz Rephua': "A dynasty of distinction and holiness... God will take me back up to the holy land"... He wrote this in old age. (Far from Jerusalem)

In the Montefiore census of the Jews of Palestine in the early 19th century the young Signior Chaim is described as a learned person, "of the holy seed of the Mizrachi lights". One assumes that in childhood and youth he studied in his father's Yeshiva. As a very young man he travelled to Padua, historically a centre of Jewish physicians-poets, to study medicine and philosophy and pursue his sacred studies further. It was in Padua that he wrote his first book of medicine in 1824 (the title-page says: "I wrote it in my youth in the city of Padua"). He returned to Jerusalem, where in 1845 he wrote the first shorter version of 'Tzitz Rephua' in Ladino.

Subsequently Signior Chaim travelled to various countries as a high ranking army doctor, and he appears to have become in time the chief Ottoman physician, as his son Shimon writes in Persian on the title page in a book of 'Psalms' (written with Ladino translation), beside the date of his father's death: "On the day he died," My revered father, the crown of my head, 'Hakim Bashi' (Chief Doctor) Signior Chaim Mizrachi died on...".

Signior Chaim served as a rabbinical emissary, and apparently also as a rabbinical judge. He spent many years in Baghdad and Kirkuk in what is today Iraq, and also apparently spent a long period in Salonika, where according to my father's family tradition, he served as head of the health services for the Greek Peninsula. He returned from time to time to Jerusalem, and about 1860 travelled to Urmia, in Persia. He subsequently lived for years in Iraq, returned to Urmia and finally settled there. It was apparently in Urmia that in his old age he wrote the expanded version of 'Tzitz Rephua'. The book is a wide ranging compendium of medical knowledge and medical history, anatomy and surgery. Three parts, in two volumes, in all about 800 pages. (The first volume was kept in the family; I found the second in a library in Israel.) It contains a survey of all known illnesses (including mental illnesses), about 1500 prescriptions for treatment and philosophy. In this book Signior Chaim concentrated material from many other works, and infused it with his own experience as a doctor. As he notes in the introduction, he wrote the book as a textbook and guide for the Jewish doctors of Turkey, with concepts in Latin, so that they will be able to debate honourably with arrogant non-Jewish doctors. This is his crowning work. It has not yet been printed.

Signior Chaim Mizrachi wrote mostly in Ladino, Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew, also some poems in Turkish. In his books he wrote glossaries and key concepts in Persian, Italian, Greek and Latin. He copied and also abbreviated and edited ancient books of medicine, catalogued a great deal of material, and wrote much from his own experience. His Jewish Talmudic background is reflected in his writing. In addition, he collected immense numbers of liturgical poems and works of Jewish thought. He also wrote, in beautiful handwriting Jewish poems in calligraphic forms employing eastern and Jewish motifs, called 'Sepher Pizmonim Yerushalayim' (Jerusalem Book of Hymns), a high level work of art.

One of his outstanding works is a voluminous manuscript on the history of false messianism, anti-Semitism and disputations with Christianity. In these handwritten anthologies of poetry and thought the author's name is not written.

Signior Chaim's standing as a great scholar, Talmudist and cabbalist is reflected in the fact that other scholars had dedicated and sent their manuscripts to him as presents. One such manuscript is a weighty work called 'Beth Vaad le-Chachamim', containing cabbalistic interpretations of a

sage on Talmudic segments, written in an exquisite hand, dated 1858 by a scholar born in Pinsk who settled in Jerusalem. The manuscript was sent according to the inscription: "A gift sent from the holy city of Jerusalem to the lofty sage, emissary, Jewish poet and singer, leader of Israel, outstanding doctor, of holy seed, master and teacher Chaim Mizrachi, resident of the great city of Babylon".

Over the years, Signior Chaim amassed wealth and property. It seems that in his old age he had suffered from persecution. In his will, which appears in one of his writings, he commands his children to leave Persia with his bones and to bury him "with the holy ones" (apparently on the Mount of Olives). He died a sudden death in 1879 in Urmia. His death was deeply mourned in the city and surrounding country. Legends about him were passed on from generation to generation, as in stories of righteous-men. His burial place is unknown.

Apart from my grandfather Shimon, his other two children, Yitzhak Rachamim-Pinchas and Luna (Kamar) were well-known surgeons. They all were Turkish subjects as well. Many of his writings were intended to serve his children as scientific books and to give them knowledge on an international level, which would enable them to win arguments with non-Jewish doctors. In 'Tzitz Rephua' he quotes his sons' prescriptions. Signior Chaim's three brothers: Don Shlomo, Moshe-Yehuda and Shmuel Nehemia-Yitzhak Preciado, were well-known Jerusalem scholars, writers and qualified doctors. They too are quoted by Signior Chaim in 'Tzitz Rephua' in the phrase: "Disen los doctores-profesores"... ("As is said by the doctors-professors..."). This shows that they were well-known learned doctors of medicine, and disproves the history-books' version that in the middle of the 19th century there were as yet no doctors in Jerusalem. I think that Western researchers overlooked the existence of local Sephardi scholars and doctors of distinction, natives of Jerusalem. (Moshe-Yehuda, Signior Chaim's brother, was a well-known scribe, and it was apparently he who wrote the beautiful census reports of Moses Montefiore on the Jews of Eretz Israel.

Signior Chaim's medical books known to me, beside 'Tzitz Rephua' are:

'**Sepher Rephuot - Etz Chaim**' (The Tree of Life), Bagdad, 1857 - a comprehensive work on select medical topics, in Hebrew and Arabic.

'**Sepher Likutim - Or Chaim**' (Light of Life - Book of Selections), Kirkuk, 1832. Medical articles in Ladino, Arabic and Hebrew.

'**Sepher Yesod Hachaim - Sepher Hanuschot**' (The Foundation of Life - The Book of Formulas), Kirkuk, from the period of 'Or Chaim' - A medical and pharmacological lexicon in Arabic.

'**Sepher Mada Rephuot Haolam**' ('The Book of the Science of World Medicine') - a large manuscript containing copies of five important medical books in Hebrew: 'Sepher Rephuot Elisha HaYevani', 'Shvilei Emunah', by Rabbi Aldabi, 'Otzar hachaim' by the physician Rabbi Jacob Tzahalon (shortened and edited by Signior Chaim), 'Pirkei Abukarat' (chapters from Hippocrates), and 'Pirkei Moshe' by Maimonides. 'Sepher Kitzurei Galenus' - extracts from Galen in Judeo-Arabic. There are also beautiful copies of Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) 'Canon' and 'Sepher Hasamim' (Book of Drugs) signed by Signior Chaim and his sons.

My Grandfather - Dr. Shimon Aplaton Mizrachi

My grandfather Shimon, who also used to sign himself - **Dr. Simon** was born in Jerusalem about 1860. He was a celebrated physician and surgeon. At the age of 42 he received the rank of general with a royal certificate from the Crown Prince of Persia, who stayed with his entourage at his home in Mahabad (capital of Persian Azerbaijan, my birthplace). The Crown Prince also gave him as gifts a general's uniform with gold epaulettes, a fine sword and a noble horse in recognition of his medical services to the community at large. My grandfather, Dr. Simon used to spend the week travelling in his high officer's coach with accompanying retainers, to treat the sick both near and far. He would return home for the Sabbath. The local people called him "Aga Shimon" (Sir Shimon) - a title of respect. It is said that he was a tall and robust person, handsome, smiling and temperamental. He was a religious man, a scholar learned in Judaism; who also knew many languages and was a skilled astrologer. Because he was outstandingly bright and a gifted physician from his youth, his father called him - Aplaton (Plato), revering Plato the philosopher and as the father of medical wisdom. Aplaton became the family name from then onwards.

My grandfather had six sons and four daughters. All the sons but one - my father - died in childhood. My grandfather Shimon died suddenly in Mahabad in 1913, at the age of 52. When close to death, he ordered his wife Rivka to take good care of the manuscripts of his father Chaim, so that his son Shlomo (my father) would know his pedigree when he grew up. My grandfather's early death was a great blow to all.

My late grandmother **Rivka Aplaton (Rukia** in Turkish) was a women's doctor, an eye doctor and a noted pharmacist in Iran. After her husband's death she served as a doctor for nearly 40 years until her death in 1949 in Mahabad. Although she had never formally studied medicine, she had apparently learned a great deal from her husband. She had many patients, whom she treated for eye diseases, for skin and venereal diseases, and for barrenness. Her fame spread throughout the country. The local people called her out of honour "Rivka Khanem" (Lady Rivka). One high-ranking patient whom she cured had been barren for 13 years: this was the wife of Kazi, head of the New Socialist Republic of Persian Azerbaijan during the Second World War. Thanks to her intercession, Kazi cancelled the military conscription order that he had imposed upon Jewish youths. My grandmother Rivka's medical treatments were remarkably successful. She cured many 'incurable' cases of syphilis. Throughout the years, she preserved the manuscripts.

My Father - Shlomo Aplatony

My father was born in Mahabad in 1909. He studied dentistry in Tabriz and was formally qualified as a dentist in Teheran at the age of 24. At the same time he studied photography and music as a hobby, and made a number of records of Persian songs. In his youth he had also made progress in Islamic studies. His Jewish education was very advanced. At the age of 17 he wrote a Hebrew-New Aramaic dictionary of impressive beauty. He afterwards translated liturgical poems and important blessings from Hebrew into New Aramaic.

My father did his military service as head nurse and pharmacist of the military hospital at Urmia, birthplace of my mother Esther-Deborah, daughter of Rabbi Nissim Kalimi Chachamov, rabbi, cantor and head of the rabbinical court of the Jewish community of Urmia, an expert Mohel (circumciser) and master goldsmith. My father Shlomo married my mother Esther-Deborah in 1940. In the great house built by my grandfather in Mahabad, my father set up his modern dental

clinic, alongside the medical clinic run by his mother. He helped her too in her work, and my mother was also of great help to my grandmother's medical work. My father knew many languages and was versed in Turkish and Persian literature, philosophy and poetry. He wrote chapters of general medicine and dentistry in Persian and Turkish

In Mahabad my father was the community spokesman, as a rich man and one of the heads of the community. He was accepted and well liked by non-Jews, and was close to government circles and official institutions. He worked and interceded on behalf of the Jewish community; established a Jewish school in the city, and was head of the synagogue where he also used to preach. Before leaving for Israel in 1950, he took care that the poor of the Jewish community should go to Israel first. After our arrival in Israel we lived in Jerusalem opposite the walls of the Old City and in 1965 the family (except for me) moved to Tel Aviv. There my father continued to practise as a dentist until the last years of his life. He also served as the head of the Urmian Jews' synagogue Shaarei Zion (Gates of Zion), until his sudden death in his eighties in 1990. Throughout his life my father used the prayer and Judaica books of his grandfather Signior Chaim.

[Another remarkable member of the dynasty of "Mizrachi Lights" was the late Rabbi and Cantor Salomon Mizrachi, a native of Jerusalem, who founded in the 1920's in Los Angeles a large cultural-religious centre for Jews from Rhodes, known as 'Ohel Avraham' (Abraham's Tent). He was much admired, wrote many articles in Ladino on the Sephardic sages, and is buried on the Mount of Olives.]

Family tree and illustrations on pp. 10, 41

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OUR MEMBERS AT WORK

Building A National Family Tree

Opher Drori

Shaam Information Systems

The Personal Aspect

My interest in family trees was awakened many years ago, probably as a result of the consciousness of roots in our family. My grandfather Mordechai Salomon was the grandson of Yoel Moshe Salomon, and like some of my relatives I used to draw family trees and trace my past. About a year ago, Dr. Simcha Mandelbaum, as a member of the family, asked me to verify data for the book he was writing: "Ten Generations in Israel".* In talking to him I realized that there was a problem in creating an index for the book and I was glad to offer my experience and expertise to create a computerized index for it. In 1987, in the course of my work at Shaam - Information Systems, the need arose to provide users of the service with information on the family trees of the entire population of Israel, for tax purposes. This was a challenge unlike the single-family tree I had dealt with hitherto: here were millions of people, and I needed to think and plan how best to build a family tree on such a scale. The article that follows will describe the structure of the national family tree, the way it was planned and built, and also the services obtainable from it.

The information presented in the system is available to its users (workers in tax departments) for their work purposes, but is not open for private research. According to the law (Population Census and the Protection of Privacy), a person is entitled to receive information about himself or herself, but not about other people (apart from name and address). Hence the family tree that was developed in the system is not open to the public at large, according to present-day restrictions.

Introduction

A family tree is a technical, graphic way to portray the system of relationships between people of the same family. We distinguish two main types of family tree: 1) A Table of Ancestors: Beside the person in question are recorded the names of his parents, above each parent his or her parents, and so on. It is customary to build such tables as if to the fifth generation with a total of 16 ancestors (8 in the fifth generation above the person in question.) 2) A Table of Descendants: Below the person in question (and spouse) are recorded their descendants of the first generation (including spouses), below them are recorded their descendants, and so on. The table is limited only by the researcher's ability to trace and collect information about all the descendants. As a rule, family trees are drawn in a hierarchical form that enables one to see the different generations. Graphically represented, family trees spread outwards to include the various individuals in the family, with different generations shown at different heights. Family trees can include various facts about the individuals that appear in them: the person's name, identity number, indication of death, year of death etc. In most cases it is preferable to display additional details about

* See Sharsheret Hadorot vol. 9, nos. 1,2

individuals in a separate framework at the side, in order to preserve the picture of the tree as a whole.

Our national family tree was designed for tax purposes, and according to current tax laws, a person's income and property are assessed on the basis of the family unit to which he belongs. In order to help the system's users (i.e. the tax departments), it was necessary to build a computerized family tree of the entire population of the state which would provide the services required by the user and obviate the need to amass and investigate data on the family connections of millions of people.

Planning the Family Tree

The users of the system are accustomed to receive their basket of services in computerized form, and it was clear that we must give the same form to the family tree service, especially in view of the very great number of individuals included. We planners faced two central problems in our efforts towards this end:

How to construct a suitable model that would enable us to build the appropriate family connections on the basis of the existing information in the national Population Register.

How to display the tree in a clear and easily usable form (since the intended users are not expert genealogists).

Constructing a model of family connections

A national family tree cannot be based on feeding by researchers: the sheer quantity of data and the need for reliability preclude this. It was necessary to build a model that would create the necessary connections on the basis of the information existing in the Population Register. Besides various personal particulars included in the Register, the family particulars include: identity number of the individual, identity number of the spouse, identity numbers of the father and mother. On the basis of these four particulars alone, we constructed a model that enabled us to build a complete family tree. In the middle of the tree are the parents (on the basis of the identity number of the person in question and his spouse), at the bottom of the tree are their children (on the basis of the father's and mother's identity numbers which are recorded for each child), and at the top of the tree are the grandfather and grandmother (on the basis of the identity numbers of the father and mother of the man in the middle). Beside the man in the middle and his spouse are displayed his brothers, i.e. brothers and sisters born of the same mother and father.

Form of display of the tree

In order to make the display clear and convenient for the user, it was decided to make it graphic, not textual. The aim was to display the whole family on one computer screen in a clear, graphic form, without the need to spill over on to other screens which impair the total picture. One of the problems was how to deal with departures from the norm in family connections, such as divorce, remarriage, etc. These must be dealt with without complicating the information as a whole. We did not want to cram the computer screen with data, and so after a great deal of thought we

decided upon a number of principles which in practice determined the way the data were displayed:

1. One computer screen should contain three generations of the family tree.
2. In the middle of the screen should be placed the person in question with his spouse by his side.
3. Dynamic building of a new family tree should be possible for every one of the individuals on screen.
4. The information displayed on the first screen of the tree should contain a visual display of the connections, surname and first name of the central figure and his parents, and first names only of the other persons shown in the tree (children and brothers). In addition there should be an agreed symbol for a deceased person.
5. There should be an easy way to obtain additional information on each individual tree, at three levels of detail: first, limited level consisting of full name, date of birth and family status; second level containing full personal details, and a third more detailed level.
6. The tree should be constructed dynamically for every potential size of family, so that it can be organized graphically for a family of 3 children and adjusted for a family of 15 children.

In practice, our program incorporated the Table of Ancestors with the Table of Descendants. Because of the dynamism in the creation of the tree, it was possible to obtain at any given moment the required form of display, both of the fathers' generations above the person studied and of the descendants' generations, according to need.

Setting Up the Family Tree

The tree itself was built online by a program specially designed for the purpose. In the course of developing the program we had to find answers to problems connected mainly with the data in the system. Firstly, not all the data accompanying the identity number of a given person exist in the whole population. For example, the identity number of the father of very old people is not always complete. A lack of this datum influences the ability to give a complete tree: even when the parents appear in the system of the Population Register, there is no computer access to them. As explained above, "brothers" of an individual are shown on the basis of the identity numbers of their common mother and father. In this situation too, when the information is incomplete it is impossible to display a man's brothers, even though he does actually have brothers. Another problem was how to relate to different situations existing within a family, such as divorce and remarriage, etc. We were guided to a solution of this problem by the decision to display a family tree based on a person's biological parents. The decision means that the first display of the tree is based on the person's biological parents even if they are not married to each other at the time of display. Information on their present spouses is of course available to the user. Development of the program took several months. It was released to the users for their purposes at the beginning of 1987.

The Services Available from the Family Tree System

The system enables the user to locate a person (a resident of the state) and to create for him within seconds a graphic family tree that includes information on three generations: it relates to him, to his brother(s) and to his spouse as one generation, to his parents as a second generation and to his children as a third generation. The system makes it possible to "stroll" between generations at the touch of a button. The age (i.e. comparative youth) of the State of Israel and its population records means that at present information is unlikely to be available for more than five generations. (This situation will naturally change in the course of time). The system makes it possible to receive a summary of data, three levels of detail, on every factor in the system. The dynamism of the tree enables the program to "stroll" through the family connections of all the residents of the state and to locate distant relationships too: for example the program enables one to locate a certain person and to receive his family tree including his brothers.

By pressing a button the user can create a new tree with one of the brothers in the middle; this new tree displays the brother's spouse, whence one can navigate to the spouse's family, and so on - all graphically on the screen. The ability to navigate within this tree is what makes it possible in practice to obtain a national family tree of all the residents of the state. Population increase in the state is dealt with "transparently" in the system, since the model upon which the system is based exists even when the population grows, and there is no disturbance or need for special treatment.

Summary

To create a national family tree is a challenge of enormous interest. There is a twofold difference between planning and developing a tree of this kind and creating ordinary family tree systems. Firstly, the challenge of size: in genealogical research a family tree that includes thousands of persons is considered large, whereas we had to deal with millions. Secondly, the information on which the tree is based is not controlled by the user or researcher, hence it was necessary to develop a model suitable for creating family connections on the basis of existing data. From its inception until the present day the system has undergone various improvements, but essentially it continues to provide the services it was designed for with great success. Alongside the program we developed in time an additional auxiliary tool consisting of a shortened family tree. The shortened tree is a "window" of information containing the name of the person investigated and the names of his parents, spouses and children. This auxiliary tool provides family tree service to other information systems that need it.

It is of course possible to "superimpose" our program on the population registers of other countries or on large population groups include the same four basic facts (identity numbers of a person, his spouse, his father and his mother). Thus one can create through the program national family trees for countries with populations far larger than ours.

For an example of a chart see p.15

Journeys with Roots Mathilde Tagger

In 1987 I accompanied my husband on a journey to Sofia, capital of Bulgaria, where he was born. It was the first time he had been back to his birthplace for forty years, and emotion accompanied us everywhere we went. This was the garden where he used to play as a child, and here was the huge log he used to jump off, still lying there. This was his old high school - now the faculty of mathematics. Things have changed after so long! This is where grandfather lived: the whole building belonged to him. Now it is a dirty and neglected, but the two iron gates at the entrance still sport the ornate initials LB (Levi Bechor) - mute evidence of a more prosperous past. Nearby is the synagogue, once one of the loveliest in Europe. Rusty scaffolding supports the shell. We are told that they are going to restore it. When? Nobody knows. On Jewish holidays the tiny Jewish community meets in a nearby room. A feeling of wretchedness and abandonment.

We travel to the cemetery one morning to visit the grave of grandfather Bechor Levi. The community has an office, but nobody knows the opening hours. A jungle of tall bushy plants has overgrown most of the plots, but cannot hide the tombstones - broken, smashed or sunken. We cannot find grandfather's grave among the wreckage. Neglect, abandonment, disappointment, frustration.

This year, 1995, we decided to visit Morocco, where I was born. Passover was chosen as the right time to bring the family together at the home of a cousin who still lives in Rabat, the Moroccan capital. Thirty-six of us, four generations, sat around the Seder table. This meeting of all the relatives was an exceptionally keen pleasure. In the town of Meknes after forty-five years, I easily found my former high school. The place remained just as I remembered it. I was also deeply moved to visit the house where we used to live. The present tenant heard our explanations and agreed to let us in. Apart from the different furniture, everything was in place. I saw again the colored tiles adorning the walls of the spacious patio. From there we went to the Alliance Israelite Francaise school where my parents taught. Today it is a Moroccan state school, and the pupils are Arab, not Jewish. The place is well kept, and I was able to recall days past without effort. From there we turned to the cemetery close by. Forebodings filled my heart: would the story of Sofia be repeated here? We found the place closed. Children told us to knock at the iron gate: the guardian was inside. So he was, and opened for us. We entered - and could not believe our eyes. Thirty or thirty-five years after the last Jew left this town, the "House of Life" as the inscription over the door calls it, is amazingly well kept.

An avenue of cypresses with white-painted trunks. On either side the graves, ancient and modern. Tombstones standing row by row. A mixture of feelings: pleasant surprise, satisfaction, even pride. It turns out that many Jewish cemeteries throughout Morocco are very well maintained because members of the former Jewish communities all over the world contribute to their upkeep. Although there is no office, I found the grave of my grandfather, my father's father, who died in 1949 after our aliyah to Israel. Emotion overcame me when my three Sabra children filled in the letters engraved in the black marble with yellow Meknes earth and read aloud the inscription in Hebrew.

At the end of this past summer (1995) we decided to close the circle. We travelled to Spain, land of our common roots. To come to the Juderia of Cordoba, to Yehuda Halevi square, to the statue of Maimonides and the ancient synagogue, or to enter the Sinagoga del Transito in Toledo, - all gave us a curious sense of being at home. We spoke Ladino freely, - the medieval Castilian of our ancestors - and the modern Spaniards understood us. And after five hundred years, we recognized certain dishes that are still part of the Moroccan-Jewish and Bulgarian-Jewish cuisine. We found any number of Magen David (Shield of David) decorations on houses and railing. On the outer wall of a monastery we "discovered" an inscription adorned at each corner with a Magen David enclosing a cross! Even the faces of the adults, men and women alike, reminded us wonderfully of our uncles, aunts and neighbors. Our journey took us through towns, townships and villages - Alcala, Toledo, Leon, Cordoba, Valero, Cuenca, Pinto and many others - whose names had a familiar ring. We knew them well as Jewish surnames.

After these three journeys, to Bulgaria, Morocco and Spain, our nostalgia for the lands of our origin was completely satisfied. For a picture of the cemetery see p. **16**

Adventure Into History by Edward Isaacs, England

On one of the many occasions when we were visiting the home of a cousin in Tel Aviv, I happened to pick up a one volume copy of a Jewish Encyclopaedia from one of her book shelves. It was an encyclopaedia of which I had not previously been aware, and so I automatically turned the pages to see if my illustrious great grandfather Rabbi Aryeh Leb Barnett was duly recorded, which indeed he was. What caught my eye especially however, was reference just below his entry to a Nathan Barnert which included a photograph of his statue outside the City Hall in Paterson, New Jersey.

His story was fascinating, but what interested me particularly was the fact that in the last line it stated that he was a brother in law of Sir Benjamin Samuel Phillips, Lord Mayor of London in 1866, who in turn was a first cousin of my great grandfather.

Nathan Barnert was a truly remarkable personality as is evidenced from the following which comes from the entry in the Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia, New York. He was a civic leader and philanthropist born in St. Michel Germany in 1838 who died in Paterson New Jersey in 1927. Eleven years old when brought to America by his parents, he was put to work in the little tailoring shop which his father opened on New York's lower east side. Evenings, after the store closed, he attended school. At the age of 14 in 1852, severing all family ties, he set out on the hazardous journey to California in search of gold, selling candles part of the way there. Once there however, he turned to peddling, made money and lost it gambling. He quickly recouped his fortunes through hard work, and in 1856 left for New York where he engaged in the manufacture of clothing.

Improving and expanding this enterprise, he moved to Paterson in 1858. A commission to supply uniforms to the Union Army during the Civil War enabled him to acquire a considerable fortune.

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"שרשרת הדורות", ינואר 1996, כרך י' מס' 1

In 1878 he retired from the clothing industry and devoted himself to real estate operations. The owner of valuable property in New York City and Long Beach N.Y. he also entered the construction end of the business and erected numerous silk mills. He was one of the first to build large factories, of which the Barnert mills in Paterson were considered amongst the finest examples in the United States.

All the while interested in civic affairs, he was elected Mayor of Paterson in 1883, and served two four-year terms. In 1870 he was delegated by the Board of Aldermen to make a special investigation of the city's finance and tax accounts. In 1912, Mayor Andrew F. McBride appointed him to the finance commission, in which post he served until 1917. His salaries for these services were distributed by him amongst various local charities.

In October 1925, a magnificent statue of Nathan Barnert was unveiled in City Hall Square. Twenty five feet high, it stands with the monuments of Garret A. Hobart, Vice President of U.S.A., and Alexander Hamilton, founder of Paterson, as a token of the esteem in which he was held by the citizens of the city. The fund for its erection was raised by public subscription. Barnert was the first American Jew to be honoured by the erection of a statue during his lifetime.

A noted philanthropist, he donated more than a million dollars to Paterson charities. He was the founder of the Nathan and Miriam Barnert Memorial Temple of Congregation Bnei Jeshurun the Hebrew Free School, and the Nathan and Miriam Barnert Memorial Hospital as well as the Nathan and Miriam Barnert Home for the Aged. Additionally he established a fund in perpetuity to be used for dowries for poor girls.

I was always fascinated by this story, and when the opportunity arose recently for us to be able to visit Paterson it was an unbelievable experience. Through the good office of a cousin living near Paterson who knew the Mayor, we were put in touch with two old and knowledgeable residents of the city who went out of their way to be helpful.

We were first escorted to the Falls - like Niagara in miniature - but which were a source of water power, and were responsible for Paterson becoming the first highly industrialised area in New Jersey. We went also to the Civic Centre Square to see the magnificent statue to Nathan Barnert and to the Nathan Barnert Hospital.

There we were received in a most welcoming manner and entertained to a kosher lunch. Nathan Barnert had laid down in the Trust Deed of the Hospital that the food served throughout the hospital must always be kosher, and whilst the hospital today has grown to enormous proportions, there has been no deviation from the principle laid down by its benefactor. The present shomer who had been in his position for the last 20 years attested to that.

The President of the Hospital Fred Lang gave us a personally conducted tour outlining the history and development of this outstanding hospital, provided us with names and addresses of members of the family who are Trustees and presented us on departure with a variety of souvenirs of our visit.

On our arrival in New York that evening I was able to contact a member of the family living in Manhattan who proved to be both knowledgeable and keenly interested in family history, and well aware of the Phillips connection. Whilst we were unable to meet this time, we both look forward to doing so in due course. Meanwhile we are exchanging family trees and other information, and so opening up yet another link in that seemingly unending family chain.

Linguistic Problems in Genealogical Research

Reuven Naftali

There are several linguistic problems that may appear while doing genealogical research. For example, what are the terms used in such research, or how does a researcher understand words or abbreviations that appear in text or on tombstones and are not used by many people in modern Hebrew. In the following article I shall try to describe some of them.

Terms used in Genealogical research:

The list of terms in the Hebrew section does not give a translation. Using a good dictionary is recommended before starting the research. There are two ways of spelling in Hebrew, Ketiv Haser ("Short" spelling) and Ketiv Maleh ("Full" spelling). The main difference is that the yod (י) and vav (ו) may or may not be used as vowels. In addition the term may be used in the construct case (סמיכות). For example Kehilla (community) or Kehillot (communities) or Kehillat Telz (The community of Telz) (Telshai, Lithuania).

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2. Glossary of non-English Words Appearing in AVOTAYNU.
3. Glossary published in SHEMOT.
4. Glossary in page 227 of the book
A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel by Sallyann Amdur-Sack and the Israel Genealogical Society (Avotaynu).

For additional Hebrew bibliography see the Hebrew section.

Abbreviations and initials used in Genealogical research;

Both Rabbinic literature and tombstones use abbreviations and initials that are not used today by many secular Jews. To understand the meaning one must learn the language in the same way one has to learn the language used in the Israeli Army. For example; the word Zahal (the name for the Israel Armed Forces) is an abbreviation (Tzva Hagana L'Israel - The Defence Army of Israel). Most people will understand the following terms:

פ.נ. (Po Nekbar - Here lies buried)

ה"ה תנצב"ה (Tehee Neshmato Tzorah Bitzror Hahayem - May his Soul enjoy eternal life).

ר"מ אדמו"ר (Adonaynu Morenu Verabeynu - Our Master, Teacher and Rabbi)

To understand terms such as N.Y. (Nero Yaeer - May his candle shine (or long life)) or YR"Y (Yerachmeh H' - May God have mercy on him) one must use one of the books of Abbreviations or Notarikon (shorthand in Greek). In many cases the names of famous scholars such as RASH"Y (Rabbi Shlomo Ytzhaki) are abbreviations and only by using Notarikon books can one understand what the full name was.

As all books are in Hebrew see the bibliography list in the Hebrew section.

XXIII

”שרשרת הדורות”, ינואר 1996, כרך י' מס' 1

ENGLISH JGS JOURNAL SELECTIONS

Compiled by Harold Lewin

Please view this compilation as merely a convenient guide to some of the more important JGS literature in English. If you find something of interest, do make an effort to read the article in its original form. The compiler apologises for all errors and missing credits.

BALTIC STATES

Archival Sources in the Lithuanian State Archives: Laima Tautvaisaite

The Archive stores books of vital records for Lithuanian communities prior to 1915. Vital records for Jewish communities are concentrated primarily in five archival fonds (record groups) reflecting the division of Lithuanian administration from end 18th c. to beginning of 20th. Jewish communities' vital records formerly in Vilna guberniya now stored in fond number 728, under "Jewish Communities of Vilna Guberniya" also includes some vital records for Jewish communities of Kovno guberniya. Vilnius Jewish vital records are most complete, including births, marriages, divorces and deaths for 1837-1915. (1)

Litvak Naming Patterns for Deriving Names of Ancestors: Harold Rhode

Speculative guidelines for establishing Litvak naming patterns. Those with 19th c. ancestors from Kovno and Vilna should be able to guess names of parents/grandparents of the furthest-back known ancestors, thereby adding personal names of one or two additional generations to the pedigree tree. The following guideline serves as an example: If the newborn's grandparents are deceased, the child is given a double name, the first from paternal side, the second from maternal side. (1)

The Jews of Lithuania & What is a Litvak? Saul Issroff

The author discusses the term Litvak and gives meanings of the term from various sources, showing that it need not only apply to residents of Lithuania and their descendants. In the Book Review section of the same journal, the author provides a scholarly commentary on "The Jews of Lithuania by Masha Greenbaum. (9)

BELARUSSIA

Jewish Genealogy Sources in Belarussian Archives: Vladislav Sochnikov

Although many Belarus records were destroyed during the revolutionary period 1918-1920, in the 1920s and 1930s and during WWII, many records did survive. This article details some of them. (1)

CANADA

Using Voters' Lists to Locate Missing Relatives: Glen Eker

The voters' lists are an important source for genealogists when other commonly used sources such as city directories and telephone books are not available or fail to yield information. They generally provide a listing of all adults over 18, with occupation and street address. The author provides examples of successful exploitation of these lists in a search for missing relatives. (7)

GERMANY

New Acquisitions at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York City: Karen S. Franklin

The 40-year-old Leo Baeck Institute is reaching out to Jewish family historians with roots in the German-speaking areas of Europe. Karen Franklin has been hired as a consultant to help make LBI more user friendly to genealogists. The article, in which she and Frank Mecklenburg describe some of these measures, is excerpted from a program given at the 14th Summer 1995 Seminar held in Washington. (1)

Antisemitic Publication with Genealogical Value: Henry Wellisch

This book review is about Der Semikuerschner, compiled in 1911 by a known antisemitic university professor named Heinrich Kraeger and enlarged in stages between 1929 and 1931. It contains thousands of biographies of Jews and persons of Jewish ancestry, especially professionals. (8)

GREAT BRITAIN

New Home for Jewish Museum: Editorial

The Jewish Museum in London, closed for a year, has now reopened in greatly enlarged premises near Camden Town Underground station. It now comprises three galleries, The History Gallery, The Ceremonial Art Gallery and a gallery for a program of changing exhibits. The address: The Jewish Museum, 129 Albert Street, London NW1 7NB (Reprinted from The New York Times) (4)

Genealogical Information in the Jewish Chronicle: Glen Eker

The author expands on the large amount of genealogical information to be found in this London-based English language newspaper which has appeared weekly since November 1841. (7)

POLAND

Enigmas & Idiosyncracies in 19th c. Polish Documents: Bill Gladstone

The author describes several interesting enigmas found in 1808-1884 Jewish civil records of the Jews of Congress Poland. These include inaccuracies in declaring ages and apparent duplication of records but with different dates, etc. (1)

Maps of Poland: Editorial

There is a catalog of Polish maps available which vary in detail from a scale of 1:6.000.000 to over 100 city maps at 1:20.000 which show names of streets and buildings. Prices vary from \$1 to \$20. Write including 4 IRCs to: PPWK, im. Eugeniusza, Romera, S.A., ul. Solec 18, 00-410 Warszawa, Poland. (3)

Histories of Polish Towns: Sarah Sachs

Under what appears to be a little publicized public service, the author obtained a very complete history of Leczyca (Leczyca) Poland and photographs from the Library of the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC (3)

Polish-Jewish Family History Library Records - An Update: Ted Gostin

This list of Polish-Jewish records in Salt Lake City updates the summary published by Avotaynu in January 1986. The article lists records in the March 1994 FHL catalog that have been added since the 1986 listing or those omitted at that time. For many Polish cities, there are FHL records up to 1890. (5)

RUSSIA

A History of the Pale of Settlement: Hal Bookbinder

The Pale of Settlement was the western area of the Russian Empire in which Jews were allowed to live. The author provides a concise history of development of this region divided into six discrete periods, and provides a useful map. Sources for further reading are listed. (6)

U.S.A.

Genealogical Research in New York City: Eileen Polakoff & Marsha Dennis

The article, excerpted from a talk given at the 14th Summer Seminar in Washington, provides a useful guide to searching for documents in the five boroughs, the five counties and the entire metropolitan area of New York City. The article explains that Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and part of the Bronx were all separate entities until their incorporation into Greater New York City in 1898. (1)

American Jewish Historical Society Genealogical Resources: Fred Davis

This article, by F. Davis and Warren Blatt, describes some of the most important genealogical holdings at the AJHS in Waltham, MA. Holdings comprise over 40 million manuscripts and 30,000 books. (1)

What's New At YIVO: Ruth Chernia

The author provides an interesting review of YIVO's history and describes some of the holdings of special interest to genealogists and family history researchers. (8)

COMPUTERS AND GENEALOGY

Three Ways to JewishGen.: David Chapin

The author lists the advantages and disadvantages of the following three methods of accessing JewishGen: - Fidonet Echo; - Internet conference mailing list; - Internet Usenet. He recommends merging the access methods, thereby obtaining the benefits of each system. Comments on this article in the following issue of the same JGS journal are also relevant. (2, 3)

RABBINIC GENEALOGY

Which Rapaports are also SCHaCH Descendants? Paul J.Jacobi

Unfortunately, summarizing this erudite article, which essentially comprises an ongoing debate between two scholars, is beyond the capabilities of this compiler. Nevertheless, it should be read by all those interested in rabbinic genealogy. (1)

KEY TO JOURNAL REFERENCES

Ref.No Journal

1. AVOTAYNU (International) Fall 1995 Vol.XI, No.3.
2. MISHPACHA (Gtr Washington) Winter 1995 Vol.15, No.1.
3. MISHPACHA (" ") Spring 1995 Vol.15, No.2.
4. MISHPACHA (" ") Summer 1995 Vol.15, No.3.
5. ROOTS-KEY (Los Angeles) Summer 1995 Vol.15, No.2.
6. ROOTS-KEY (" ") Fall 1995 Vol.15, No.3.
7. SHEM TOV (Canada JGS) March 1995 Vol.XI, No.1.
8. SHEM TOV (" ") Sept. 1995 Vol.XI, No.3.
9. SHEMOT (Gt Britain) October 1995 Vol.03, No.3.