

The Yizraelite – No 2243 Date: 6.2.26

Kibbutz Yizrael

Reut's Editorial: The sign calling for the return of the hostages is being removed from Maytronics. (The picture says it all – Ed)



Edi-torial: This week we are publishing two editions of “The Yizraelite” – The cyber edition with the full text of Patchi’s memoir articles as they appeared in the weekend culture supplement of the “Haaretz” newspaper over the past few weeks and a hard copy edition with the ChatGPT AI summery of the article. We recommend you read the full article on Kehilanet or WhatsApp or Email. I will gladly email a copy to anyone who so requests. The cyber edition is Edi-tor friendly. I am free to add photos and text to my heart’s content in the service of our readers.

Congratulations to Bar and Shachar Levy



On the birth of their son, Yoav.
Grandson to Yifat and Kobi Levy.
Great-grandson to Binni (of blessed memory) and Steve Blass.

Congratulations to the entire Levy family, the Blass family, the Hillel family, and the Katznelson family.

Wishing you joy, light, health, and an abundance of love



Invitation to the Community Management Meeting

On Sunday 8.2.26 at 17:30
Meeting Room

Agenda:

1. New members' and candidates' personal budgets.
2. Presentation of the pilot programme in the clothing branch including Eddie's request for approval of the pilot at the assembly.



Kibbutz Passover Holiday Gift – Hedva Sharabani

For Community / Holdings / Agriculture / Pensioners

The Passover holiday is approaching, and we are preparing for the holiday gifts. This year, a voucher for various retail chains will be given for you to choose from.

Anyone who preferred to receive a credit to their allowance last holiday and wishes to do so again – there is no need to notify us; you are already on the list.

Please inform us by Sunday, 08.02.26, only if you wish to change your choice from last time.

Volunteers in the branches who are not kibbutz members will receive a modest gift. For any questions or matters – you are welcome to contact me.

Thank you,
Hedva Sharabani

(Time to start cleaning the house???? – Ed)



The 2025 Year Summary booklet

The 2025 Year Summary booklet has gone online and is presented to you for viewing and reading. For ecological and economic reasons, we chose not to print the booklet and to present it in digital format. Thank you to all the activity coordinators – the clusters, branches, and committees – who sent material for the booklet. Thanks to Danit Kirshberg for

producing the booklet in a professional, accessible, and aesthetic manner.

You can view the booklet via the link: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/hplbz/jvbd/>

Or by scanning the code below.

Limor Griman

*(The Booklet is full of good pictures and important information... worth a look!
Unfortunately, it is a bit much for me to translate – Ed)*



Summary of General Assembly - 2.2.26



Participants: 30 members in the moadon and on Zoom
Chairperson of the Council: Shlomo Cohen
Council Secretary: Uri Gilad

Agenda:

Appointment of the Magal Internal Audit Office as the internal auditing firm of the kibbutz
(Guest: Roni Gilad, representative of the firm)

Shai Witelson, chair of the Audit Committee, presented the candidacy of Mrs. Roni Gilad from the “Magal” company (based on Kibbutz Ein Shemer) for the position of internal auditor of the kibbutz.

Shai explained that the process had been thorough and lengthy. The committee conducted a broad search for suitable candidates, carried out interviews, and examined in depth proposals from three different audit firms before formulating a final recommendation. The committee’s recommendation was submitted to the Executive Committee, which reviewed the matter and approved the selection prior to bringing it for approval by the Assefa.

Roni Gilad introduced **herself** and outlined her approach to the role of internal auditor, detailing her professional background and the working methodology of her firm.

Roni is a member of Kibbutz Ein Shemer and has many years of experience working in kibbutzim as a Human Resources manager and as a community manager. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Human Resources Management, a master’s degree in Organisational Consulting, and later retrained professionally in the field of auditing. She noted that her primary knowledge is drawn from 18 years of practical management experience, which gives her a deep understanding of kibbutz needs beyond purely academic knowledge.



The “Magal” company (which has been operating for about 20 years) specialises in internal auditing within the cooperative settlement sector (kibbutzim, moshavim and regional enterprises). A key advantage of the firm lies in its team of partners. If an audit is required in a specific field with which she is less familiar, another auditor from the firm who specialises in that area will join the process in order to ensure maximum professionalism.

Roni also addressed the issue of making the audit process and its contents accessible to the public. Since most members are generally not available to read lengthy reports, she presents a focused summary of 9 to 11 key points in public forums, while managers receive the full report for in-depth work.

Following the presentation of the proposed auditor, Shai raised a proposal for dealing with delays in responses to audit reports. He noted that in the past, audited bodies had tended to delay their responses to reports, which created additional work for the audit office and unnecessary extra costs for the kibbutz.

The Audit Committee recommends that any additional costs incurred due to a delay in response by a particular branch or department should be charged to the budget of that branch, rather than to the budget of the Audit Committee.

The purpose of this proposal is to create a form of “sanction” that will encourage faster and more efficient cooperation with the audit process.

This proposal can be added to the Audit Committee procedures, which will need to be brought for approval by the General Meeting at a later date.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a vote was held via Kehilanel to approve the appointment of the Magal firm as the kibbutz internal audit office.

Voting results:

For – 46

Against – 4

Abstentions – 4

Reported by: Limor Griman

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Summary of the Economic Council Meeting - 02.02.26

Participants: 21 council members

Council Chair: Uri Gilad

Council Secretary: Shlomo Cohen

Agenda:

1. Election of Udi Shani as Chair of Teldor

(Guest: Udi Shani)

Idan Zilas, CEO of Yizrael Holdings, presented the need for a strategic change at Teldor due to losses in 2024 and an expected loss in 2025. After a search process that included nine candidates, the list was narrowed down to three: Ofer Shahar, Giora Inbar, and Udi Shani. From these, Udi Shani was selected as the recommended candidate.

Shani, a Major General (Res.) and former Director-General of the Ministry of Defence, currently serves as Chair of Plasan, Kibbutz Sasa, and brings extensive experience in both the defence industry and the kibbutz sector.



Udi Shani introduced himself and stated that he sees the position as a significant and interesting challenge and intends to commit to it fully. In the short time since the evaluation process for the role began, he has identified several key challenges facing Teldor:

- a. **Addressing the price issue** – The company will not be able to compete in the market solely on the basis of price, as Israeli manufacturing is inherently expensive. In his view, the solution lies in identifying segments where the company is considered superior and where it can develop and grow.
- b. **Positioning within the defence system** – The company is not sufficiently well positioned within the defence establishment. Shani proposes “spreading out” within the defence system in a different way, for example by developing unique Teldor products that would not require standard tenders, which are difficult to win.
- c. **The American market** – He identified weakness in this market and believes that a different operational mechanism must be created in order to succeed in the United States.

During the discussion, an additional challenge was raised, shared by the shareholders: the gap in intentions and expectations between the two partner kibbutzim (Ein-Dor and Yizrael) regarding the company. Shani addressed this and noted that, based on his experience in other kibbutzim, the common goal should be economic stability and security, and once agreement is reached on that, other differences become secondary.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a vote was held: The Economic Council approved the candidacy of Udi Shani as Chair of Teldor by a majority of 21 in favour, with no objections and no abstentions.

2. Alternatives for the Location of an Agro-Solar System

In September 2025, the Asefa approved engagement with the company “Enlight” for the planning and construction of an agro-solar system on Yizrael’s agricultural land. The area originally designated for this purpose was “Area 1000,” which extends from the Yizrael junction to the recycling centre zone.

A team from Enlight, together with environmental consultants, carried out an assessment process of the land, taking into account environmental and landscape considerations, statutory constraints, and regional aspects.

The assessment resulted in three alternative options for the project location:

- a. 500 dunams in the southern part of Area 1000, adjacent to the kibbutz
- b. 500 dunams in the northern part of Area 1000
- c. 184 dunams south of the kibbutz. It was noted that even a project of 150 dunams would be economically profitable.

Several clarification questions were asked regarding the proposed areas.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a vote was held:

The Economic Council approved all three alternatives by a majority of 19 in favour and 2 opposed.

3. Approval of an Energy Storage Project

(Guest: Idan Libes, Partner Manager at “Ageera”)

The project is a joint venture (50/50) with the company “Agira” (אגירה לישראל) for the establishment of a system of batteries, control and optimisation of electricity sources and consumption. The goal is to exploit electricity tariff differentials (charging at low cost and discharging at high cost), to provide grid services to the company “Noga,” and to create energy security for the entire kibbutz during power outages, without reliance on generators.

The project includes the completion of installation of new electricity meters with automatic communication, which will transfer all readings to a modern, computerised system.

The investment required from the kibbutz is approximately 500,000 NIS in equity capital, while the remaining financing (approximately 5 million NIS) will be provided through loans taken by the joint venture company.

Idan Libes from Agira answered technical questions concerning battery lifespan, resilience in extreme climate conditions, availability during emergencies, integration with the kibbutz's existing generator system, safety, and measures to prevent theft.

Axel Levin, coordinator of the Planning Committee, noted that the plan presented differs somewhat from what was approved by the Planning Committee, and requested that project approval be conditional on the location of the battery containers being re-approved by the committee – a process expected to take place during the coming month.

Elad Ilan raised concerns about making new investments in 2026 in light of the kibbutz and holdings' challenging cash-flow situation.

Idan Zilas responded that this is a relatively small investment which is safe and profitable from day one, and that this is precisely the type of investment that is appropriate for us to undertake in the current reality. In addition, it is a project that provides tremendous added value in terms of energy stability and upgrading the kibbutz's metering infrastructure.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a vote was held:

The Economic Council approved entering the project and allocating the required land, subject to Planning Committee approval. The decision passed with a majority of 18 in favour and 2 opposed.

Reported by: Limor Griman

**The Public Opinion Survey for all Members of Yizrael
Institute for Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea
University of Haifa,**

Shalom, Kibbutz Members,

We are sending you the 2026 annual public opinion survey questionnaire of the Institute for Research of the Kibbutz at the University of Haifa, conducted in cooperation with the Kibbutz Movement. The processes taking place today on the kibbutzim affect all kibbutz members, and therefore we are interested in knowing your views on a variety of issues.

The response of each and every person is very important to us, since only by receiving answers from the majority of those surveyed can we represent all sectors of the

kibbutz public in assessing the situation “on the ground.” All responses are confidential: we undertake that no information identifying you personally and/or your kibbutz will be published.

To complete the survey, please open the following link (click on the link with the left mouse button while holding down the Control key):

<https://tinyurl.com/SEKER2026>

If the link does not open properly, it is recommended to copy it into your browser.

If necessary, you may contact us by phone at 050-5740963 (Eliat) or write to the email address:

kibbutz@univ.haifa.ac.il

Thank you for your assistance,

The Public Opinion Surveys Team
Institute for Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea
University of Haifa, Haifa 3498838
<http://kibbutz.haifa.ac.il>

Submitted by: Limor Griman

Human Resources Update

Call for Applications to Manage the Kolbo (Local Store)

With the current term of Netta Cohen and Tami Penn as co-managers of the Kolbo coming to an end in June, a call for applications is being issued to fill the position. For public information, Tami and Netta are interested in continuing for a second term.

Below is the job description. Applications may be submitted to Kinneret, Human Resources Manager, until 20.02.26.

Position Description:

Managing the Kolbo as a welcoming and friendly place, while ensuring the continuous and ongoing supply of merchandise for customers, including adherence to the budget in terms of manpower, ongoing expenses, and investments. (Details in Hebrew newsletter or from Kinneret – Ed).

Submitted by: Kinneret Govrin

From the Desk of the Committee Appointments Committee



1. **Housing Committee** – The committee proposes as public representatives: **Nofar Elul** and **Anat Friedman**.
2. **Residents' Committee** – The committee proposes **Yitzhak Peleg** to serve as coordinator of the Residents' Committee.
Yitzhak's candidacy will be presented at the kibbutz assembly, after which a vote will take place on Kehilanet.
3. **Demography Cluster** – The committee proposes **Kobi Levy** as a public representative to the Demography Cluster. Kobi's candidacy will be presented at the assembly, and the election will be held at the ballot box.

You are welcome to contact any of the members of the Committee Appointments Committee:

Kinneret Govrin, Albert Rosilio, Liran Penn, Navot Assaf, Dotan Savir, Shelly Edelstein, Hedva Sharabani

Submitted by: **Hedva Sharabani**

From the Early Childhood Courtyard – Tu B'shvat



Mid-year is a special time.

The routine has already settled, the faces are familiar, relationships have been formed, and everyday life takes on a steadier rhythm.



And precisely now – in the heart of winter – nature reminds us of something

important. On the surface, everything seems quiet, almost dormant, yet beneath the ground deep work is taking place: roots are strengthening, energy is gathering, growth is happening from within.

The same is true for us. After a period of adjustment, learning, and moving forward at full speed – something has calmed. Space has opened for deeper processes: to reinforce newly acquired skills, establish habits, expand knowledge, and to explore and experience in a relaxed and confident way.

During this period, we held individual meetings with parents – to pause for a moment, to look together at the journey we have taken from the beginning of the year until now, to see the development, and to think ahead: what is right to focus on, what needs fine-tuning, and where we can deepen even further.

Within the teams, we also chose to pause – to create “together,” to take time, to think about roots and blossoming, and to be present in the small yet meaningful moments of daily work – through the eyes of the children, the parents, and the staff.

And within all of this, we were also fortunate to celebrate together – and even to revive a cherished tradition. This year we renewed the long-standing custom of celebrating Tu B’shvat in early childhood, and we were excited to once again hold a joint, system-wide gathering for everyone.

On a sunny day, we met on the big lawn in front of the stage, sang together accompanied by the guitar of Diana Shorrer, enjoyed the delightful dances of Gan Alon and



Gan Rimon, tasted the holiday foods that each kindergarten brought, and finally went out for joint plantings with the noi.

Moments of community, belonging, and simple joy.

“In a time when we sometimes get annoyed after three seconds if we don’t see two blue checkmarks on WhatsApp, once a year we receive a reminder of the most important ingredients: patience, persistent effort, investment, and dedication. All of these eventually bring results and fruits.” (Sivan Rahav-Meir).

So, may we all be privileged to enjoy the simplicity of things, the small and wonderful moments, and may we be able to recognise them, appreciate them, and take pleasure in them.

Happy holiday,
Yael Oster – Director of Early Childhood



Academia on the Bar - Hannan Shaliv



The series of lecture-discussions “Lanu Mishelanu” (“For us by one of us”) has set out on its way. We opened with the wide-ranging and highly meaningful lecture by Yaniv Shapira: “The Road to the Exhibition – The Movement: The Kibbutz in Israeli Art.” Yaniv argues, and rightly so, that this concept carries many meanings, especially for graduates of youth movements and for members of the kibbutz movement wherever they may be. We received a broad overview of Yaniv’s work as a curator and exhibition builder in general, and in particular about the special exhibition he is currently preparing at the Ramat Gan Museum. Many thanks to Yaniv, who continues to enrich our lives in all matters relating to art and artists, and we are already looking forward to the realisation of his lecture on “The Menashe Kadishman Exhibition.”

The next lecture, which will take place on Thursday, 19.2.26 at 20:30, will be given by our member Tzach Sassi on the topic of capital investments: “Investment Principles that Work for Everyone.” Indeed, quite a challenge for members of a socialist commune from the last of the “true kibbutzim,” and we are sure that Tzach will captivate us with his insights. In order to provide an initial idea, a summary of the issues he will expand upon in his talk is also being published, and he will be very happy to answer questions and comments at the end of the lecture.

As we have already mentioned, additional interesting topics await us each month on Thursday evenings. In March, the plan is to meet with the team from Malkishua.

On behalf of the Culture Committee and the Laundry Pub team
Hannan Shaliv



A Musical Experience and Yizrael Pride - Ofra Shelef



I would like to share with you the experience I had on Friday, an experience that truly warmed the heart.

I joined a trip of the students from the Music School to a concert of the Haifa Symphony Orchestra.

Dvořák and Rachmaninov, Amit Peled on cello, Royit Feldkreiz conducting.

As someone joining from outside the regular group (although this was not my first trip with them), I am deeply impressed by and appreciative of the musical education and approach of Stas, which is evident from the very moment he steps onto the bus and throughout the journey to the concert.

Where should I begin? Perhaps with what is far from obvious – the behaviour of the students on the trip: exemplary and admirable.

Any educator or teacher who has accompanied students on outings will tell you what such journeys can be like... for that alone, the teachers deserve a medal...

Stas, for those who don't know him, also functions a bit like a flight attendant – moving among the passengers on the bus, checking that everyone is comfortable, stopping to ask, calming the newcomers, and then giving an overview of the performer, in this case Amit Peled, as well as the composers and the pieces. It seems to me that every teacher hopes and prays for such attentive listening.

When we arrived at the hall, each student received guidance sheets with questions and points for focusing attention and interest (the sheets were collected on the way back and received feedback).

We entered the hall as the musicians came onto the stage. The students sat down and... silence.

The orchestra, conducted by Royit Feldkreiz, performed the Cello Concerto by Dvořák. The guest soloist was Amit Peled.

The Haifa Orchestra has hosted many renowned artists, but I have never experienced such a powerful performance.

First of all, Amit is a virtuoso – that is said by people more objective and more musical than I am – and... he is very much one of our own.

I was deeply moved. To be honest, this work by Dvořák is one of my favourite pieces, and I listen to it often, which is a great advantage when coming to a concert. To my ears, Amit's performance was wonderful – a precise and perfect combination of Amit, his instrument, and the orchestra.

Inspiring.

I had the feeling that Amit was conducting a dialogue through his cello – with the orchestra, with the musicians who played solo passages, with the first violin, with the conductor, to whom he occasionally sent a smiling glance... I felt that he and the cello were truly one.

I was captivated by Royit's conducting. I thought about her name and about Moses the shepherd-leader. That was the metaphor that came to my mind – a shepherd, a leader, a conductor. In this concert – the conductor Royit Feldkreiz.



It was interesting to notice how closely the musicians-maintained eye contact with her and responded to her. From my impression, she led them with confidence. Women leaders – we've already said that, haven't we? Indeed, we have.

This attention to such details came thanks to Stas's classes... you should join them... (I'm not sure I would have noticed all this without those lessons).

The orchestra played superbly. And in the orchestra, for those who may not know, Anna Gavrilov plays the flute – pure delight.

At the end of the concerto, Amit asked to say a few words. With great emotion and charm, in front of hundreds of listeners, he shared that he is from Kibbutz Yizrael, mentioned that students from the Yizrael Music School were present in the hall, and expressed gratitude for the privilege of playing with the Haifa Orchestra.

He added that he is invited to perform with orchestras all over the world, but there is nothing like playing at home, here in Israel.

As a special treat, we received a surprise: the night before, Stas had written an arrangement of the song "HaEmek" ("The Valley") for Amit and three cellists. The audience joined in with humming and gentle singing.

At the conclusion of the concerto, the audience rewarded the orchestra and Amit with thunderous applause. They truly deserved it.

It seemed that we all felt a sense of uplifted spirit and great Yizrael pride. After the concert, Amit Peled met with the Music School students. He answered their questions and responded to their requests for tips. All of us – the students and everyone present – received a wonderful bonus. Not an addition to the budget, but a blessed enrichment. A bonus for life.

Amit also revealed himself to be a true educator and pedagogue.
Bravo, bravo, bravo. **Ofra Shelef**

Impressions from a Concert in Haifa – Ilana Peleg



Last Friday, a trip was organised from the Music Academy to the auditorium in Haifa, to attend a concert to which Amit Peled had been invited as the cello soloist.

Playing flute in the orchestra was our own Anna Gavrillov, and the piece that Amit performed was the “Cello Concerto” by Antonín Dvořák.

The excitement of seeing and hearing Amit, the wonderful artist, was great – but even greater was the moment when, after the applause at the end of the performance, Amit stood up and told the large audience (of more than 800 people) that he was happy to play an additional piece, arranged by Stas Gavrillov, director of the Yizrael-Gilboa Conservatory.

The emotion felt among those who came from the Beit HaMusica was tremendous, along with the surprise of the announcement.

Stas arranged a piece called “Emek,” which includes motifs from the famous song “Shir HaEmek.” Amit also told the audience that he is a son of Kibbutz Yizrael, that he is happy to come for visits, and that he maintains professional ties with Stas.

We were all deeply moved, and after the concert we met with Amit. He spoke about the journey he had taken to become a cellist performing around the world, and the students asked him questions.

It was a formative and wonderful event, and a source of Yizraelite pride that we have Stas and Anna. Listened, was impressed, and wrote: Ilana Peleg



Jezebel Breathes Again, More or Less

“And even though he may tarry, still I await him every day, believing he will come.”

843 nightmarish days. Twelve years with no Israeli hostages in Gaza. Were we dreaming? On 26.1.26 this chapter closed, more or less.

There are no hostages in Gaza, everyone is “home” – but not really. There are those who were kidnapped alive and should have, and had to, return alive – but someone decided otherwise.

Rani Gvili, may his memory be blessed – the last fallen hostage – was returned to his loving family, not as they had hoped and prayed, but at least they were able to bring him to a proper burial in the country he loved.

Now only one remains – not singular and not special – and the time has come for him to release us and to release himself from us. Yes, the one whose name must be spoken: Benjamin Netanyahu. The one who did not know, even though he claims to know everything. The one no one pulled by the lapel of his coat, who was not woken at all, and when they finally bothered to do so he asked, “Why are they shooting?” The prime minister of failure and bloodshed. On his watch the greatest disaster in the history of the state happened to us. No matter what he does or how much he tries to escape, we will not forget and we will not forgive, and history will not forget his role in the failure.

Most of the senior office holders have long since gone home, but the one in the ivory tower is sure that he is actually saving us. It is not clear from what.

After hours in which I was stuck, wondering what to do now and how to gather the broken pieces that are our lives and continue – where to, and with whom? How does one even contain all these unclear emotions? – all I managed to say was: unimaginable. It is unimaginable what happened to us, and how we did not see it coming. How on one cursed day the gates of hell opened upon us, civilians and soldiers were kidnapped and disappeared, total chaos ruled, and a single government vanished and fell silent.

How did this terrible disaster happen to us, and how did we return to exactly the same place? For a moment it seemed we might manage to put all the disputes and quarrels aside and unite. It was nice to think, even for a short time, that we were truly capable of it – but very quickly we returned to the same point, to 6.10 and to what was before it. Each side used the war for its own political needs, which made me wonder whether

this also happened in past wars and I was simply too naïve and too young to understand it. Clearly, yes.

“The beauty of Israel lies slain upon your high places; how the mighty have fallen.”
When will we finally stop living by our sword and begin living for our land?

Just before the end, I looked toward the upper dam, at the yellow flags that were replaced by Israeli flags, at the chair and the yellow flag that remained last, and at the sign at the entrance. Good hands made sure to move them, as well as the yellow flag above the dining hall which was respectfully lowered, folded and placed for safekeeping. And I – I gathered the pins, removed the stickers, the magnets, the signs and the flags from the balcony and the car; I emptied the closet of the hostage shirts that I made sure to wear over the past two and a quarter years. I wondered to myself whether to throw everything away or to keep it – mainly because this is a period we will not want to forget, and we will remember all the good men and women that we lost.

We brought them back – and now we will rise.

So now, when the war with Hamas has supposedly ended, and while I hold my breath during the “hold me back” game between Trump and Khamenei and the threatening war that seems ready to erupt, it is possible to return to dealing with things that are not really important – the Winter Olympics, which begin today (Friday). Expect my updates from a wintry, snowy Milan-Cortina.

“And in that house, there we both sat
and kept silent the words we could have said.
Now it is an empty room – why do we deserve this,
and how is it that we didn’t see it coming...”

(Idan Raichel) – **Jezebel (Tzafnat Mor)**

My Second Nature – The Modest Cyclamen



**MY SECOND
NATURE**

The cyclamen blooms during the Israeli winter in many places on the kibbutz.

The name of the flower and the way it is pollinated have undergone fascinating transformations, moving between folk tradition and complex botany, and songs have been written inspired by it. The scientific name *Cyclamen* is derived from the Greek word *Kyklos* (circle), referring to the round shape of

the plant's tuber, or sometimes to the circular way in which the fruit stalks coil after pollination.

The name "Rakefet" first appeared in modern Hebrew in an article titled "Plants of the Land of Israel" in 1883, and is a direct translation of the German folk name for the flower, *Saubrot* ("pig bread"), which was given because pigs were fond of eating its tubers. In modern Hebrew literature (from 1929 onward), the name "Rakefet" became established. In the past it was also called "Rakef", and its names in Arabic (such as "Shepherds' Soap") reflect the traditional use of its foaming tubers for washing. The Hebrew name of the flower is linked to a legend according to which King Solomon chose the cyclamen, modest and bowing its head, as inspiration for the shape of his crown.



The cyclamen employs several pollination techniques:

Buzz Pollination – a process in which pollen is released only in response to vibration. Certain bees (such as the carpenter bee) cling to the flower and vibrate their flight muscles at a high frequency, causing a cloud of pollen to be released from the anthers.

A primitive pollinator – the main and unique pollinator of the common cyclamen in Israel is a small, ancient moth called *Micropterix berytella*. It feeds on the pollen and finds shelter from the rain and a place for reproduction within the downward-facing flower.

A survival mechanism – despite its need for pollinators, the cyclamen is also capable of self-pollination, when necessary, which ensures its survival even under winter conditions when insects are scarce.



Many medicinal qualities have been attributed to the cyclamen...

<https://storytelligarden.co.uk/cyclamen-history/>

A painting of cyclamens by the artist Moshe Gershuni is displayed in the permanent exhibition at the Mishkan Museum of Art in Ein Harod. At the same time, a beautiful retrospective exhibition of his former wife, Bianca Eshel Gershuni, is on display there. Highly recommended to visit. Thanks to Assi Mor for the idea of writing about the cyclamen. Shabbat Shalom. Rotem Agmon

Tu B'Shvat 5786



Tonight, Friday 6.2 at 18:45 – Holiday programme and Friday dinner in the dining hall.

Tomorrow, Saturday 7.2 at 10:30 – Planting in the Butterfly Garden,
and opposite “Ofra’s second-hand store” –

craft stations, hot tea, and cakes.

Tu B’shvat team: Hannan Shaliv, Tali Brauman, Noam Grinshpon,
Tzach Sassi, Shulamit Witelson



Discussion at the Pub –
“The Democrats” Political Party
Wednesday, 11.2.26, 20:00 at the pub

Danny Elgart – retired Superintendent, bereaved brother.

Inbar Bezek – former Member of Knesset, CEO of the Upper Galilee Development Company.

Ram Shefa – former Member of Knesset and former Chair of the Education Committee.

Please register for the event using the attached link so we will know how many participants to expect.

If it appears that a large number of people are expected, we will reconsider the meeting venue.

Registration link:

https://e.democrats.org.il/Democrats_OpenHouses/246620

Nitzan Rivlin Feldman



Meeting with Ghadir Hani

Ghadir is a social-educational activist who promotes making connections, dialogue and equality in Israeli society.

The meeting addresses building bridges between Jews and Arabs, and empowering women and young people.



**Tuesday
17/2/2 at 20:00; in the Moadon**

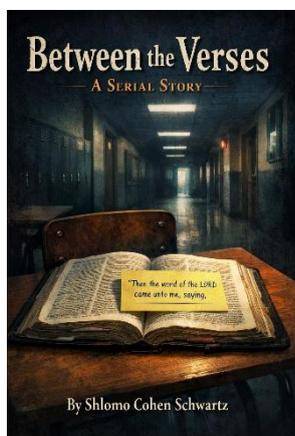
You are invited to the fascinating and powerful lecture of **Ghadir Hani**, a Muslim woman from Acre, who has received numerous awards for her courageous activity, including:
the Israeli Hope Award for Promoting Partnership in Israeli Society for 2020, the Goldberg Prize for 2024, the Luxembourg Prize for 2025, and the Ben-Gurion Award for 2025.

Between the Verses – A Story in Instalments

by Shlomo Cohen Schwartz

Chapter Four: A Suspicious Student

Summary of previous chapters:



The chain of pranks and precisely targeted messages leads Jeremy to realise that someone is watching him and the other teachers. The empty notebook, the markings on the duty roster, and the silences of other staff members deepen the sense of surveillance. Even so, the possibility that this is merely a student prank still hangs in the air.

On Sunday, Jeremy decided to return to the more comfortable explanation: it's a student. Someone clever, with plenty of spare time, perhaps someone who feels invisible. The obvious candidate, almost by default, is Ido – a twelfth-grade pupil, quiet, sharp, always asking

questions that are not meant for the exam. Unpleasant to say, but Ido is a rather too-clever student.

He asked Ido's homeroom teacher to summon him for "a short discussion." Ido entered the empty classroom with steps that were a little too confident. Not insolent, but not cautious either.

"You called me?"

"Yes," said Jeremy. "Sit down."

He didn't begin with accusations. He spoke about matriculation exams, about pressure, about adolescence. He observed how Ido reacted to the words. Nothing. Just nods. When he mentioned the verses written in the margins, Ido raised an eyebrow.

"Verses where?"

"In notebooks."

"Some people like the Bible," he said simply. "That's not a crime."

Jeremy was silent for a moment. "And if it isn't verses? If it's messages?"

Ido smiled slightly. Not mockingly. With understanding.

"Sir," he said, "if I wanted to play games with you, I'd do it far less subtly."

That sentence was too clean. Too accurate. Someone speaking the truth without fear. Jeremy felt the ground slip away from him.

"So who is it, then?" he asked, almost to himself.

Ido shrugged. "I don't know why teachers think they're so interesting to us. As if we don't have lives."

When he left, Jeremy remained alone. He realised he had been wrong. Suspecting a student had been an act of evasion – a way of not looking higher up, of not admitting that something rotten was happening in a place where responsibility was supposed to reign.

That same day, in the staff room, he found a new note. This time without verses from the Book of Jeremiah. Just a single line:

"Easier to blame others."

Jeremy crumpled the paper, but didn't throw it away. He was beginning to understand the pattern: every time he fled to a mistaken conclusion, a correction arrived. Not a punishment. A lesson.

And this lesson, unlike the ones he taught in class, was not meant for matriculation. It was meant for a very different kind of maturity.

To be continued next week

Biblical background to “Between the Verses. Chapter 4.

Edi-tor: Hi again, Chat. Can you give me and our readers the biblical references and allusions as usual, please, Chat,

ChatGPT: Certainly – here are the **biblical references and literary allusions** embedded in this chapter, in the same spirit as in previous weeks:

Biblical References and Allusions – Chapter Four

1. “Between the Verses” – Title of the Series

The entire framework of the story is built on the idea that hidden meanings lie “between the verses.” This echoes the traditional Jewish approach to Scripture, where deeper interpretations are discovered not only in the text itself but in what lies beneath it – a classic Midrashic concept.

2. Verses Written in the Margins

The mysterious “verses” that appear in notebooks clearly allude to passages from the Bible, and more specifically to the Book of Jeremiah. The ongoing presence of biblical quotations functions as a modern echo of prophetic messages appearing in unexpected places.

3. The Book of Jeremiah

The explicit mention that earlier notes contained verses from the *Book of Jeremiah* is highly significant. Jeremiah the prophet is associated with warnings, moral rebuke, and uncomfortable truths delivered to people who do not wish to hear them.

The unknown note writer in the story plays a similar role – exposing denial and forcing Jeremy to confront realities he would rather avoid.

4. **“Someone is watching him”**

The growing sense that an unseen observer is monitoring events recalls numerous biblical themes:

- “The eyes of the Lord are in every place” (Proverbs 15:3)
- The prophetic tradition in which hidden actions are revealed and judged.

Jeremy’s unease mirrors that of biblical figures who realise they are being held accountable.

5. **The Concept of a Moral Lesson Rather Than Punishment**

Jeremy concludes that the notes are not meant as punishment but as a lesson.

This reflects a deeply biblical idea: divine rebuke as education rather than vengeance, as expressed in Proverbs 3:12 – “For whom the Lord loves, He corrects.”

6. **“Easier to blame others”**

The final note in the chapter functions almost like a modern proverb. It echoes a classic biblical motif: human beings avoiding responsibility and shifting blame.

The earliest example is Adam saying, “The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me of the tree” (Genesis 3:12).

Jeremy’s initial urge to blame a student follows this ancient pattern.

7. **Jeremy / Jeremiah Parallel**

Even though the teacher is called Jeremy, the similarity to the name Jeremiah is not accidental. Just as the prophet Jeremiah was forced to question comfortable assumptions and face painful truths, Jeremy is being pushed to mature morally and spiritually.

8. **“Not meant for matriculation examination – but for a different kind of maturity”**

This closing line hints at the biblical distinction between mere knowledge and true wisdom. In Scripture, wisdom is not about examinations or grades but about ethical growth – “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 9:10).

9. **These layers of allusion give the chapter its quiet depth: what appears to be a simple school mystery gradually takes on the tone of a moral and almost prophetic drama. (*The plot thickens – Ed*)**



Day and Date	Time	Activity
Sunday 8.2.26	7:00	Walk with Shlomit and Peter
Monday 9.2.26	8:00	Pedicure with Limor Moalem *appointment must be booked
	9:00	Sweet Treat with Noa and Monica
	10:00	Workday at ORBA
	18:00	Veterans' Evening
Tuesday 10.2.26	9:30	Art of Painting with Chas Broadhurst
Wednesday 11.2.26	9:30	Documentary Film
Thursday 12.2.26	10:00	Film with Galia Shemi
	10:00	Open Ceramics Room with guidance by Ziv Ben Bassat
	17:15	Chair Exercise with Michal Shaanan

Abraham Shapira (Patchy) - (Memoir Chapters)

Editorial Note: This week we conclude the series of articles that appeared over several weeks in the Haaretz newspaper. The series included a number of pieces previously published in earlier editions of The Yizraelite, as well as a personal memoir written by Patchy himself, which we present here for our readers. The full article, which is somewhat lengthy, will be available exclusively **in the online edition**, while the printed Hard Copy version will feature a concise summary prepared by ChatGPT.

ChatGPT Summary:

The memoir by Abraham Shapira is both a personal life story and an intellectual journey, intertwining the history of Israeli society, the kibbutz movement, and encounters with some of the greatest Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century. It reflects on the formation of a young man's identity within the pioneering ethos of pre-state Israel, and on the spiritual and cultural influences that shaped his later work as an editor, educator, and bridge between worlds.

Shapira begins by recalling his childhood in Haifa. His formal elementary school years left little mark on him, but at the age of ten he joined the pioneering youth movement "HaTnu'ah HaMe'uhedet." From that moment his life became dedicated to the ideals of Zionist fulfillment through kibbutz life. The political turmoil of the British



Mandate period—illegal immigration, British repression, demonstrations, and underground resistance—formed the backdrop to his adolescence.

During high school he encountered an extraordinary teacher, Baruch Kurzweil, whose intellectual depth and uncompromising seriousness left a permanent imprint on Shapira and his classmates, including the future poet Dalia Rabinovitch. These years instilled in him a love of literature and philosophy.

After completing school and army service, Shapira joined Kibbutz Yizrael as part of a garin (training group). The kibbutz, like many young settlements of the 1950s, struggled

for survival, and most of his peers eventually left. Shapira, however, remained committed both to kibbutz life and to his yearning for higher education. Against prevailing norms in the kibbutz movement, which regarded university studies with suspicion, he fought to combine manual labour with intellectual development.

While working in the agricultural branches of the kibbutz, he sought permission to study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His goal was to complete a BA in two years rather than the usual three, because he was expected to return to full-time work as a shepherd after his period of study. During this time he also founded, almost single-handedly, the cultural and ideological quarterly **Shdemot**, which became an influential forum for spiritual and ethical reflection within the kibbutz movement. Despite indifference—and sometimes hostility—from movement leaders, Shapira edited the journal for ten years, mostly in his spare time.

His studies at the Hebrew University opened for him a new world. There he encountered some of the towering figures of Jewish thought, foremost among them **Professor Shmuel Hugo Bergman**. Shapira vividly describes seeing Bergman—already elderly and a founder of the university—attending classes like an ordinary student in Gershom Scholem’s seminar on the Zohar. Bergman’s humility, warmth, and intellectual nobility deeply impressed him.

Through Bergman, Shapira entered a small, intimate study circle devoted to early Hassidic texts. The group included scholars such as Rivka Schatz-Oppenheim and Benjamin Oppenheim, and even a Benedictine monk, Father Yohanan Weinhoven. This unusual circle embodied the openness and dialogue that Shapira came to cherish. Later, Father Yohanan left the monastery, converted to Judaism, and emigrated to the United States—an episode that left a strong impression on Shapira.

Bergman became a mentor and friend. He encouraged Shapira to contact **Martin Buber**, the renowned philosopher. Shapira hesitated, feeling unworthy, but Bergman persisted. Eventually Shapira met Buber in his Jerusalem home. The encounter, which he had imagined would be formal and intimidating, turned into a warm, open conversation. Buber surprised him with his attentiveness, simplicity, and willingness to engage as an equal rather than as an authority figure.

This first meeting led to many others. Shapira not only continued to visit Buber but also brought groups of kibbutz members and educators to meet him. These conversations, some of which Shapira recorded and later published, revealed Buber’s extraordinary capacity for dialogue and his deep interest in the moral and social questions facing Israeli society. Buber and Bergman both became regular readers and contributors to **Shdemot**, lending the journal intellectual stature.

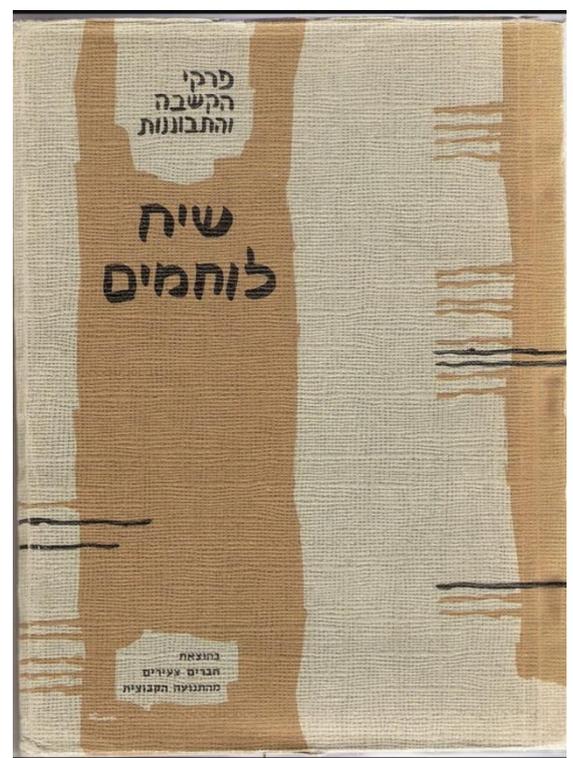
The memoir also touches on Shapira's later collaborations with Buber's son, Rafael, after Buber's death. Shapira helped edit and republish several of Buber's works in Hebrew, including new editions of *Paths in Utopia* and *Moses*, and compiled the posthumous collection *Hope for This Hour*. He notes with pride that Buber's writings were translated into dozens of languages, reaching even Japan, where scholars and monks sought him out to discuss Buber's philosophy.

Throughout the memoir Shapira reflects on the tension between his two worlds: the physical labour of kibbutz life and the spiritual-intellectual realm of Jerusalem academia. He often returned from seminars and meetings with great thinkers to milk cows or herd sheep at dawn. This dual existence, though exhausting, shaped his unique perspective as both a man of action and a man of ideas.

In the closing pages Shapira considers the enduring relevance of Buber and Bergman. He recalls Buber's insistence that one must respond to the present moment not from short-term tactics but from responsibility toward the future. He quotes Buber's profound question: how can a person learn to believe that life has meaning and direction? For Shapira, these questions remain urgent—especially in times of national crisis and moral uncertainty.

The memoir ultimately portrays a life dedicated to dialogue: between kibbutz and university, between manual work and scholarship, between Judaism and broader human culture, and between individuals seeking meaning. Through his encounters with Bergman and Buber, Shapira found models of intellectual humility and ethical commitment that guided his own path.

More than a personal recollection, the document serves as a testimony to a formative chapter in Israeli cultural history—a period when ideals of pioneering, community, and spiritual searching converged. Shapira's story reminds readers that great ideas are kept alive not only in books and universities, but also in the lived experience of those who strive to connect thought with life.



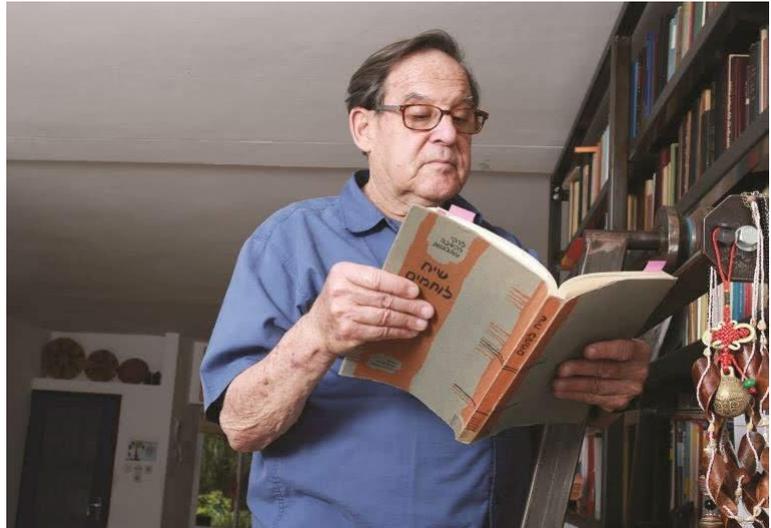
“Siach Lochamim”

Warriors Talk

Abraham Shapira (Patchy) - (Memoir Chapters)

Shdemot in the Valley and the Sages of Jerusalem With S.H. Bergman and with Buber (Memoir Chapters)

Most of my years of study at the elementary school left no mark on me and were not etched into my childhood memories. When I was about ten, a pupil in Grade 5, I found my way into membership of a pioneering youth movement, “HaTnu’ah HaMe’uhedet” (“The United Movement”), which had been established as a result of the



merger of the Gordonia movement with part of the “HaMaḥanot HaOlim” movement. From then on, all my thoughts were devoted to the world of the movement, and the horizon of my aspirations as a member was fulfilment on a kibbutz.

The final years of our schooling at the elementary school were imprinted on us, too, as children, under the sign of the upheavals of the struggles of the “Hebrew Yishuv in Eretz Israel” (as the Hebrew settlement was called in the Mandatory period): the illegal immigration of the survivors of the death camps; the immigrant ships detained by the British Mandate authorities; mass demonstrations that filled the central street of Haifa, my city of birth; the paratroopers of the British army, who fired dum dum bullets into the crowds of demonstrators; the daring actions of the Irgun and Lehi against the British, and more.

After completing Grade 8 at the elementary school, I began studying at the “Chugim” high school. From the sixth class (Year 10), we had the privilege of studying in the class of a teacher unlike any other: Baruch Kurzweil. We studied ten hours a week in his class: Hebrew literature, general literature, medieval poetry, and philosophy. To this day I cannot conceive of a teacher or lecturer more horizon-breaking, unveiling unknown worlds and deepening knowledge as he did. We were all attentive to his teachings, as well as to his personal stories. Echoes and resonances from Kurzweil’s

worlds I shared even forty and fifty years later with my classmate Dalia Ravikovitch. I vividly remember Kurzweil's short, stocky figure standing on the dais, facing the class, when suddenly he raised his hand and pointed it toward Dalia and asked, as if inquiring: "Dalia, is it true that you write poems?" We were all astonished not only by this manner of discovery, but also at ourselves. One can easily imagine what Dalia felt in those moments [...]. About her and her letters to me, it will be told elsewhere.

Our enlistment in the IDF was set for the end of the summer of 1955. Already upon finishing the matriculation exams, at the outset of that summer, I hastened to go out to work on the kibbutz our training was meant to "complete". What does "complete" mean? Every training group (a "gar'in", in our language) that had coalesced with the intention of going together to Nahal service was supposed to join one of the young kibbutzim founded after the War of Independence. Most of those kibbutzim experienced severe crises and cried out for an addition of members. The leaders of the youth movements decreed and determined the targets of the "completion" – we were designated to complete the Yizrael group at the foot of the Gilboa. It was a group that had undergone grave existential crises. Toward the end of the 1950s it even stood twice before the question of whether to exist or to be erased from the map of the country.

Most of the members of my garin were Jerusalemites, from Rehavia and Talbiya [...]. We all returned to Yizrael after our release from the army. At that time, and even many years later, any form of higher education was not considered the accepted norm for kibbutz members. Against this background it is understandable why most of the members of my garin left or abandoned Yizrael a year or two after we were released from the army.

I myself hoped and expected that some miraculous path would be found that would allow me to continue being a kibbutz person while at the same time studying Judaism in its many forms at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. [...] At the end of four years of work in the branches of the farm I asked to go out to the youth movement in order to write educational programmes for the youth movements connected to the kibbutz movement. "The Movement" was the one that financed the work of the kibbutz emissaries within it. The only path left to me was to combine the studies and my daily movement obligations. No one among my kibbutz comrades and no one among the Kibbutz Movement people with whom I was in working, showed any interest or regard for the "act of the chariot" I wished to shoulder and whose tests I had to withstand. There also stood before me a challenge that is doubtful whether it could be realised: to complete the bachelor's degree in two years and not in three, according to the rules of

the Hebrew University. For I knew that at the end of the two years I was supposed to return to work in the cowshed and be a shepherd of sheep on my kibbutz, Yizrael.

Alongside my devotion to the worlds that opened before me at Givat Ram, the campus of the Hebrew University, with their multidisciplinary demands, and alongside the writing of work programmes intended for the educational work in the above youth movements, I founded, almost on my own, the quarterly Shdemot – amid complete indifference to the new enterprise on the part of the kibbutz establishment, from the heads and leaders of Ichud HaKvutzot VeHaKibbutzim (that was the name of our kibbutz stream), through the ideologues and spokespeople of our movement, to the heads of the youth movements affiliated with it.

For ten consecutive years I edited and continued to build Shdemot. After the first two years, in the eight following years of my labour in this enterprise – those after its birth – my kibbutz allowed me to devote only one workday a week to editing the quarterly, and a few years later two workdays a week. That is, in effect I worked every day an additional “workday” in the hours after my kibbutz “work schedule” day. Yes, that’s right. It’s unbelievable. But that is how my kibbutz life was conducted over the years.

In past years, I wrote three doctoral dissertations, devoted largely to Shdemot.

I return to my two years in which one of the centres of my time bore the titles of my courses at the university in Jerusalem. Incidentally, in those years the Hebrew University was still the only academic institution for higher education in Israel.

My first academic year of study, with all its branches and connections, was rich with discoveries and experiences. Then began to sprout and grow friendships with several of those with whom we sat together on the benches of study.

At that very time, and without premeditation, I also was fortunate enough to have personal contact with some of the greatest among the sages of Jerusalem, and these became very real and enduring connections, whether through correspondence or through many personal meetings that brought me again and again from the Yizrael valley to Jerusalem.

Most of the lectures and tutorials in which I took part were held in the Mazier Building, the splendid and large building among the campus buildings at Givat Ram. This building served as the classroom building for most Jewish Studies. I would arrive every Monday at midday, to the second floor of the Mazier Building, where Jewish Studies and philosophy were held. I would then slip into the philosophy seminar led by Professor Nathan Rotenstreich. As is known, one can register for a “B.A. seminar”, as distinct from a “lecture” and a “tutorial”, only in the second year of study.

Week after week, as we awaited the time of that seminar, Professor S.H. Bergman would pass by us. His head was a bright white grey, his back bent, and his body very hunched in his shuffling, hurried walk. Where was he hurrying to?! He was on his way to a “tutorial” for reading the Zohar for first-year students, under the guidance of Professor Gershom Scholem. Unbelievable! After all, we are speaking here of the central figure among the founders and builders of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem! And now, when he was on the threshold of his old age, he was like an ordinary student together with first-year students. This portrait of his radiant personality is engraved within me with exceptional clarity even now, sixty-five years later.

Bergman made aliyah with Elsa, his first wife, and their three children in 1920. In Jerusalem a position awaited him as director of the National Library. Under his leadership the library was built and shaped and became our national library. After several years, when the Hebrew University was founded, he was appointed its first Rector. Alongside this appointment he was the father of philosophy studies in Hebrew, and he also continued to write books in most areas of philosophy and interpretive thought in our language – all this in parallel with his philosophical writing in several European languages. I hold now in my hand the first of his books in Hebrew: *The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Jerusalem, 5687 (1927), p. 261. I did not come here to illuminate the scope and significance of the life’s works he granted to our world – S.H. Bergman, the creative philosopher and the person of active social involvement – and I will only add here that the bibliography of his writings, only up to 1967, encompasses 1,786 entries.

However rooted Bergman was in his Eretz-Israeli, and later Israeli, being, he continued always to experience the roots and splendid branches of his upbringing in the golden city of Prague. Thus, he also continued until his later years to write and testify about the world of his childhood and youth friend, Franz Kafka.

One expression of my integration into Jerusalem life began to take shape when my dear friend Ehud Ben-Ezer invited me to join him in participating in a study circle beyond the public institutions: a unique, small circle that held weekly meetings on Tuesday evenings, and whose host, also one of its learners, was Professor S.H. Bergman. Ehud, to his friends “Udi”, was among the founders of Kibbutz Ein Gedi, and there I came to know him. He had come to Jerusalem a year earlier to study at the university. When we met again in Jerusalem, he was already immersed in the life of the Givat Ram campus. That weekly study evening was devoted to reading texts from the beginnings of Hassidism under the guidance of Dr Rivka Schatz-Opppenheimer, a student of Gershom Scholem and a lecturer in the Department of Kabbalah at the Hebrew University.

Bergman was an alert and attentive student even in this home circle. One of the prominent figures of the fourth generation of Bergman's successors in the Department of Philosophy at the Hebrew University described him as "a distinctly Socratic figure". Our teacher Rivka Schatz would respond to Bergman's questions and musings as she responded to the comprehension difficulties of all the other students participating. One of them was her husband, Professor Benjamin Oppenheimer, a renowned Bible scholar.

To this day I preserve the small, already torn and worn booklet with which we worked in this circle: The Testament of the RIVASH, a foundational work of the Hassidic movement attributed to the Maggid of Mezeritch.

I persisted in my participation in this highly unique circle throughout my two years of study in Jerusalem. The resonance box of that period nourished me for many years. Here I will talk only very briefly about the relationships that formed during those meetings between me and Father Yohanan Weinhoven, a Benedictine monk from the famed Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion. Father Yohanan's figure stood out with the light of his face and his monastic robe among the hundreds of students who moved through the floors of the Mazier Building. He received a special permit from his strict order to leave the monastery even on the evenings when the meetings of our circle were held, in which he was among the regular and active participants. I gradually became a conversation partner to Father Yohanan. In the second year of our weekly meetings in the circle, I invited him to be my guest for a weekend in my kibbutz home in the valley. Indeed, it was for him a Sabbath that opened worlds he had not known. During it I even brought him to a meeting with David Maltz at Ein Harod.

[...] I was surprised when I was invited for a return visit to Dormition, which included an invitation to lunch with the monks. I even climbed with Yohanan up the staircase of the square tower – which had become something of a symbol of the monastery standing out in its presence alongside the Old City wall. He invited me to his personal cell high in the tower.

A few weeks later Yohanan's absence from the weekly meetings at Bergman's home began to be tangible. No one knew how to explain his absence, and Bergman kept silent. Perhaps he, too, did not know.

Even after I returned to my work in the dairy on my kibbutz, at the beginning of 5722 (1961–62), I managed to come to Jerusalem several times and to participate in meetings of our circle. At one of those meetings Bergman told us in his soft, slow voice:

“I received a letter from our friend Yohanan [...] and I wish to read it to you.” I remember clearly that we were tense with attention as he read to us an airmail letter, he had received from him. It became clear to us that Yohanan had relinquished the title of priesthood and had left the monastery. More than that: he had converted to Judaism and travelled far beyond the seas. He was accepted as a student in Jewish Studies at Brandeis University in Boston (as a continuation of his studies at the Hebrew University). I will quote here only the first part of that letter:

Waltham

October 5722 (1961–62)

Dear Professor Bergman!

I was very glad when I received your postcard and to hear about our circle, and I remembered again my pleasant visits at your home—on Tuesday and on Shabbat. I think I must explain a bit more my personal situation, because until now I assumed that you knew the great change in my life since I left the land. When I left Israel in August 5720 (1960) I also left monastic life and the priesthood, so now I am no longer worthy of the title “Father”. I began to return to civilian life after a long process of inner doubt which showed me more and more that there is, as it were, an abyss between my thoughts, my faith within myself, and even my behaviour, and all that the Church demands of me, and rightly expects of me as a monk and priest. In the years I was in the monastery I always suffered from a lack of honesty and integrity of conscience, and my period in the Holy Land—especially the last years in Jerusalem—were like a real liberation for me, and I decided at last, officially to leave the priesthood. I must acknowledge that I left Mount Zion and my friends in the Church without bitterness, with true gratitude for all the good, richness, and education I received in the Church and in the monastery. But—people are people—there were also many misunderstandings, and there still are.

The past year in the U.S. was one of the hardest: to find a new relationship toward the world, people, myself, and the future; a very difficult economic situation—work—lack of work—studies [...] but inner joy—God’s grace—helped me through the “High Holy Days”. I completed the M.A. in June, I worked during the summer as a kitchen worker—irony of life! —and this year I began doctoral studies. [...]

I will not speak here about the continuation of the path Yohanan Weinhoven carved for himself. I will note only that many years later I met him at the conference for Jewish Studies held then every year in Boston. He did not remember at all details of the weekly circle at Bergman’s home, nor me or my name.

That letter Yohanan sent to Bergman struck me at the time as though taken from one of Hermann Hesse’s novels (I thought particularly of *Demian*). Bergman gave it to me

for safekeeping, and it is preserved with me together with Bergman's letters to me, which are not few. Our correspondence, alongside meetings at his home, continued almost until 1975, the last year of his life.

Bergman would customarily rise from his seat by his worktable at the end of the "evening" in order to converse with his friends and acquaintances. Thus, he also often approached me and wove with me an ongoing contact. His speech was soft and his eyes always shone. In his voice echoed strands of his Prague German. The spiritual nobility that enveloped his portrait was evident even in his everyday conversation. Thus, for example, he never adopted customary and common phrases such as "I think" or "I want to say", but always used the expression "I wish" ("I wish to say", "I wish to propose", and so on).

In one of those very brief conversations, after our study evenings together, he said to me, to my astonishment: "Abraham, I wish to suggest that you telephone Martin Buber and arrange with him a time when you will come to his home to meet him." I wondered and thought to myself: "Who am I, and what am I? Is it fitting that Buber should make time for a conversation with me?!" I thanked Bergman deeply and hoped I had fulfilled my obligation. I thought the matter had ended. But Bergman did not let go. The following week he approached me again and, after a silence of two minutes or a little more, asked me whether I had already telephoned Buber's home (the previous week he had given me the telephone number, etc.).

[...] Thus I found myself sitting opposite Buber in his study (after his wife's death he lived in his granddaughter Barbara's house, on Hovevei Zion Street in Talbiya). I already knew at that time several of the central volumes in Buber's writings: *BeSod Siah* (In the Secret of Dialogue), *Penei Adam* (The Face of Man), *Te'udah VeYe'ud* (Mission and Destiny), *'Am Ve'Olam* (People and World), *Netivot BaUtopia* (Paths in Utopia), and more. Buber was accustomed to the awed embarrassment in his presence – of even that the greatest and most renowned.

From the early stages of his spiritual creation and of the worldview he shaped for himself, Buber was involved in several cultural spheres, and before long became one of the most distinctive representatives of German culture. At the same time, from his youth, he was an active Zionist. His spiritual biography overlaps the history of Zionism, as well as the history of Jewish thought in the twentieth century. On the day of his death (13.06.65), President Zalman Shazar said: "Until this morning, Buber was the one man whose spiritual life spans the length of modern Zionist thought, and he should be seen as a permanent figure in the development of Jewish thought." He also became a pre-eminent representative of Judaism in the twentieth century to the outside world.

His student and colleague A. A. Simon called him “an emissary who was not sent” (see his essay “Bridging Bridges—On the Problem of the Influence of M. Buber”, *Molad* 115, Shevat–Adar 5718).

There is no doubt that he was one of the few universal personalities of the twentieth century, one of the greatest among the sages of his time.

In further meetings with Buber that year, in 1960, I found him, when I arrived at his home, in the midst of reading proof-sheets in preparation for the printing of a book that contained many of his essays on the questions of Zionism’s path and the horizons of its vision. He held a large magnifying glass in his hand to make meticulous reading of the manuscript easier. These were probably the proof-sheets for the collection *‘Am Ve’Olam* (1960), which was also something of a continuation of the collection *Te’udah VeYe’ud* (1959). It is worth noting that only in the late 1950s and the early 1960s did most of his central books appear in Hebrew, though they had long been known to readers of German and English.

I still have not told anything about the course of my first meeting with Buber, the one that was unplanned and not prearranged, for it was Bergman who initiated it (and I could not but comply with him [...]). It goes without saying that it never occurred to me that it would be a cornerstone for the series of meetings with him in his home—those for which I became, in a sense, a go-between and, in fact, also an initiator.

The conversation, conducted without tension, seemed to flow from its very beginning. This, of course, only thanks to Buber. I had read about meetings of figures from Israel and from abroad with him—each person and their story. The unusual ease that prevailed as I sat opposite him also enabled me to debate with him and even to disagree with a central and widespread view of his (I wrote about it and documented it elsewhere). To my surprise he responded to me, not as one laying down the law, nor as one representing authority. After that part of our conversation, and as if all at once, he was no longer the revered man perceived as distant. Suddenly I was no longer sitting before the man whom some of those who knew him in Jerusalem would call “Buber behind the beard”—that is, a man conscious of his aura, of the special atmosphere that surrounded him, and who did not seek to dwell beyond it; a man not inclined to weave a simple conversation [...]. All at once he became human, without trappings, open and deeply attentive.

I continued to take part in the study circle at Bergman’s home on Tuesday evenings. These became, not by my initiative, a foundation for an ongoing conversation between Bergman and me, between me and him.

Every Thursday afternoon or evening, another distinctly Jerusalem week would come to an end in my world, with its marks and echoes, and I would go back to my kibbutz home in the Jezreel Valley. Many of my Sabbaths were devoted to duty work in the dairy. I would rise in the middle of the night and hurry to the milking, after which, even on very rainy and gloomy days, I would go out at the head of the flock to pasture.

In the summer vacation between my first academic year in Jerusalem and the second, Bergman invited me more than once to visit him at his home, “when you arrive in Jerusalem,” as he put it.

I refresh my memory of that time with the help of his letters and postcards. In our meetings Bergman would speak at length and tell of his Czech world, of his youth in Prague, and not a little, too, about his classmate and close friend, Franz Kafka. In one of those meetings he held in his hands a page prepared on his table and noted that it was a copy of a letter he had sent to his friend, Franz, in 1902. He began translating it for me into Hebrew as he read it aloud, and a tremor from the time in which the letter was written seemed to take hold of him even now. I did not ask him then whether the original was in Czech shorthand or in German, and I did not dare to request that copy of the letter, which is, of course, preserved in the carefully ordered Bergman archive in the Manuscripts and Archives Department of the National Library.

Many years after I first encountered this letter from its author Bergman, my friend, the polymath Shlomo Zucker, translated it for me. I met Shlomo for the first time in my first year at the Hebrew University. The beginning of our friendship lay in a shared background: in his past he had worked in the sheep branch at Sde Eliyahu in the Beit She’an Valley, and I, as related above, had been a “shepherd” on Yizrael.

In the 1990s I dealt several times with this highly significant document—Bergman’s early letter to his friend Franz Kafka—with my students in M.A. seminars at Tel Aviv University.

And here is the letter in Shlomo Zucker’s translation (In Hebrew, not English – Ed).

Hugo Bergman’s letter to Franz Kafka (1902)

Why did I become a Zionist? In your letter there was not lacking, of course, the necessary mockery of my Zionism. It is already fitting that I stop being amazed by this, and yet I must return to be amazed by it again and again: that you, who for years were my bench-mate in studies, if not more than that—you do not understand my Zionism. If I were to see before me a wanderer who has an “*idée fixe*”, I would not laugh at him, because for him that *idée* is part of his soul. And my Zionism, in your eyes, is nothing but an “*idée fixe*” that is in me. Perhaps it is also part of my soul—this, most likely, you do not know; and yet so it is. Perhaps for me it is even more than that. It was gathered

and assembled from scraps of my self. I can see your smile. If you grasped this, you would understand yourself and me. Unconsciously, from the days of your childhood, you sought content for life. I did so as well. But you—your upbringing was different from mine. You were able to soar to sun-drenched heights and in your dreams reach the loftiest heavens. What could paralyse your power? You were always dependent only on yourself, and thus you also received the power to be alone. And I? I never dreamed too much. And when I did, my dreams could not go very far, because the clumsy reality was pushed into them, to ensure that I would not shoot above the target.

Searching and searching I was [...] and the power to stand alone, like you, was not in me. My portion was always to yearn for others and to have my heart beat in the warmth of love. Do not believe that it was the feeling of pity that made me a Zionist. My “Zion” is a decent piece of egoism. I sense how I would like to soar, how I would like to create, and I cannot; and again, I have no strength, and yet I feel that under other conditions perhaps I could have the strength, and I feel that natural talent is not absent from me. Only the strength is lacking. And thus, Zionism is for me an expression of my longing for love. Because I am aware that thousands besides me suffer as I do, I want to go with them, to work with them—oh, if only I could at least participate with them in feeling. Perhaps again we shall overcome our weakness, again we shall stand firm on our own ground and not be uprooted and flimsy like a reed. Perhaps, perhaps I will one day again find within me the strength [...]

Translated: Shlomo Zucker (S.H. Bergman Archive, National and University Library in Jerusalem, File 2570).

I will add here only one anecdote of those that Bergman revived in his memory during our conversations. “Kafka ‘copied’ from me,” he said, “from our class’s final-exam notebook in mathematics.”

The clear subjects of these memories prevent me from telling—also from documenting even a little—the processes of my work in the birth and growth of each and every Shdemot volume. But it is worth telling here that Buber, very much like Bergman, was not only a regular reader of Shdemot. He rejoiced, like Bergman, to be among the active participants in this kibbutz quarterly.

It has not yet been spoken about my meetings with another significant figure among the sages of Jerusalem: Professor A. A. Simon, founder of education studies at the Hebrew University, Buber’s student and close associate. He, too, contributed distinct gifts to the shaping of this quarterly.

I did not have the privilege of being among Gershom Scholem's students at the Hebrew University. I had the privilege of coming to know him and to be invited to his home only several years later. My work in collecting and editing central books—more than a few—of his writings is documented and will be told elsewhere.

Bergman, in his great humility, was always attentive and responsive not only to his students but also to his students' students. Here I will bring only a few examples connected with me.

In the 1960s, as in earlier years, it was customary in the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University to stencil and publish annual courses of faculty teachers that were considered of special importance. Thus, for example, in 5722 (1961–62) the Department of Philosophy published an annual course of Bergman's, on the subject of dialogical philosophy from Kierkegaard to Buber. Two lectures at the end of that series were devoted to Buber. In one of my conversations with Buber, I mentioned that set of lectures, and it became clear to me that Bergman, in his modesty, had not told him about it. Following that mention, the initiative arose to publish that set of lectures as a book at the Bialik Institute.

A few years later one of Bergman's central books appeared: *Anashim VeDrakhim* (People and Paths), Bialik Institute, 5727 (1967), 424 pp. In its introduction Bergman wrote: "I must thank two friends who encouraged me with their persistent demand to gather the scattered essays into a book: Abraham Shapira, a member of Kibbutz Yizrael and editor of *Shdemot*, and my friend Moshe Barash."

During my continuing contact with Bergman, in writing and face to face, I suggested that I gather a small selection of his essays and publish it by means of *Shdemot*. He agreed gladly and left me the choice of the essays to be included in that booklet. Six of its seven chapters were collected there for the first time. Bergman chose the title: *Heaven and Earth*. The year of publication was 5729 (1969). We published about two thousand copies, which sold out within a few years. For quite a few years afterwards there was still great demand for that publication. Bookshops and people from the academic world returned to me seeking to obtain it.

It seems worthwhile to tell here of one small detail in the very close relations that prevailed among the families of several of the great sages of Jerusalem. Bergman gave his eldest son the name Martin as an expression of his admiration for Martin Buber. He told me of this on a later occasion, in a letter dated 29.07.73:

[...] It is a pity that you did not find us at home and that we could not speak face to face about the matters you are discovering in Buber's *Gog and Magog*. I confess to you, my friend, that it is very difficult for me to discuss it as a finished text, as you are able to do

[...]. I feel too strongly the living Buber, with all the good and the not-so-good that is bound up with such physical closeness (my eldest son, whose arrival I am awaiting, is called Martin!).

Toni Simon, the wife of Professor Akiva Ernst Simon, told me in one of our conversations that Bergman's firstborn changed his name to "Shlomo" after children in their Rehavia neighbourhood and at school called him "Martin Luther".

Gershom Scholem recounts in his book "From Berlin to Jerusalem" how he stayed in the home of Hugo and Elsa Bergman after his immigration to Israel. Later, Ernst and Toni Simon rented a room in that same Bergman house on Habashim Street. Hugo and Elsa Bergman then had three children: Martin, Chava, and Uri. Toni Simon told me that out of special affection for Uri, the Bergmans' son, when her own first child was born, she chose to name him after him: Uriel.

Following the story of my acquaintance with Buber, it seems almost necessary to report on its continuations, which, as it were, formed of themselves. More precisely, we are speaking here of a chain of meetings that I initiated. He always responded with full willingness and even with desire.

To be sat opposite Buber in his study, to converse with him about the affairs of the world, or to engage with him from the depths of the inner world of an individual in his solitude—these were the heart's desire and the object of longing for cultural and creative figures from many fields of spirit: poets, theologians, politicians, veteran educators, and others. I found myself, more than a few times, in the position of one who "approaches on behalf of", a connector and mediator. Some of the letters that reached me from those who met him are preserved with me. They told that it had been for them a rare and uncommon experience. Others recounted that they had intended in advance to remain silent and to listen for an answer or a direction, yet found themselves amazed to be in the midst of a dialogue they had not anticipated at all. One of them expressed the imprint Buber left on his world by pointing to the unique gift of dialogue that this great man possessed with the totality of a guest whom he had never known before. He added a sentence he had written down from Buber's book *BeSod Siah*: "Dialogue opens what cannot be opened in any other way."

I do not remember how it occurred to me to initiate the first conversation between young central figures in the kibbutz world and Buber. After it there were no echoes of horizons opened or fruitful reactions. Yet it is interesting that this very conversation bore, several years later, fertile and enriching results.

Following that meeting, I initiated—at intervals of time—three group meetings with Buber: a conversation with central members from Yotvata and Ein Gedi (then very young kibbutzim), and two conversations of educators together with their pupils—from the second and third generations on Kibbutz Afikim. I published three or four of those conversations in journals and in a book. The fourth and last in the series, which was probably also the most significant, has not yet been published. The protocols recorded in all those meetings, together with background material and a comprehensive introduction, are prepared for publication, whose time will yet come, God willing.

Recently I returned to re-examine the protocols of those conversations, which I recorded at the time. I also felt a need to acquaint myself anew with an article I published soon after Buber's death, in the summer of 1965. I wrote it then at the request of my friend Shlomo Grodzensky, editor of *Amot*, that uniquely significant bi-monthly journal (whose editorial board included Gershom Scholem, Leah Goldberg, Nathan Rotenstreich, Dov Sadan, and others). Some sixty years have passed since then. In that article, "Meetings with Buber", I devoted prominent space to sections from those conversations of kibbutz people with Buber.

The paragraphs quoted in my article from those conversations may teach how alert and attentive Buber was to every nuance that arose from the worlds of those young people. He listened closely to every shade of meaning. His capacity for creative renewal was very evident in the insights and illuminations he offered in response to what was said there and then. Quite a few of those insights were not necessarily among the well-known or familiar ones to those versed in his writings and in his thought on issues of Zionism, community and fellowship, utopian visions of the future, the individual in responsibility, and, of course, the "dialogical situation".

As in his writings as a whole, in these conversations too Buber did not intend to deliver a "doctrine", to see himself as a "rabbi", or as the bearer of a message. In the "Afterword" to his well-known work "The Problem of Man" (the first series of lectures he delivered at the Hebrew University shortly after his immigration; this work is included in his book, 'Penei Adam'), he writes: "I do no more than point to the direction in which alone there are better chances of success than in the directions followed hitherto."

After Buber's passing, his eldest son, Rafael Buber, became responsible for his spiritual legacy, including the publication of writings from his estate in various languages as well as in Hebrew. A close and enduring connection was woven between us, beginning with his visit to me at Yizrael. Rafael Buber responded gladly to initiatives of mine to bring out books by Buber—whether in new format or in editions expanded and

supplemented. The most notable of these was his book *Netivot BaUtopia*, which I re-edited. I incorporated additions and supplements and appended an extensive essay of my own on Buber's social utopia. This renewed edition aroused many responses, including unusually serious reviews. At Rafael Buber's initiative, Buber's principal German publisher hastened to issue it in a worthy translation, and in Germany, too, this publication received many favourable reactions.

I should also mention his book *Moses*, which, with Rafael Buber's energetic encouragement, I laboured to prepare in a renewed edition. Yet even afterwards it did not arouse echoes among the Hebrew reader, nor in our educational system, nor among those engaged in Jewish Studies. In my humble opinion, it has not yet been discovered within our culture in its various branches.

Colleagues and friends have remarked to me that it would be fitting not to omit from this account the volume "Hope for This Hour", from Buber's estate, in which I gathered and edited essays, notes, and spiritual sparks, most of which had not previously been collected, not even in other languages. I published that volume within the series "Jewish Bookshelf", which I founded and edited at Am Oved Publishers.

A book project in encyclopaedic format is devoted to the very extensive bibliography of Buber's works in their various genres and in the many languages into which they were translated: "Martin Buber – Bibliography of His Writings, 1897–1978", edited by Margot Cohn and Rafael Buber, Magnes Press, 1980. This foundational book encompasses some 1,500 entries. It emerges that by the time of its appearance, Buber's books and essays had been translated into nineteen languages. In the years immediately following, writings of his appeared in seven additional languages.

I find it meaningful to note that even into Japanese culture, so distant from us in every sense, dozens of Buber's works were translated. I had the privilege of hosting in my home and in my kibbutz several Japanese visitors who travelled all the way here to engage in discussion of Buber's thought: among them scholars who teach aspects of his worlds in Japanese universities, students who came to Israel for periods of study, and even a Buddhist monk who journeyed from northern Japan out of a deep affinity for Buber's book "I and Thou".

Two shelves in my library are filled with Buber's writings in several languages—books, booklets, offprints of articles. Among them stand out three thick volumes of Buber's correspondence, covering the years 1897–1965. Only the first two have been translated from the German original into Hebrew and published by the Bialik Institute. I imagine that the person who will shoulder the task of bringing out the third volume in Hebrew has not yet been found. In these correspondence volumes, one can become

acquainted with sparks from the worlds of many great figures who shone in various cultural spheres and were active from the turn of the century until the sixth decade of the twentieth century.

Paul Mendes-Flohr, the foremost scholar of Buber and the chronicler of his works, the man who granted us a rich and fascinating biography of him, informs us that in the Martin Buber Archive, preserved at the National Library in Jerusalem, there are more than fifty thousand letters to and from him.

Indeed, the name Buber embodies a stature that shines among the giants of spirit of the Jewish people since the beginnings of the twentieth century. A wondrous unity binds together his “garden of spirits”, and so, too, the legacy of Bergman, which has not yet been exhausted.

In these chapters I have intended, from the distance of many years, to point to aspects of the lives and paths of Professor Shmuel Hugo Bergman and Martin Buber as they were engraved in my own life. As I now bring these autobiographical fragments into the public domain, I am aware of their renewed meanings in the worlds of every new generation that is privileged, and will yet be privileged, to encounter the voices of these great teachers.

How shall I conclude, at this time, these aspects that were quarried from the depths of my world, while we are still stunned by the great rupture—from the day of the massacre and from all that has come upon us since? I shall try to speak by means of a direction that students of mine in an M.A. seminar at Tel Aviv University in the early 1990s sought to point to from Buber’s writings:

“Always, in every hour, in every situation, it is possible to do **something** [...] something that determines to what extent the character of the next situation will be shaped. Tactical calculation always offers us the means that are not correct; it sacrifices the future for the sake of the moment, whereas we can reach the goal only through consistent work for the future. The true answer—that is to say: to respond to the moment not out of the moment, but out of the future.”

(From *On Our Path*, Jerusalem, March 1939)

“[...] Is it within your power to help me learn to believe? To learn to believe in reality, in life, in existence? To believe that there is an intention hidden within reality, and a goal

toward which life strives, and a meaning to existence?"

("The Hidden Question", 1951, Te'udah VeYe'ud, Zionist Library, 1960)

These questions, which stand at the centre of that essay, are the ones interwoven in **Hope for This Hour** (as the title of the collection from his estate mentioned above) and in hopes for the future that arise from "responding to the moment not out of the moment, but out of the future."



ENGLISH IS FUN with Rahel

IN PRAISE OF ENGLISH

In the year 1599, the poet and historian Samuel Daniel sang of the English language that was coming to full flower during the Elizabethan Age:

“And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
The treasure to our tongue, to what strange shores
This gaine of our best glory shall be sent.
T'inrich unknowing Nations with our stores?
What words in the yet unformed Occident
May come refined with the accents that are ours?”

The answer to Samuel Daniel's questions is that English, “the treasure of our tongue,” has become the most widely spoken language in the history of humankind, the linguistic wonder of the modern world.

The Academie Francaise has announced, with typical Gallic precision, that there are 2,796 languages existing today. Of these, only ten are the native tongue of more than one hundred million people. Chinese boasts more than a billion native speakers, English 350 million, and then in descending order Hindustani, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, German, Indonesian, Portuguese and French.

Although Chinese surpasses English in the sheer number of its native speakers, it does not rival English as a global language. It is subdivided into five distinct dialects that are mutually unintelligible in their spoken forms.

English is spoken all over the planet by people of all races and nearly all religions and cultures. In fact, recent surveys indicate that those using English as a preferred second language outnumber those who use it natively.

English is the first or official language of forty-five countries covering one fifth of the earth's land surface. More than 10% of the populations of other countries, such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and Sweden, are able to converse in English. One out of every seven people in the world understands and speaks the English language in some form.

The majority of the world's books, newspapers and magazines are written in English. Most international telephone calls are made in English. 60% of the world's radio programmes are beamed in English, and more than 70% of international mail, telexes and messages are written and addressed in English.

It is the language in which two-thirds of all scientific treaties and technical periodicals are printed and 80% of all computer text stored.

The rise of English as a planetary language is an unparalleled success story that begins long ago, in the middle of the fifth century A.D. At the onset of the Dark Ages, several large tribes of sea rovers, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, lived along the continental North Sea coast, from Denmark to Holland. They were fierce warrior people who built beaked galleys and fought with huge battle-axes and battle hammers, burning towns and carrying off anything they happened to want.

Around AD 449, these Teutonic plunderers sailed across the water and invaded the islands then known as Britannia. They found the land pleasant and the people fighting among themselves very easy to conquer.

They brought with them a Low Germanic tongue, that in its new setting, became Anglo-Saxon, or Old English, the ancestor of the English we use today. During the reign of King Egbert in the ninth century, the land became known as *Englaland*. "the land of the Angles," and the language *Englis*, because the Angles were at that time the chief group.

.....more next week



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