

The Diplomatic Club



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Perspective on the
Current Middle East

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Dear friends,

February and March are busy months with lots of major festivals and events taking place in the world.

Saint Valentine's Day ,International Women Day are traditionally a days on which lovers express their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards (known as "valentines"). The holidays missed they religious or ideological meanings.

People across Asia have celebrated Chinese New Year. Known variably as the Year of the Goat, Sheep or Ram, the sign's confusion stems from its Chinese character, "yang," which broadly describes any of the ruminating mammals, with or without horns.

Many Chinese prefer to translate it as the "Year of the Sheep" because sheep are cute and cuddly, and large sheep figures have appeared around the capital's shopping areas in recent weeks. The goat, however, is more likely to be the original meaning because it was a popular farm animal among Han Chinese

who started the zodiac tradition.

Israel is preparing to celebrate a Purim. Purim commemorates the survival of the Jewish people in Ancient Persia, from the threat of annihilation at the hand of the powerful and evil Haman, the "prime minister". Haman plotted to kill the Jews on the 13th of Adar, but his plan was foiled and he ended up being killed himself. As a consequence, the Jews celebrated the next day, the 14th of Adar.

To celebrate the joyous holiday is reading Megillat Ester (The Book of Esther) which tells the whole story of the events relating to the holiday, dressing up in costumes, giving gifts to the poor (matanot l'evyonim), giving gifts to friends (mishloach manot) and having a large Purim feast (seudat Purim).

The Diplomatic Club is celebrating an International women's day with hope for good future of all women, every mother and here children in the world.

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Julia Verdel
Publisher and Team

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Ambassador Shein: Perspective on the Current Middle East



By Eveline Erfolg

Early in October of 2015, H.E. Mr. Alexander Shein began his work as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the State of Israel, after being posted in a variety of countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

DC: Alexander Petrovich, after staying in many different countries in this war-struck region, how do you find Israel?

AS: My family and I find it very nice; we like it here. I also find it very interesting from a professional point of view. I've spent most of my diplomatic career in this part of the world, as after my graduation from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which sent me to the Middle Eastern and North African regions.

My first diplomatic mission was as an attaché of the Soviet Embassy in Tunisia, the second was in Algeria, then in Syria. Later on, I was appointed as Ambassador in Iraq, then in Jordan, and then in

Tunisia for the second time. And now I'm Ambassador to Israel.

Israel differs very much, in all and from all; not only from the Arab countries, but also from European countries, which I often visit. Israel is a completely distinctive and unique country, with a distinctive and unique society. I wouldn't compare it with anything. Nevertheless, there are numerous common grounds with everyone, and, I would say, with Russia above all others, due to the large wave of emigration from the former USSR.

DC: The Russian-speaking population of Israel has indeed stimulated a huge commercial, medical and cultural exchange. How do you see the prospects for further development?

AS: We already have very developed commercial and economic ties. The foreign-trade turnover between Russia and Israel is about 3.5 billion USD. We trade a variety of goods: Russia's export to Israel includes mainly oil, as well as petroleum products, diamonds, wood, metals, some primary commodities such as sulfur, food items, and agricultural produce, such as wheat.

Israel also exports agricultural produce to Russia, but it's different and includes fruits and vegetables. Approximately one-third of Israel's export to Russia is mechanical equipment, which is encouraging given Israel's great achievements in the field of high technologies. Israel also exports chemical products, pharmaceutical and medical equipment.

By the way, a well-known Israeli pharmaceutical company, Teva, has built a factory in the Russian city of Yaroslavl, which is already making Israeli medical supplies and medications in Russia. There are many more examples of our bilateral economic cooperation.

Other than that, I would like to highlight one more point, which opens new prospective horizons for our two economies. In 2015, Russia, together with other Israel-friendly countries – Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan – formed a Eurasian Economic Union, which offers a new fully integrated common market of over 180 million consumers, cheap skilled labor, huge natural resources and transparent rules for investments.

The Union's executive body has concluded that Israel is a desirable partner to sign a free trade zone agreement. Israeli partners have expressed such an interest too. Thus, now we are at the negotiation stage, which, I hope, will bring a fruitful, mutually beneficial outcome.

DC: Despite the fact that Russia supplies weapons to Arab countries, and trains their personnel, thereby strengthening its economic and political positions, particularly in Iran, Israel does not participate in economic sanctions imposed on Russia, does it?

AS: No, Israel is not involved together with most of the nations of the world; it refused to participate in these sanctions from the very beginning.

We highly appreciate this independent policy of Israel. At the same time, I would like to mention that the sanctions are not the worst thing Russia is going through, as the worst harm is caused by the falling prices of

“ *We view today's situation as a historical opportunity to say goodbye to Russia's dependence on the export of hydrocarbons and to develop a vivid, innovative market economy.* ”

our traditional export goods. In fact, we view today's situation as a historical opportunity to say goodbye to Russia's dependence on the export of hydrocarbons and to develop a vivid, innovative market economy.

As for the cooperation with Arab countries, it is by no means aimed against the security interests of Israel. On the other hand, a number of Western countries, including the closest allies of Israel, do much more than Russia in supplying weapons and training to the Arabs.

Of course, Israel doesn't really like the fact that we are beginning to supply weapons to Iran. However, this concern was always expressed over the context of Iran's nuclear program, and I would like to stress that this deal includes supply of strictly defensive weapons, and there should be no complaints or speculations on the matter.

We postponed the implementation of that contract for a while, until the problem of the nuclear program was resolved and the sanctions on Iran have been alleviated. Now, in accordance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, this problem is solved, and largely thanks to the vigorous activity and the efforts of not only Russia but also, and even perhaps to a greater extent, of the United States, which may have strained relations between Israel and the US.

DC: Recently, the relations have been strained not only between the US and Israel, but also between the US and Russia. Could this be the beginning of a new Cold War?

AS: This is not the Cold War; the situation reflects the ongoing historical process of an emerging polycentric world-order and a geopolitical interaction between states and groups of states for the influence on these transformations. These contradictions are much deeper.

The era of the Western dominance is coming to an end. The share of the West in global GDP is falling. New economic and financial giants are emerging today. This is a long-term trend.

Russia is such a large country that even when it is going through difficult times, when it is weakened, it cannot dance to someone else's tune for a long time.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Russia was greatly weakened economically and politically, then we had a very

good relationship with the West, especially with Washington. They liked to help us build “democracy,” so to speak, just as they want to impose its social model everywhere. It sat well with Russia’s former leadership.

However, when Russia got stronger and a new leadership emerged, it decided to implement a sovereign, independent foreign and domestic policy. The relations soured at that instance. The Ukrainian and the Syrian crises only added fuel to the fire, and served as an additional pretext to deter Russia.

All of these steps, including NATO military expansion, to worsen the relations with Russia were initiated and adopted by the US and Western Europe in their desire to conquer new historical space and get unilateral advantages at the expense of others. There are only retaliation measures from our side.

We have never initiated the deterioration of relations; we do not need that. We need good relations, but at the same time, we also have the right to promote our views and interests in this world, and, as I said, not to dance to the American tune.

DC: You said that good relations are needed. How about Ukraine then?

AS: We want to have a good relationship with Ukraine as well. We are vitally interested in Ukraine’s order and stability, as our nations are not only neighbors, but also closely related, as we are two Slavic Orthodox Christian nations stemming from

one common root. Nevertheless, our relations were messed up by the aggressive propaganda campaign started by the regime that illegally came to power in Kiev, by means of a violent unconstitutional coup d’état.

The campaign is strongly supported by the Western governments and media outlets, which are seeking to prevent the spread of alternative information or opinions on ongoing processes. That is why the public in the world, including here, in Israel, gets mainly a one-sided distorted picture of the situation.

“ *Twenty-five years ago we started almost from scratch. We’ve come a long way since then and it is difficult to name an area where Israel and Russia have not cooperated yet.* ”

The campaign is also designed to deliberately shape an image of Russia as “the enemy” among the Ukrainian population. These steps are dictated by the dominance of the far-right ideology in contemporary Ukrainian politics, with the government’s determination to implement a violent solution to internal problems, including opposition of the Donbass people to Ukrainian nationalists, as well as its desire to divert people’s attention away from the deep socioeconomic crisis.

Kiev’s forceful propaganda muzzles journalists who wish to express an independent alternative viewpoint; a number of them are not only silenced, but also assassinated. The Ukrainian government does not deny that its opponents are being killed, but it does nothing to find and punish the guilty.

It has behaved this way in the case of the burning alive of over 40 opposition activists in Odessa in May 2014, as well as war crimes committed by its armed forces in Donetsk and Lugansk regions, etc. As a result of these developments, currently more than a million Ukrainians have taken refuge in Russia.

I don’t think that this situation can persist for too long. The current leadership of Ukraine has decided that the more it attacks Russia in any way possible, the more money will come to them from the US and Western Europe. They decided to follow the example of some small Baltic countries.

I believe that the Ukrainians will one day realize that this deliberate confrontation with Russia is a historical mistake which was made by the current leadership in Kiev. The western countries are paying for this conflict through subsidies and loans; but the financing is not for free. Ukraine will have to pay them back.

Russia is still committed to a comprehensive and peaceful solution to the internal Ukrainian crisis and will continue helping the Ukrainians restore national harmony and return to the path of normal, sustained development.



DC: Traditionally, Russia has always supported the Arab countries, and today it voices opinions that not many can say out loud about the situation in the Middle East.

AS: Contrary to what is said by the West, Russia always spoke openly about the inapplicability of Western democratic development schemes and patterns imposed on Middle Eastern countries, which have their unique social models. Especially when these foreign ideas are brought to the region on American bayonets, as it was in Iraq, or with NATO bombs, as it was in Libya.

We are against this, and perhaps, no one else opposes this like Russia does. That's what distinguishes us from other

countries. Of course, we believe that it is necessary to promote democratic development in the region, but we also believe that no one should impose solutions from the outside, because it leads to disastrous results, as we can see for ourselves.

All the schemes such as a Greater Middle East are strictly theoretical. They try to change the ways of the region's peoples, following which we see only ruins, and where there were states, now we see ashes.

There is an obvious example – Iraq, where I worked many years ago. Of course, Iraq was an authoritarian, totalitarian regime, but the reason that it could not be different, that it could not be transformed in the right direction, is that it was isolated. There were stringent sanctions against the

regime and nations living in Iraq.

The ruling coterie lived a lavish lifestyle; Saddam Hussein had five palaces just in Baghdad. It was unimaginable luxury on the one hand, and unbearable poverty on the other. Many sought to emigrate, especially the intellectuals and the middle class.

Then the Americans came and overthrew Saddam Hussein and his clique. Then, under the guise of de-Ba'athification – that is, the eradication of the only ruling party in Iraq, the Ba'ath party – they dismantled the national army, the police and the administrative structures, generally destroying the state.

As a result, today Iran's influence in Iraq is even greater than America's, and the current Iraqi government is asking Russia

to supply weapons, as well as inviting Russian oil companies to participate in the development of oil fields in Iraq. The world has faced an unprecedented surge in the threat of terrorism: ISIS declared itself a state, and together with other extremist groups established their control over large swaths of land in Syria and Iraq. A long list of the fallout can be continued.

DC: Does Israel participate in the military actions against ISIS?

AS: As far as I understand, Israel holds a neutral position and is pursuing a line of non-interference in the Syrian conflict. It does not take sides in Syria, and is not involved in the international political, diplomatic and military efforts to resolve the conflict, including President Putin's initiative to form a broad-based anti-terrorist coalition in accordance with international law and under the aegis of the UN.

Israel has its own specific interests regarding what is happening in Syria. These interests are mainly dictated by concern for the public safety and national security of Israel. We completely understand it.

DC: The advancement of Turkish forces into Syria creates a corridor towards Russian forces and against Russia. What do you think about the prospects of Russian-Turkish relations?

AS: The recent developments in the region and in the world have brought clarity to the overall picture, including to the nature of the regime in Ankara. It has become obvious who is really

fighting the extremists and who is trying to manipulate them for their own goals.

What we care about is that Turkey's actions undermine international efforts, and could be an obstacle in the attempt of the international community to achieve a political settlement in Syria, because Turkey clearly has its own, selfish interests in Syria, which it upholds.

After they claimed that they would be Russia's allies in the fight against terrorism, they shot down our plane. It then became clear what the Turkish government is about, and what goals it pursues

“ *What we care about is that Turkey's actions undermine international efforts, and could be an obstacle in the attempt of the international community to achieve a political settlement in Syria.* ”

in Syria and regarding Russia. Moreover, they are now engaged in stirring up anti-Russian sentiments among the so-called leaders of one of the groups of the Tatar community in the Crimea.

Turkey's policies are even worse than the Ottoman Empire's. It is enough to mention their actions against the Kurds, which together with the army of the Government of Syria are the most active fighting force against the Islamic State terrorists on the ground. Turks prefer to bomb the Kurds, rather than ISIS, due to their own interests.

We are distancing ourselves from the current Turkish leadership, while maintaining good fellowship with the Turkish people, who are our neighbors and whom we have nothing against. Nevertheless, the current leadership has shown us its true face.

DC: In recent years, Russia has again declared itself not as a regional power, but as a force that has global influence.

AS: Russia has never been a regional power, even though some forces have tried to impose such an illusion in the world. Take a look at the world map: How can Russia be a regional power? In which region? The European? Caucasian? Asian? Asia-Pacific? Arctic? Russia is a geographically unique state; it is a multiregional power to say the least.

As of our strength, the times of a difficult transition in the 1990s in Russia are in the past. The potential of the Russian state, which is the sixth largest economy in the world, as well as its foreign policy and its diverse resources, have recovered.

Of course, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the US declared itself as the only world power. The EU and NATO liked the idea that there was now only one decision maker, and that Uncle Sam would always keep the proper order. Well, the current instability in the world, including in the Middle East, proves that it didn't work then, and it's not going to work now.

We also don't think that there should be two or three world powers. Our foreign-policy concept is based on a polycentric



world, with many centers of power. Obviously, besides Russia there are new ones, such as China, India, South Africa and Brazil. Some countries accelerate their development and some slow down. It is objective historical development.

As for Russia, we act not only in order to uphold our national interests, but we have increased greatly our responsibility for the unfolding international situation. It is clear for those who closely followed the developments around Syrian chemical weapons, Iranian nuclear program, climate change or many other challenges.

I can assure you that Russia will continue its consistent policy designed to improve the situation in the world, relying on international law in order to provide freedom of choice to each nation, to cultivate partnerships between the leading world

regions, cultures and civilizations, based on mutual respect.

DC: In 1991, the first Russian Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Bovin presented his Letter of Credentials to the president of Israel Chaim Herzog. Twenty-five years of diplomatic relations is not a lot in terms of history. Which diplomatic traditions do you think have formed so far?

AS: Twenty-five years ago we started almost from scratch because when our relations were broken off in 1967, no connection was left. First, the consular relations were restored. Then, diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level were established. We've come a long way since then; our political dialogue is conducted at a very high level, and regular consultations are held on a variety of political issues.

We are improving our coordination mechanisms, as well as mutual exchange of military information through the Ministry of Defense, regarding the steps of the armed forces of both countries to prevent any kind of incidents.

Our cultural cooperation is very vibrant. Many Russian artists perform in Israel, and the audience is very large and appreciative. There is also scientific cooperation between our countries, and many delegations arrive from Moscow to establish communication in various fields, including medicine, high-tech and military. It is difficult to name an area where Israel and Russia have not cooperated yet.

In general, it is my firm belief that if we continue to cooperate on the basis of genuine mutual respect and understanding, we shall be able to fully use each other's capabilities for mutual growth, and to address common issues together.

President Rivlin receives diplomatic credentials of new ambassadors to Israel from the Netherlands, Austria, Costa Rica, Moldova, and Vietnam



H.E. Mr. Gilles Arnout Beschoor Plug

President Reuven Rivlin received the diplomatic credentials of new ambassadors to Israel from the Netherlands, Austria, Costa Rica, Moldova, and Vietnam, during a special ceremony at the President's Residence.

New Ambassador of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Gilles Arnout Beschoor Plug, who arrived together with his wife, and senior staff, presented his letter of credentials to the President. President Rivlin welcomed him and expressed his appreciation for the long history of close friendship between the two peoples. "I am aware of your in-depth understanding of the situation in our region, and welcome your intention to help wherever you can. Between our two people, there is a long history, and we appreciate greatly the Dutch people, culture and of course your football," said President Rivlin, and added, "I am delighted to welcome you and your wife, and hope you will feel at home here in Israel."

Ambassador Plug thanked the President, and said, "I want to express my appreciation, and the appreciation of my country for your work for the sake of coexistence. So that we can further our good relations and offer the assistance you spoke about, we must further deepen and strengthen our strong bilateral relations. Indeed we have recently established a bilateral forum between Israel and the Netherlands which this year will meet for the second



H.E. Mr. Martin Weiss

time." He concluded, "One of the great strengths we share is diversity. Israel is a diverse society and Holland welcomed over hundreds of years many groups – including many Jewish communities – and we know how this can enrich the country."

Next, new Ambassador of Austria, H.E. Mr. Martin Weiss, presented the President with his diplomatic credentials. President Rivlin welcomed him warmly and said, "We greatly appreciate your country's strong and clear stand, and all you are doing to combat anti-Semitism. Every person should be able to worship as they chose."

Ambassador Weiss thanked the President and said that his country placed great importance in the expansion of trade with Israel. He said, "We share in your desire to expand the bilateral trade between us, and we shall be working toward this." He stressed, "We also share your desire for peace. The establishment of peace in the region will lead to a better future, full of potential for all the peoples of the region." Ambassador Weiss then said in Hebrew that he was sorry he could not conduct the whole meeting in Hebrew but he was learning, to which the President responded "Danke schön!" At the end of the meeting, the Ambassador surprised the President with an Austrian football shirt, signed by the national team.

The Ambassador of Costa Rica, H.E. Mr. Esteban Penrod Padilla, was next to present his credentials



H.E. Mr. Esteban Penrod Padilla.

to the President, who noted to him that Israel still remembered and appreciated that Costa Rica was one of the first countries to recognize Israel's independence. He said, "This showed your understanding of the wishes and the prayers of the Jewish people to return to their homeland, and to Jerusalem at its heart. We hope that everyone will understand that Zionism has become reality, and that we will be able to build confidence and bring to an end the conflict. We appreciate greatly Costa Rica's support for Israel over many years, and I am delighted to welcome you to Israel."

Ambassador Padilla thanked the President and said in Hebrew, "I am very happy to be returning to Israel, the holy land, which I love so much." He went on to say, "Israel is a beacon for the whole world, in hi-tech, innovation, agriculture and more. Our countries are far apart geographically, but have similar values of democracy. I see a bright future for the relations between our two nations."

The President next received the incoming Ambassador of Modlova, H.E. Mrs. Gabriela Moraru. The President spoke of the wide ranging bilateral relations and cooperation between the countries as an expression of the historic and cultural bonds between the peoples. He said, "I hope the good will and relations between our peoples will continue to grow stronger," and added, "We appreciate your decision to allocate International Holocaust Memorial Day as a national day of remembrance."

Ambassador Moraru thanked the President and said, "I am proud to come to represent my country in Israel. I hope that during my tenure we will be able to increase the cooperation between our nations. Israel



H.E. Mrs. Gabriela Moraru

is a model of democracy and innovation. I wish for the peace and prosperity of Israel and its people."

Lastly, new Ambassador of Vietnam, H.E. Mr. Cao Tran Quoc Hai presented his credential to President Rivlin. The President welcomed him and said, "We are now celebrating 22 years of relations which we appreciate. We are excited by your advances and economic progress out of your desire to serve your people. The cooperation between our countries is important and has been successful, and should continue to be so."

Ambassador Cao spoke of the importance of the contribution to Vietnam made by Israel's Mashav program which focused on sharing knowledge, empowering human capital, and offering technological assistance in a range of fields. He said, "It is an honor for me to represent my country here. I am sure we will be able to deepen our cooperation in agriculture and innovation among other areas."



H.E. Mr. CAO Tran Quoc Hai.

President Rivlin receives also diplomatic credentials of new ambassadors to Israel from the Japan, Egypt, Malta, and Bosnia and Herzegovina



H.e. Mr. Hazem Ahdy Khairat

President Reuven Rivlin at a ceremony at his residence, received the diplomatic credentials of four new ambassadors to Israel from Japan, Egypt, Malta, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each ceremony began with the raising of the flag and the playing of the national anthem of the visiting country, included an honor guard, and - after the presentation of the credentials - the signing of the guest book, before the playing of Israel's national anthem Hatikva.

Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Koji Tomita presented his letter of credentials to the President who congratulated him on his appointment, and asked he send his warmest regards to the Emperor of Japan. He said, "I am aware of your country's great work for the benefit of all the free world," and added, "I am aware of your desire to play a positive role in our region."

The President went on to stress that militant Islam was causing great distress across the region, "It is clear to us what is happening in our region is likely to impact the whole world. We know that you are highly respected by the Palestinians, and I know that you are able to help us build bridges between Israel and the Palestinians, and build confidence and the understanding that it is in our mutual



interest to live together." The President concluded, "An ambassador with your great experience can help us with our neighbors in the region. We are looking forward to the future, and to working to strengthen the ties between Israel and Japan."

Ambassador Tomita thanked the President for his warm words, and said that the Emperor had asked him to convey his personal greetings, and had expressed to him his strong desire to deepen the cooperation between Israel and Japan. He said, "The issues you raised are the issues which I would be delighted to assist move forward during my tenure." The Ambassador added that it was his hope to be able to help in promoting the vision of the Prime Minister of Japan, to use diplomacy to bring a resolution to the conflict. He concluded, "I will do all in my power to advance cooperation between our countries in order to realize the desire of our leaders to strengthen the ties between us."

President Rivlin then welcomed new Ambassador of Israel to Egypt, H.E. Mr. Hazem Ahdy Khairat, "I welcome here at the President's house ambassadors from around the world. But it is very special to welcome ambassadors from our close and important neighbors. Egypt is 'Um El Donya', 'mother of the world' and especially in our region Egypt plays a most important role. We live together in a difficult region. We have found a way to live together in peace and friendship. This is a message to the whole region,



H.e. Mrs. Cecilia Attard-Pirotta

and the whole world. I was in Egypt during times of war, and I was in Egypt during peace. The peace agreement between our countries is an international treaty and it is for both us, a top priority. We may not agree on everything, but we respect each other and because of this we will build a shared future."

Ambassador Khairat thanked the President for the warm welcome and said, "We must take responsibility for the benefit of those who live in this region, to bring prosperity, justice, hope and equality."

The President wished him success in his new role and said, "I sincerely hope that you and your family will feel at home." Before departing, the Ambassador signed the official guestbook in Arabic and wrote, "I presented today my letter of credence to his honor President Rivlin. We spoke in a constructive atmosphere regarding the urgent matters and agreed to work together to reach a comprehensive, and just peace in the region."

Then, Ambassador of Malta, H.E Ms. Cecilia Attard-Pirotta presented the President with her diplomatic credentials. President Rivlin congratulated her on her appointment and said, "I welcome you happily as a neighbor on the Mediterranean Sea, and I thank you as the Jewish people will never forget that Malta was the only country that didn't demand a visa from the Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. We are looking forward to working with you during your time here as ambassador."

Ambassador Attard-Pirotta thanked the President and said it was a privilege to represent her country in Israel, and noted, "Last year we marked 50 years of diplomatic relations. We are looking forward to deepening our economic ties, as well as sharing knowledge and experience. I will certainly do all I



H.E. Mrs. Jelena Rajakovic

can in order to strengthen our bilateral relations."

Finally, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E Ms. Jelena Rajaković presented the President with her credentials. The President said, "You have faced many challenges in your region in the past, just as today, we are dealing with ongoing conflict in our region. In Israel, Jews and Arabs live together, and we often look at your country, as one which solved the conflict in your region, and could help us find the way to create better relations." The President noted the good relations between the two countries and said, "The ties between us are strong, yet we must strengthen them further. We appreciate your efforts on Holocaust education, and your work to combat antisemitism."

Ambassador Rajaković thanked the President for his words and said, "Bosnia and Herzegovina was created by a peace agreement and is comprised of different groups and communities. We have a very complicated constitutional structure, but we manage it peacefully. We are close friends of Israel, and enjoy good relations, and there are many opportunities to strengthening these ties."



H.E. Mr. Koji Tomita

New Egyptian ambassador arrives in Tel Aviv, the first since 2012.

“ I welcome his arrival and the re-stationing here of an Egyptian ambassador to Israel, something that will enable us to further strengthen relations with this important and key Arab country
- Binyamin Netanyahu ”



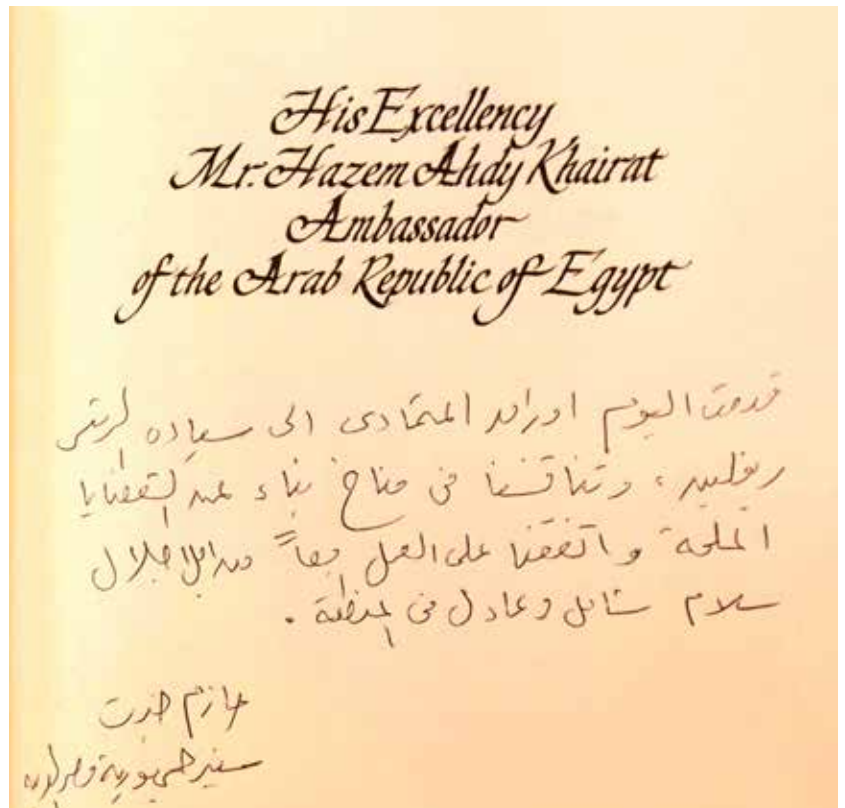
Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu welcomed Egypt's new ambassador to Israel on Sunday, saying at his weekly cabinet meeting that Hazem Khairat's arrival would lead to a strengthening of ties between the two countries.

"Over the weekend Egypt's new ambassador to Israel Hazem Khairat arrived," Netanyahu said. "I welcome his arrival and the re-stationing here of an Egyptian ambassador to Israel, something that will enable us to further strengthen relations with this important and key Arab country." Khairat, a former ambassador to Chile, was appointed by Sisi in June; an appointment which was immediately and "deeply" welcomed by Netanyahu.

"This is an important piece of news. We appreciate it," Netanyahu said at the time. "It's something that has been, and that is deeply welcomed in Israel and I think it's very good for cementing the peace that exists between Egypt and Israel."

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, but relations have often been cool.

Jordan followed suit in 1994.



Kenyan President Plants an Olive Tree in the Grove of Nations

Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of Kenya, said in a planting ceremony held on February 23, 2016 at the Grove of Nations in Jerusalem.

“ I hope and pray that the tree we are planting today shall symbolize the deepening of our relations ”



On Monday February 22 Italian Minister of Environment Dr. Gian Luca Galletti visits the Ramat Negev R&D Station to learn about Israeli desert agriculture during an unusually heavy downpour. Galletti was accompanied by a small delegation from his ministry in Rome, and Italian Ambassador to Israel **Francesco Maria Talo**. **“Italy is examining Israeli technology and methodology in the fields of water management and low cost renewable energy production”, said the environmental minister.**

The Manager of the Ramat Negev R&D Station **Tzion Shemer** said

that the purpose of the center is to develop agricultural products that thrive in dry climates and to share know-how with farmers who work in desert conditions. “We also provide guides to help youngsters with absolutely no farming experience to become successful farmers, because we are interested in settling the land, and developing the land.

The Traditional Arab Home



Visitors and observers of Palestine in the nineteenth and early twentieth century generally wrote about the Arab home from an archaeological or anthropological point of view. Their inclination was to view the local landscape as if it were a series of illustrations to the Holy Scriptures, so they stressed the archaic and “primitive.” Furthermore, most of their attention was directed to the simple home of the Arab peasant, or fellah. Other types of buildings were referred to in passing, if at all, and only a handful of writers have evinced any interest in the architectural design of the traditional Arab home.

Arab residential construction in Palestine could be called architecture without architects. It is the creation of a collective rather than individuals, a direct expression of the way of life and the tradition that created it. In popular culture, the design of a home, like patterns of behavior, are social conventions. Popular architecture is thus based on fixed models. The basic template repeats itself, though with some variation.

Popular Arab construction includes several types of buildings, each of which has its own social and historical background. There is the village home consisting of a single undivided interior, the block of village homes, the old-style city home, the liwan house, the riwaq house, and the central space house. Several other secondary and less common types may also be noted: summer homes in the



vineyards, farmhouses (such as the Shuni ruins near Binyamina), the mansions of village sheikhs (for example, Majdal Yaba/Migdal Afek), the mansions of local leaders in the Galilee or Acre, and city mansions.

Arab popular architecture is firmly based on traditions of residential construction that emerged in the Levant during the Islamic period, but which have not been static. It has absorbed Mameluk and Ottoman domes and ornamentations. Extensive changes in the culture of housing construction in Palestine took place at the end of the nineteenth century. New types of houses were introduced and a wealth of Lebanese, Turkish, and Western influences came into play.

The Village Home



The Arab village home in Palestine was based on two fundamental principles. First, it consisted of a single large space shared by all family members and other residents, including livestock. Second, it was divided into two levels, lower (qa‘a al-bayt) for daily activities, and upper (matztaba) for living quarters and sleeping. Some houses also had a raised platform (liwan) outside the house, in front or on the roof, used for dining. Villagers of means built verandas, surrounded by a rail and roofed with grape vines.

Married sons built their homes next to that of their parents. Also, new rooms were added when needed, such as the madafa, where the men of

the family received guests, a kitchen, stables, and storerooms. In general, new rooms were perceived as independent units, and were not connected by doors. The result was a collection of living units surrounding a central courtyard.

This model is disappearing, remaining only in the old centers of Arab villages. Unfortunately, neither the Arabs nor the Jews have sought to preserve these old houses, and many are being demolished or radically changed by additions.

The City Home

The last 150 years have seen the development of a unique Arab architectural tradition of city homes, for the most part in Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, Ramla, Lod, and Yaffo. This type of house, which created the landscape of these old cities, was clearly a product of popular Arab construction, and is no less important than the village home. Its golden age came to an end at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and by the end of it, new forms and building materials came into use.

In the city house, the lower level was floored with marble tiles, and instead of mats there were expensive carpets. Niches in the walls, which in the village home were used to store produce, were exploited for complex, ornamented cupboards, and stone seats were replaced by couches.

The yard was a fundamental component of the traditional city house. At its center was a well, and sometimes a small garden. The living spaces on the courtyard level were generally dark and damp, because considerations of security and privacy ruled out the placement of windows on outside walls. An external staircase led from the yard to the living quarters on the upper story. The roof served as a kind of upper yard, used for housework, leisure, and sleeping on hot nights.

The architecture in the Judean Hills and coastal plain were based principally on domes. The shortage of wood led to the development of a method that made it possible to build domes without a wooden frame. In large cities (Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Ramla), the domes were based on ceramic tubes. This material was also used for railings and ceilings and became a typical element of the old Arab skyline in Palestine.

As a rule, the rooms or apartments in the Palestinian Arab house consisted of a single space that was seen



as and furnished as an independent multi-purpose unit, or as a house in and of itself. Therefore, no doorways connected one room to another. In most cases, each room included a standard niche for mattresses, and the space was divided into an entryway and a raised platform. In general, the ceiling was a single dome, but more spacious apartments might have more. Ornamentation (stone tracery around windows or the entranceway) was fairly intricate, some of it preserving Mameluk styles.

Today one may still find city homes in this style in Arab neighborhoods, especially in Haifa and Jerusalem. Some of them are neglected, while others are well kept up and enhance their surroundings.



According to the Foreign Trade Administration at the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry, Chocolate Exports from Israel Exceeded \$10 Million Last Year and Can be Found in 43 Countries, Including South Korea, Egypt and Angola

and Europe, and there were even exports of \$105,000 to Belgium, the "chocolate capital" of the world. Chocolate exports to East Asian countries reached \$618,000, with most exports going to Japan.

Among European countries, the UK was the largest importer of Israeli chocolate, with imports totaling \$1,152,000. France is the next largest with \$601,000 and Russia is third with \$157,000. In North and South America, the U.S. imported more than \$5 million in Israeli chocolate, Canada imported \$88,000 and Argentina \$15,000. In other surprising figures, South Korea imported \$66,000 worth of Israeli chocolate, Egypt \$45,000, Brazil \$11,000 and Angola \$2,000.

Valentine's Day is also unofficially "international chocolate day." Cocoa beans have been found over the last decades to have impressive health benefits, winning over loving couples as well as singles who find consolation in their sweet delights. Chocolate consumption around the world is on the rise and the people of eastern Asia have only recently discovered chocolate's addictive pleasures. According to estimates, chocolate consumption in these markets has tripled in recent years. Valentine's Day is a day of brisk business for chocolate, with some 5% of annual chocolate sales worldwide taking place on this day alone.

Even though the Israeli climate is not suited for growing commercial amounts of cocoa, chocolate production in the country is rising as well as chocolate exports. According to data from the Foreign Trade Administration in the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry, chocolate exports reached around \$10 million in 2015. Some 28 companies exported Israeli chocolate to 42 countries around the world. The biggest markets for trading in chocolate were North America

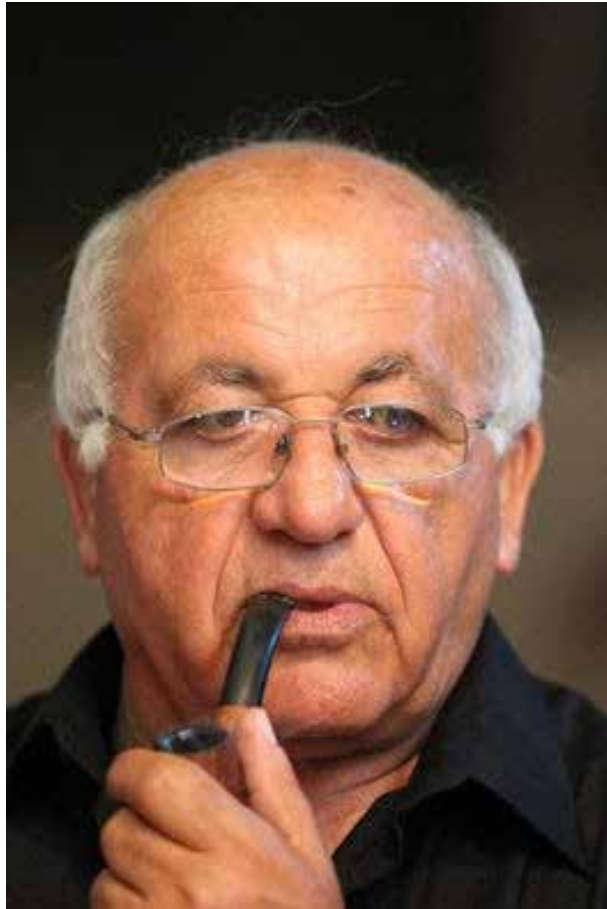


The Loss of the Great Writer Salman Natour

Salman Natour who passed away on February 15th has been writing for over 35 years on the collective Palestinian memory. He worked as a journalist, author and playwright and has published twenty-eight books and six plays in Hebrew and Arabic. He was also the former editor of al-Ittihad magazine.

Salman Natour was born in 1949 in Daliyat al-Karmel. He graduated high school in Haifa and completed his bachelor's degree at the University of Haifa in 1976. He studied philosophy and worked in journalism from 1968 until 1990. He worked as the culture editor of al-Ittihad magazine as well as being editor of the cultural magazine, Al-Jadid. Salman Natour was also active in the establishment and management of a number of institutions including; The Arab Writers Union, The Association for the development of Arab music, I'lam Arab Media Center, Arab and Jewish Artists against the occupation, Adalah - Legal center for Arab Citizens and the Emil Touma Institute for Palestinian & Israeli Studies.

Starting in 2011 Mr. Natour was the project manager of the Mossawa Center's culture rights project through which he and project staff were able to raise the awareness of the Arab community on their cultural rights and the importance of empowering cultural organizations, in order to preserve and develop Palestinian culture in Israel and in the oPt. The project included a yearly month of cultural events taking place in



towns and cities all over the country in March.

Salman Natour has published twenty-eight books many of which were translated to Hebrew as well as six plays. He has also translated several Hebrew works to Arabic such as David Grossman's, "The Yellow Wind."

In 2014 Salman Natour was honored for his work at an official ceremony presided over by Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi, the Sheikh of Sharjah, at the Arab Theatre Festival in Sharjah, UAE. Salman Natour along with a variety of other authors and playwrights from Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Libya, Jordan, accepted awards in honor of their work and contributions to Arab theatre.

The Passing of Salman is a great loss to the world of Arab literature and he will be greatly missed by his colleagues, friends and family. The Diplomatic Club extends condolences to his wife Nada, his children Inas, Eyas, Ghadir and Miras and his grandchildren.

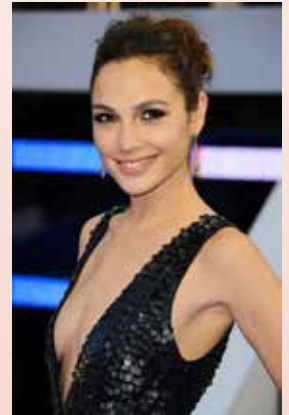


Top 10 Most Beautiful Israeli Women in 2015

Israeli women are known to be graceful and have retained their feminine looks and charming personalities. Here we have compiled a list of top 10 most beautiful Israeli women in 2015.

10. Gal Gadot

Gal Gadot first rose to fame when she won the Miss Israel pageant in 2004. She is a graceful and beautiful Israeli model and actress. She has also been a part of the 2007 photo shoot of Maxim magazine. She began career as an actress from tv series named "Bubot." In Hollywood, Gal appeared in "Fast & Furious," "Date Night," "Knight and Day" and "Fast Five."



9. Alona Tal



Alona Tal began as a child star, and then rose to fame as a model of a laundry detergent. In 2003, she played the lead role of "Lihiyot Kochav," also known as "To Be a Star." She has appeared in series like "Veronica Mars," "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," "Cold Case," "7th Heaven," "Commander in Chief," "Supernatural," "Ghost Whisperer," "The Mentalist," "Knight Rider," "Monk," "Lie to Me," "Leverage" and "Pretty Little Liars."

8. Michal Yannai

Michal Yannai is an actress born in Ramat Gan in Israel. She is a television presenter and was starred in movies. Her best works are "Neshika Bametzach" or "The Day We Met" in 1990, "Pour Sacha" in 1991, and "88 Minutes" in 2007. She is a beautiful female.



7. Miri Bohadana



Miri Bohadana is an actress, model and tv celeb. She participated in the Miss Beer Sheva contest in 1993. In 1995, she became a part of the Miss Israel pageant and placed first runner up. She has represented her country in a lot of beauty competitions. Miri has modeled for Pierre Cardin, Ferrero Rocher and TNT. Her best movie is "Eskimo Limon."

6. Odeya Rush

Odeya Rush is a gorgeous and remarkable Israeli female. She got success as a television performer. Her best shows are “Curb Your Enthusiasm” and “Law and Order: Special Victims Unit.” Odeya played superb roles in “Mary, Mother of the Christ,” and “The Passion of the Christ.”



5. Bar Refaeli

Bar Refaeli is a model and actress. She has been the cover girl of Sports Illustrated magazine. She is a hot and very charming lady. In 2005, Bar was seen in tv series “Pick Up.” She also hosted MTV’s “House of Style” in 2009. She is one of the judges of “Germany’s Next Top Model”.



4. Noa Tishby

Noa Tishby is an actress, hot model and successful singer. She attended the Tel Aviv National Museum of Arts before becoming a model. She is praised for her film called “Five Minutes Walking,” and released an album named “Nona”. Noa has been a part of movies like “Connecting Dots,” “The Island,” “Fatwa” and “Ghosts of Girlfriends Past.”



3. Ayelet Zurer

Ayelet Zurer is a beautiful actress and bold tv presenter. She was first seen in the 1991 television show called “Inyan Shel Zman.” In 2005, she was featured in the Steven Spielberg movie “Munich”. Her best works are “Vantage Point,” “Adam Resurrected” and “Fugitive Pieces.”



2. Moran Atias

Moran Atias started her career as a tv celebrity from the show named “Out of Focus.” She then became a model and worked with Roberto Cavalli, a noted fashion designer. She holds the Miss Israel crown. Her best movies are “The Mother of Tears,” “Land of the Lost,” “The Next Three Days,” “Crazy Eyes” and “The Third Person.”



1. Natalie Portman

Natalie Portman is of American and Israeli citizenship. She began acting career from the 1994 movie called “Leon: The Professional”. Then she was in the cast of the classic “Star Wars” series. She is a successful and beautiful Hollywood actress. Natalie has gotten many awards and nominations. Her best movies are “Closer,” “V for Vendetta,” “Goya’s Ghost” and “The Other Boleyn Girl”.



The greatest love letters.

Top 10 odes, compiled by life insurance company Beagle Street, include a 1964 letter from Richard Burton to Elizabeth Taylor and a beautifully written note from poet John Keats to his neighbour, Fanny Brawne, sent in 1818.

The are extracts from the Top 10 letters :

1. Johnny Cash wishes wife June Carter Cash a happy 65th birthday (1994).



Johnny Cash's letter to his wife, June Carter Cash, is the greatest love letter of all time, according to a new poll. Originally written in 1994 on June's 65th birthday, the letter reads:

"Happy Birthday Princess, We get old and get use to each other. We think alike.

We read each others minds. We know what the other wants without asking. Sometimes we irritate each other a little bit. Maybe sometimes take each other for granted.

But once in awhile, like today, I meditate on it and realize how lucky I am to share my life with the greatest woman I ever met. You still fascinate and inspire me.

You influence me for the better. You're the object of my desire, the #1 Earthly reason for my existence. I love you very much.

Happy Birthday Princess.

John"

The pair married in 1968 and remained together for more than 30 years. June died in May 2003. Johnny Cash passed away just four months later.

2. Winston Churchill to his wife, Clementine Churchill, in 1935



"In your letter from Madras you wrote some words very dear to me, about my having enriched your life. I cannot tell you what pleasure this gave me, because I always feel so

overwhelmingly in your debt, if there can be accounts in love.... What it has been to me to live all these years in your heart and companionship no phrases can convey."

3. Poet John Keats to his neighbour Fanny Brawne in 1819



"My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you - I am forgetful of every thing but seeing you again - my Life seems to stop there - I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving - I should be exquisitely miserable without

the hope of soon seeing you. I should be afraid to separate myself far from you."

4. Author Ernest Hemingway to actress Marlene Dietrich in 1951



"I can't say how every time I ever put my arms around you I felt that I was home. Nor too many things. But we were always cheerful and jokers together."

5. Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine de Beauharnais in 1796



"Since I left you, I have been constantly depressed. My happiness is to be near you. Incessantly I live over in my memory your

caresses, your tears, your affectionate solicitude. The charms of the incomparable Josephine kindle continually a burning and a glowing flame in my heart."

6. Richard Burton to Elizabeth Taylor in 1964



"My blind eyes are desperately waiting for the sight of you. You don't realize of course, EB, how fascinatingly beautiful you have always been, and how

strangely you have acquired an added and special and dangerous loveliness."

7. King Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn in 1527



"I beg to know expressly your intention touching the love between us. Necessity compels me to obtain this answer, having been more than a year wounded by the dart of love, and not yet sure whether I shall fail or find a place in your affection."

8. Beethoven to his anonymous "Immortal Beloved" in 1812



"Though still in bed, my thoughts go out to you, my Immortal Beloved, Be calm-love me-today-yesterday-what tearful longings for you-you-you-my life-my all-farewell. Oh continue to love me-never misjudge the most faithful heart of your beloved. Ever thine. Ever mine. Ever ours."

9. US President Gerald Ford to his wife Betty Ford in 1974



"No written words can adequately express our deep, deep love. We know how great you are and we, the children and Dad, will try to be as strong as you.

Our Faith in you and God will sustain us. Our total love for you is everlasting."

10. Musician Jimi Hendrix writes to an unknown girlfriend (date unknown)



"little girl.... happiness is within you....so unlock the chains from your heart and let yourself grow—like the sweet flower you are....

I know the answer—Just spread your wings and set yourself

FREE

Love to you forever

Jimi Hendrix"

Chinese New Year

is an important Chinese festival celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar. It is also known as the Spring Festival, the literal translation of the modern Chinese name. Celebrations traditionally run from the evening preceding the first day, to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first calendar month. The first day of the New Year falls on the new moon between 21 January and 20 February. In 2016, the first day of the Chinese New Year falls on Monday, 8 February.

The New Year festival is centuries old and gains significance because of several myths and traditions. Traditionally, the festival was a time to honour deities as well as ancestors. Chinese New Year is celebrated in countries and territories with significant Chinese populations, including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, and the Philippines. Chinese New Year is considered a major holiday for the Chinese and has had influence on the lunar new year celebrations of its geographic neighbours.

There's also celebrations in Israel to mark the upcoming Chinese New Year. Former Israeli President Shimon Peres hosted the Chinese Ambassador to Israel at an event in Tel Aviv. Peres also wrote a song to commemorate the New Year, describing China as a country based on wisdom and great history.

As China prepares to celebrate the year of the Monkey, celebrations also got underway in Israel to mark the occasion. China's Ambassador to Israel opened the ceremony in Tel Aviv.

"On behalf of the Chinese Embassy in Israel, we'd like to say Happy New Year and good fortune to the families of our staff in China and all the people," said Zhan Yongxin, China's Ambassador to Israel.

Citing strong ties between the two countries, Israel's former president Shimon Peres also commented on China's strengths.

"You don't win anything with wars but you do with wisdom. The story of China is the wisdom of science and greatness of history," he said.



As far as this event's co-hosts are concerned, it will be a year of continued shared interests.

Aside from celebrating China's New Year together, China and Israel are marking strengthening ties.

Event highlights included a festive dragon display and traditional Chinese music. Israel's former president wrote a melody for the occasion performed by Israeli and Chinese artists.

- Japanese New Year is celebrated on January 1 because the Gregorian calendar is now used instead of the Chinese calendar.
- Vietnamese New Year (Tết Nguyên Đán or Tết), more commonly known by its shortened name Tết or "Vietnamese Lunar New Year", is the most important and popular holiday and festival in Vietnam, the holiday normally falls between 20 January and 20 February. It is the Vietnamese New Year marking the arrival of spring based on the Chinese calendar, a lunisolar calendar. The name Tết Nguyên Đán is Sino-Vietnamese for Feast of the First Morning, derived from the Hán nôm characters 節元旦.

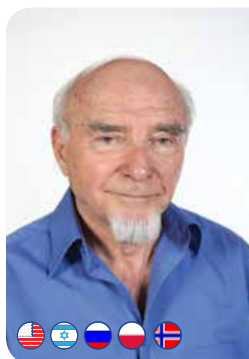
250 Overseas Vietnamese attended a New Year get-together held by the Vietnamese embassy in Israel. Ambassador Cao Tran Quoc Hai briefed the guests on Vietnam's achievements in 2015, especially the successful 12th National Party Congress. The ambassador praised the contribution of Vietnamese people working and living in Israel. He said he hopes they will continue to promote cooperation between Vietnam and Israel.

Saying “Happy New Year!” Around the World

Language	Happy New Year!
Afrikaans	Voorspoedige nuwe jaar
Arabic	Kul 'am wa antum bikhair
Basque	Urte Berri on
Bengali	Shuvo noboborsho
Chinese (Cantonese)	Sun nien fai lok
Chinese (Mandarin)	Xin nian yu kuai
Czech	Stastny Novy Rok
Danish	Godt NytÅr
Dutch	Gelukkig nieuwjaar
Esperanto	Bonan Novjaron
Finnish	Onnellista uutta vuotta
French	Bonne année
German	Ein glückliches neues Jahr
Greek	Eutychemenos o kainourgios chronos
Hawaiian	Hauoli Makahiki hou
Hebrew	Shana Tova
Hungarian	Boldog uj evet
Indonesian (Bahasa)	Selamat Tahun Baru
Italian	Felice Anno Nuovo or Buon anno
Japanese	Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu
Korean	Sehe Bokmanee Bateuseyo
Laotian (Hmong)	Nyob Zoo Xyoo Tshiab
Latin	Felix sit annus novus
Nigerian (Hausa)	Barka da sabuwar shekara
Norwegian	Godt Nytt År
Philippines (Tagalog)	Manigong Bagong Taon
Polish	Szczesliwego Nowego Roku
Romanian	La Multi Ani si Un An Nou Fericit
Samoan	Ia manuia le Tausaga Fou
Spanish	Feliz año nuevo
Swahili	Heri za Mwaka Mpya
Swedish	Gott Nytt År
Thai	Sawatdee Pi Mai
Vietnamese	Chuc mung nam moi
Welsh	Blwyddyn Newydd Dda



Corrections in the Medical directory



Dr. Z. Mesner D.M.D, PH.D

Specialist in periodontics & implantology

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Reception Hours: Sun 9:30-19:00, Wen 9:30-14:00
Thu 9:30-19:00



In 1960 graduated from the Hebrew University - Hadasa school of dental medicine. The leading trend in dentistry in the last years is to insert implants and complete treatments in one day. In spite of that, due to my long time experience in treating gum diseases (periodontics) and in cooperation with general dentists I still believe in essential and patient process of treatment of diseased gums and affected teeth. Accurate diagnosis of the state of health of teeth and gums may need several meetings in order to improve oral hygiene before taking final decisions. The final treatment plan states which teeth need gum operation, which teeth have to be removed and where implants should be inserted. Controlled oral hygiene is necessary in all stages of treatments, and constant connection with the general dentist is needed.

Daily and efficient cleaning of teeth and implants is very important, since gum diseases around implants is more traumatic than around teeth.

A few words about me: I studied and specialized in Israel, Norway and England. I have a many years experience. I work in my private clinic which has a long reputation, with familiar direction and a devoted team near me.



Dr. Shalev Moshe, MU, MD

Head of the uro-oncological surgery service

Meir Medical Center, Kfar Saba

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Reception Hours:

Thu. 16.00-20.00



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According appointment



March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

In 2000, President Bill Clinton officially dedicated March as National Colon Cancer Awareness Month in the USA. Since then, the world has joined the initiative to promote this important goal. As part of the efforts to spread colorectal cancer awareness and education in Israel, Dr. Ron Greenberg answered the most common questions relating to this topic.

Colorectal cancer is the third-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., and first in Russia. What is the situation in Israel?

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer in Israel. It appears at a similar rate in both men and women. Last year, 3200 new colorectal cancer patients of a variety of ages, were diagnosed in Israel. Colon cancer is especially common after 50, and the risk rises with age. When the disease is detected early, the chances of recovery reach approximately 90%. Therefore, early detection is crucial, as it increases the chances of beating colorectal cancer.

What are the main causes of colorectal cancer?

For most patients the cause of cancer is unknown, but studies on this matter are being conducted all the time. There are several known risk factors that may increase the risk of colorectal cancer. These factors include excessive eating of processed meats, obesity, low physical activity and smoking. In addition, people with a long history of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease have a higher risk of getting colorectal cancer.

Are there genetic or family histories that can increase a risk of colorectal cancer?

An individual's risk of getting colon cancer during his life is approximately 5% to 6%, with approximately 90% of colon cancers occurring after age 50. This risk is higher in people who have a family history of colon cancer or specific genetic syndromes that are associated with colorectal cancer. According to research, one third of colon cancers contain a hereditary component.

For instance, a person whose immediate family members have had colorectal cancer is at a higher risk of developing intestinal cancer. These people are more at risk only if colon cancer was diagnosed among close family members (such as a parent or a sibling) under the age of 45, or if there are several cases of colon cancer among relatives from the same side of the family.

What testing can assist in the early detection of colorectal cancer?

It is important to notice a variety of symptoms that may imply that there is a need to examine the colon. These are: the presence of occult blood in stool, changes in bowel habits (such as diarrhea or constipation during long periods of time) lasting more than six weeks for no apparent reason, unexplained weight loss, new and repeating abdominal pain, sensation of incomplete evacuation after a bowel movement, blood deficiency (anemia).

Having one or more of these symptoms does not mean you have colorectal cancer, but it means that comprehensive testing is required to find the cause.

What solutions can Israeli medicine suggest today?

Surgery is the most common treatment for colorectal cancer. The

surgical approach varies depending on the size of the tumor, its location and potential complications. Among the types of surgery are: open abdominal surgery with a midline incision, laparoscopy with a camera and micro tools, or a robot that allows the physician to use three-dimensional imaging and precise tools, which performs the surgery in accordance with the surgeon's instructions.

Dr. Ron Greenberg



Senior Staff Physician,
Surgery Division,
Tel Aviv Sourasky
Medical Center.

Specializes in colorectal,
as well as in esophageal and
stomach surgery.

Graduated from the Faculty of
Biology at the Hebrew University of
Jerusalem, and the School of Medicine
at Ben Gurion University.

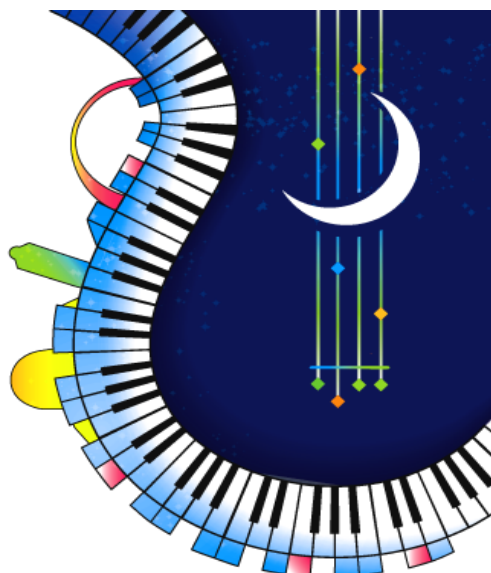
Possesses vast clinical and academic
experience, including teaching surgery
at the Tel Aviv Medical Center and Tel
Aviv University.

Areas of special interest:

- Minimally invasive rectal surgery using innovative techniques, such as Doppler and stapler; use of new energy devices; fissure repair surgeries.
- Use of biological adhesives to close fistulas of the gastrointestinal tract, and pilonidal sinus.
- Pelvic floor repair surgeries in cases of chronic constipation and emptying disorder.
- Open or laparoscopic colorectal surgeries.

tel. 052-426-6394

**Sounds of the Old City,
March 9-12**



SOUNDS انغام في القديمة
OF THE OLD CITY

Music Festival in Jerusalem

28-31.3.16

23:00-19:00 | 18-21 Adar a

Musical bands and ensembles will perform authentic music on central stages and in the streets of Jerusalem's Old City quarters (Jewish, Muslim, Armenian and Christian), each matched to the character of the quarter. Visitors will follow a circular route from the Jaffa Gate. Free entrance.

**Fifth annual Jerusalem
Winner Marathon,
March 13**

Several different tracks are available to runners and hand-cyclers, from full marathon (42.2K) to 800 meters. Some 2,500 participants are expected from all over the world. The full route takes runners past the city's most prominent historical sites.

**Eilat Birds Festival,
March 15-22**



Organized by the Israel Ornithological Center of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, the Eilat Birds Festival brings together birders from the world over during the peak of spring migration in southern Israel. Special packages are available at the Isrotel Agamim Hotel, which hosts the event now in its ninth year.

**International Clown
Festival, Netanya,
March 18-20**

Clowns from Israel and other countries will offer performances and workshops, some for free.

**Festival of Wine &
Plenty, Zichron Yaacov,
March 25-26**



In the picturesque Ramat Hanadiv gardens, local wineries and producers of cheese, olive oil, jams and baked confections will offer tastings, workshops and cooking demonstrations.



Gente de Zona in Tel Aviv, Israel. March 30, 2016

International Cubaton group Gente de Zona are coming to Tel Aviv, Israel, in March 2016. Gente de Zona's music has a unique mix of reggaeton, rap and traditional Cuban music influences. The band has come under the interational spotlight after the collaboration with Enrique Iglesias for "Bailando", in 2014, and was awarded three Latin Grammys. Other hits are "La Gozadera", featuring Marc Anthony, and "Yo Quiero" featuring Pitbull. Gente de Zona will perform at the Tel Aviv Convention Center on March 30, 2016.

Chris Norman concert in Tel Aviv, Israel. March 30, 2016

Chris Norman, legendary front man of the British rock band Smokie, is coming to Tel Aviv, Israel, in March 2016. Chris and his band have gained popularity in the '70, with hits as "Living next door to alic", "If you think you know how to love me" and "Don't play your Rock 'n' Roll to me". Chris has left the band at the end of the '80s to start his solo career: "Midnight Lady" is one of his most popular solo songs. He has now released the solo album "Crossover". Chris Norman will perform one concert at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv on March 30, 2016.

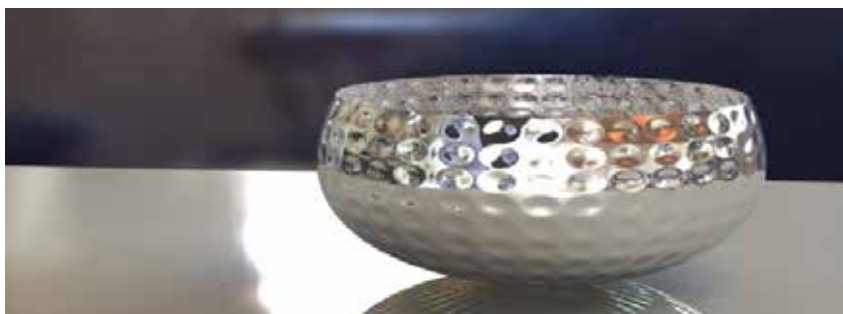


The Dinosaurs are Coming to the Negev. Beer Sheva. March-June, 2015

An awesome dinosaur exhibition is coming to the Negev Zoo in Beer Sheva during the Spring of 2015 bringing Jurassic Park to the Negev Desert. The exhibition which has toured the world with great success, will bring more than 30 kinds of life-size dinosaurs (up to a height of about 13 meters in height!) to Israel, as well as more exhibits, activities, and interactive displays. The Dinosaurs will be in the Negev Zoo from March 26 to June 14, 2015.



Alessi - In-Possible March 25 - June 06, 2015 Design Museum Holon



The Alessi Museum collection, with 25,000 objects and 19,000 designs, offers a fascinating cross-section of contemporary design, a formidable perspective on the thousands of approaches to the world of design.

The Romanian film "Why me?" director: Tudor Giurgiu, at the Francophonie Film Week, March 13-17, Holon Cinematheque

The Romanian Cultural Institute in Tel Aviv and the Embassy of Romania to the State of Israel proudly invite you to the Francophonie Film Week which will take place between March 13-17, at the Holon Cinematheque. During the program there will be screened, with Hebrew subtitles, films from Romania, France, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, Cyprus, Ivory Coast and Greece.

With the support of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Tel Aviv, the film "Why me?", directed by Tudor Giurgiu, will represent Romania and will be screened as part of the official program of the event on March 16th, at 18:00.



Why me? (2015, 125 minutes, Hebrew and English subtitles)

Wednesday, 16.03.2016, at 18:00, Holon Cinematheque (6 Golda Meir St.) | Tickets: 03- 5021555

The complete program of the Francophonie Film Week:

Sunday, 13.03.2016, at 20:30 – Felix et Meira (Canada, 2014, director: Maxime Giroux)

Tuesday, 15.03.2016:

at 17:00 – *Aya de Yopougon (Ivory Coast, 2010, director: Marguerite About)*

at 19:00 – *Impressions of a drowned man (Cyprus, 2015, director: Kyros Papavassiliou)*

at 21:00 – *My sweet canary (Greece, 2011, director: Roy Sher)*

Wednesday, 16.03.2016:

at 18:00 – *Why me? (Romania, 2015, director: Tudor Giurgiu)*

at 20:30 – *L'homme qu'on aimait trop (France, 2014, director: Andre Techine)*

Thursday, 17.03.2016:

at 19:00 – *38 temoins (Belgium, 2010, director: Lucas Belvaux)*

at 21:00 – *Les grandes ondes (Switzerland, 2013, director: Lionel Baier)*



Invitation to a panel discussion on:

“Arts, Culture, Science: A man’s world?”

Thursday, 17 March 2016, 18:30
The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

On 8 March, the international community is celebrating the International Women’s Day by highlighting the social, economic, political and cultural achievements of women as well as by calling for greater efforts to tackle gender inequalities that still affect societies all over the world. For this reason, the Austrian Cultural Forum has initiated last year a series of events emphasizing the essential role and contribution of women to society. After having focused on successful role models, this year’s panel discussion will address the situation of women in the fields of the arts, culture and science.

The debate will seek to identify good practices in promoting women and their achievements in the fields of the arts, culture and science and to raise awareness of the challenges that women continue to face. In addition, the debate will provide an opportunity to highlight the importance of role models in promoting women’s rights and emphasise the important contribution of men in supporting women in their struggle to achieve gender equality.

Moderator: Ms. Yael Wissner-Levy,
Speechwriter and Communications Consultant

Panelists: Ms. Noa Regev, CEO, Jerusalem Cinematheque

Ms. Astrid Peterle, Jewish Museum Vienna

Ms. Deborah Hartmann, The International School for Holocaust Studies/Yad Vashem

Mr. Tomer Spector, Design Museum Holon

RSVP tel-aviv-ob@bmeia.gv.at until 14 March 2016.

The event will be held in English. Light refreshments will be served before the discussion.

The Emotive Body - Photography Exhibition by Malka Inbal. 8th March - 15th April 2016



"The human soul is the most fascinating thing that exists in my mind, an infinite riddle that shall never be solved; interminable layers that vary from person to person. From a young age I have been observing people, in an attempt to comprehend feelings and thoughts, relationships between people, according to their body language. I lovingly listen to intimate conversations and try to decipher the imperceptible.

The series **From White to Gray** is a return to the private and personal realm. I have reached the age of 50, and perhaps for the first time in my life, I feel peace of mind and completeness. Feelings of personal achievements, in all areas of my life, have led me to choose white fabric. The many layers that the different sentiments bring to mind have been expressed in shades of grey. I have expressed intimate feminine moments in this work, experiences which I felt from within myself and upon observing my close surroundings."

The exhibition is open to the public Monday - Thursday 10:00 - 16:00 hrs at Romanian Cultural Institute, Tel Aviv, 8 Shaul Hamelech blvd., 6th floor.



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