

## DOCTORS IN ERETZ ISRAEL

*O had I eagle wings, I'd fly to Thee,  
And with my falling tears make moist Thine earth,  
My heart is in the East and I am in the uttermost West [Spain]  
How can I find savor in food? How shall it be sweet for me?  
How shall I render my vows and my bonds, while yet  
Zion lieth beneath the fetters of Edom [Christianity]  
And I'm in Arab chains?  
A light thing would it seem for me to leave all the good things in Sepharad -  
Seeing how precious in mine eyes to behold dust of the desolate sanctuary.*

This *Ode to Zion* was written early in the 12th century by the Spanish physician-poet Judah Halevi. In other poems, Halevi expressed his longing to return to Eretz Israel (Zion.) Although he was a successful court physician in Toledo he seems to have become bored with his life — also, he didn't like to be awakened late at night to make harem calls at the palace:

*They called me in, but they did not call to me,  
Among them, I was not one of them,  
My visits were not those of a visitor;  
They sought my skill but ignored my heart.*

Another time Halevi wrote, "I cry to God that He quickly send deliverance to me and give me freedom to enjoy rest that I may repair to some place of living knowledge, to the fountains of wisdom." That idyllic place was Jerusalem.

So in 1141 CE, ignoring the advice of family and friends, Judah Halevi abandoned decadent Spanish society and set off alone for the Holy Land. He barely survived a stormy sea voyage and arrived in Alexandria and after that there were conflicting versions of the story, including that he was so warmly greeted by the locals who urged him to stay that he abandoned his plans to sail on and remained safe on dry land. However, there's a romantic legend which suggested that the pious poet *did* reach Jerusalem and immediately upon arriving fell to kiss the precious earth - but, in the act, he was trampled and killed by an Arab horseman.

The 19th century German poet Heinrich Heine told the story slightly differently. Upon reaching Jerusalem Judah sat like Jeremiah amid the ruins and sang his *Ode to Zion* so powerfully that vultures were almost moved to tears - and then an Arab horseman galloping by stabbed him through the heart: *Calmly flowed the rabbi's blood. Calmly he intoned his song. To the last note and his final death-sigh was 'Jerusalem.'*

This talk of Arab horsemen was fanciful since at the time the city was under Crusader control and perhaps the legend originated from one of Judah Halevi's other poems:

*Could I but kiss thy dust,  
So would I fain expire.  
As sweet as honey then,  
My longing and desire.*

About two decades later, in May 1165, the family of Moses Maimonides (Rambam) landed in Acre, near Jaffa, where about 200 Jewish families were living. They stayed for about five months and during this period the male members visited Jerusalem for only three days. They found only two Jews living there since under Crusader law no Jews were permitted. Indeed, Acre was too limited for scholarly Torah study or for the family to make a living - or for the thirty year old bachelor to find a bride - so they moved on to Cairo. According to legend, when the Rambam died in 1204, his body was placed on the back of a donkey which was allowed to wander — a distance of about 500 miles (!) to Liberia's on the Sea of Galilee where he was buried.

In 1267, another Sephardic pilgrim Nachmanides (Ramban) arrived in the Holy Land. He'd been a physician in Gerona but at age 70 was imprudent enough to win a public religious disputation in Barcelona against an apostate Jew. Because of his brilliance, and blasphemy, he was separated from his family and banished and after three years of wandering finally arrived in Jerusalem. By then the Crusaders had been replaced by the Mamelukes, who were a military caste of former slaves who'd been forcibly converted to Islam and then rose to power. Under their rule Jerusalem became a second-rate town in ruins without even a surrounding wall. Nachmanides described it as more desolate than any other place, but he didn't weep for long. He gathered a small group of friends and together they converted a dilapidated old house into a splendid domed synagogue. The Jewish Quarter grew up around this building and spiritual life revived, at least for a short while, and today you still can visit the Ramban Synagogue in the Old City.

Of the three Spanish doctors whom I've mentioned, Judah Halevi may or may not have reached the Holy Land — probably not; Maimonides passed through briefly but his corpse returned allegedly on the back of a donkey and Nachmanides came and stayed. Halevi was a pilgrim, the Maimonides family were escaping Muslim oppression and Nachmanides was an exile.

The narrative of Tuvyah Cohn was very different — he was a transitional figure between devout Jewish doctors of earlier times and secular doctors who would replace them. Tuvyah led a peripatetic life and after graduating from the University of Padua in 1683, made his way to Turkey where he served as court physician to five consecutive Sultans. Although he became wealthy, like Judah Halevi six centuries earlier, his heart was elsewhere. In the introduction to his famous medical book (1701) Tuvyah wrote, "I live with my people in Constantinople and may God grant me the honor to see Jerusalem built." He wanted to spend his last years in the Holy City studying what he called "the crowned texts" (Torah.)

In fact, Tuvyah Cohn did live to see Jerusalem built. At age 62, he made *aliya* and remained there for nearly three decades until his death in 1729. But he arrived at one of the worst times in the city's history. A corrupt pasha had come to power and extorted money from the tiny impoverished Jewish community so although Tuvyah came to Jerusalem wealthy, he died poor. He lived frugally and gave charity to others but, as he wrote in a letter, "All I had was stolen and taken from me...Still I try to make my house a place of assembly for the sages."

In 1729 a Franciscan monk wrote that he'd been treated for dysentery by an old Ashkenazic Jew who was a graduate of Padua and who spoke to him in Latin (TC spoke nine languages.) Several months later that same old doctor had a stroke and was paralyzed and aphasic (It was called "the silent illness".) When Tuvyah Cohn died he was buried in an unmarked grave near the Mount of Olives. Although he'd retreated from the world of medical science in order to seek quiet contemplation of Torah, but its unlikely he ever achieved the tranquility that he yearned for.

If you were to visit Israel today, two graves near the Mediterranean Sea symbolize the story of modern medical development in The Holy Land. In the port city of Jaffa, behind high walls in an austere, overgrown Protestant church graveyard, is the rarely visited grave of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, the famous British pathologist after whom Hodgkins Disease is named. While about 25 miles north (Zichron Ya'acov) in a thousand acre nature preserve is the magnificent mausoleum of Baron Edmund de Rothschild.

In 1866 Dr. Hodgkin had visited the Holy Land as companion and medical attendant of his friend the fabulously wealthy Sir Moses Montefiore. In effect, Hodgkin was just along for the ride - some of the time a camel ride. Other times they travelled by carriage, sedan chair, sailboat, or on foot but on this their fifth trip together, it was the 68 year old doctor, not the 82 year old banker, who developed dysentery, died and was buried in the forsaken church graveyard.

They were an odd couple. Hodgkin a Quaker, small and slight, dour and relatively poor. Montefiore an observant Jew, 6'3" tall, debonair and vigorous. Both were devout in their own ways and respected each other's beliefs. Both were philanthropic to the core and concerned for the disadvantaged and oppressed wherever they were - Hodgkin for Australian aborigines, New Zealand Maoris, North American Indians and poor Jews in London's slums whom he treated for no charge. Montefiore was the champion of far flung Jewish communities in Russia, Rumania, Syria and Morocco.

Because the traveling group observed strict kosher dietary laws, Sir Moses always brought his own ritual slaughterer (*shohet*) along. On his trip with Hodgkin in 1866, Montefiore was on a mission to distribute relief funds in the Holy Land which had recently been attacked by drought, locusts and cholera. Money had been raised throughout the British Empire but there also was another financial source. During the early 19th century an eccentric Rhode Island merchant Judah Touro made vast amounts of money in the shipping business in New Orleans. He only became interested in Jewish affairs late in life and when he died in 1854, he left \$143,000 in his will for various Jewish causes (\$20,000 to build the Jews Hospital in Manhattan which later became Mount Sinai) including \$60,000 for "the wretched poor of the Holy Land."

The money was to be used at the discretion of Moses Montefiore whom Touro knew only by reputation and had never met. Sir Moses used much of Touro's donation to rebuild the old city's main synagogue which had been repeatedly ruined and when reconstruction was completed in 1864 the so-called *Hurva* (ruined) synagogue became a place for public gatherings and visits by notables. (In effect, Judah Touro was the first American *macha*, long before the UJA and other Jewish philanthropies.) Throughout the 19th century Palestine was infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes, typhoid, typhus and small pox were endemic and under Ottoman rule the only medical care available to the tiny Jewish community was from Christian missionaries. "The London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews" employed several apostate doctors and although the local rabbis forbade Jews to enter the missionary hospitals, lacking an alternative many did anyway.

To correct the situation, after his first visit to Palestine Moses Montefiore recruited a 34 year old German, Simon Frankel, who seeking adventure signed on as ship's doctor on a Dutch cruise ship. Instead of adventure he found romance and on board married a Creole girl whose father was Jewish. So in 1843, Simon Frankel signed a three year contract and became the first graduate of a European medical school to settle in Palestine. He was provided instruments and drugs to open what became known as "The Montefiore Clinic." The poor would be treated for nothing - not only Jews but anyone in need - but there still was no Jewish hospital and the proselytizing British missionaries were aggressive. Montefiore bought a small building and set up a 14 bed hospital but after only a few years it failed and closed. Simon Frankel had been hired to compete with the missionary doctors, but he got along better with them than with the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish leaders who were constantly squabbling. When his wife died in childbirth, Frankel moved back to Europe and, later still, returned to Jaffa where he died alone, impoverished and forgotten.

Buried in the other cemetery that I mentioned earlier are Baron Edmund de Rothschild and his wife. He headed the French branch of the fabulously wealthy Rothschild family. During the 18th century the family patriarch Meyer Rothschild had been a shrewd financier in Frankfurt who loaned money to Napoleon and other royalty to fund their wars. He established an international banking empire that later was headed by his four sons at locations in Vienna, London, Naples and Paris. During the Crimean War in the 1850s, when the Jewish community in the Holy Land was cut off, in order to stem missionary activity the French branch of the Rothschild family stepped in and set up a second Jewish hospital known as "The Rothschild Hospital." During a German siege of Paris in 1870 The Rothschild Hospital was cut off from the source of its funds so the French branch of the business sent two letters - by dirigible! The first went to the family bank in London asking them to transfer money to the Jerusalem hospital's account; the second letter was sent to the director of the hospital informing him of the transfer - it took 26 days to arrive by dirigible. I guess that's why that form of air mail never caught on.

Sometimes there was rivalry between the French and British philanthropists and in order to keep in peace in the family, Montefiore (who worked for the Rothschild bank in London and had married into the family) gracefully deferred to Baron de Rothschild who headed the French family. So instead of building the new hospital he'd planned for just outside the walls of the old city, Montefiore used Judah Touro's money to establish an agricultural settlement on the same site.

Today that area, called *mishkenot sha'ananim*, is an elegant colony with expensive stone homes - and its distinguishing landmark is known to all as Montefiore's Windmill or *Yemen Moshe*. Baron Edmund de Rothschild established the wine-growing industry in Palestine and when he died in 1954 he was buried in Paris. But twenty years later his and his wife's remains were brought to Israel for a lavish state funeral and reinterred in the lovely park in Zichron Yaacov. Many other members of the extended Rothschild family supported Zionist causes. In particular, Lionel Rothschild who headed the English branch was responsible for securing the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which assured a future Jewish homeland in Palestine. (Remember that originally Theodore Herzl wasn't particular about the location and seriously considered Uganda.)

There's an amusing anecdote about Sir Moses Montefiore's last will and testament. In 1884 when the great man was approaching his 100th birthday and Jewish organizations the world over wished to honor the event and get in on the action. Leaders of the German and Sephardic communities in New York City, headed by the banker Jacob Schiff, decided there was need for a chronic disease hospital to serve their poor brethren living in squalid Lower East Side tenements. Mount Sinai Hospital was strictly for acute illness so on Montefiore's 100th birthday, they opened a new facility with a massive ceremony and named it the Montefiore Home for Chronic Invalids. Naturally they anticipated a handsome donation from the grateful Lord, but he was not so easily taken advantage of - instead, he sent a large bronze bust of himself - nothing more. Years later the home moved to the Bronx and I'm told that the bust still is on display in the lobby of Montefiore Hospital.

During the early 20th century there was a flood of German immigrants to Palestine which included hundreds of doctors and they established high medical standards and emphasized research. There also were a number of American Zionists and among them was Henrietta Szold, a 47 year old teacher and editor of the Jewish Publication Society. She'd grown up in Baltimore, and in 1907 joined a small Zionist study group in Harlem that called itself Daughters of Zion. Two years later she visited Palestine with her mother and although impressed by the beauty of the land, she was appalled by medical conditions. At her mother's urging Henrietta decided to call attention to the situation and appealed to her friends to be proactive by engaging in what she called "practical Zionism." In 1912 they formed the first chapter of a national women's organization, soon to be called Hadassah with Henrietta Szold as its leader.

Ten months after their first organizational meeting, the department store magnate Nathan Strauss issued a challenge to Henrietta. He soon would be sailing to Palestine with his wife and his brother Isidor and offered to pay the expenses and four months salary for a nurse to set up a health station in Jerusalem. Hadassah would have to pay \$2,500 for the next two years and the nurse would have to be ready to sail in three weeks. At the time the woman's group had only \$283 in their treasury but they were so successful raising funds that they were able to hire two nurses - Rose Kaplan and Rachel Landy - to travel with the Strauss family.

The father of the Strauss brothers had emigrated from Germany to Georgia during the Civil War and moved to New York City where he opened his first department store. In 1898 his sons bought out R.H. Macy and the rest is mercantile history. But while they were in Palestine the Strauss brothers had an argument. Isidor wanted to return home sooner - as he said, "How many camels, yeshivas and hovels can you see? If you've seen one you've seen them all." So Isidor raced back to England just in time to catch the Titanic. Nathan and his wife had been fascinated with all the camels, yeshivas and hovels and stayed on - and for the rest of his life Nathan felt guilty that he'd missed the boat. He spent his remaining years doing good works in Palestine and was the principle benefactor of the new city of Netanya which was named after him.

In 1918, the Rothschild Hospital, which during the War had been closed by the Turks, was reopened by a volunteer group of Hadassah doctors and nurses called the American Zionist Medical Unit - later it became known as the Hadassah Medical Organization. The unit had 44 members, most under the age of 25; they brought their own equipment and were led by a controversial Russian born physician Max Rubinow. Soon he was joined by Henrietta Szold, then 60 years old, who helped Rubinow administer the program and remained for 25 years until her death in 1945.

The Americans were not universally welcomed by the city's doctors who viewed them as competitors. Hardly any of the Americans spoke Hebrew and the locals said that they wouldn't be familiar with the unique diseases prevalent in the area. Few had ever been out of the United States and many were insensitive to social conditions. Nevertheless, Hadassah opened several hospitals and later Henrietta Szold was described by Chaim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion as one of the most remarkable Jewish women of the century.

Speaking of Chaim Weizmann, during the 1920s when organizational plans were being made to establish a world-class university and research center on Mount Scopus, the Zionist leader travelled to Frankfurt Germany to solicit the support of the famous bacteriologist Paul Ehrlich. In 1908 he had been the first Jewish recipient of the Nobel Prize in Medicine - the first of dozens to follow. He was entirely secular - in fact, his long-time housekeeper once wrote a memoir about her years working in the Ehrlich household and said that for about the first decade she didn't even know that they were Jewish. Paul Ehrlich had no idea why Weizmann was visiting that day but he was flattered when told that the Zionists wanted to establish a research institute in Jerusalem similar to The Pasteur Institute in Paris and the Rockefeller Institute in New York which would be named the Ehrlich Institute. Although Paul Ehrlich enthusiastically supported the concept, he died in 1915 before there was much progress. Three years later the Hebrew University was dedicated (it actually opened in 1924) and ten years later (1934) when the research center opened it was named The Weizmann Institute.

Almost immediately after Hebrew University opened, planning began to replace the "rickety, dangerous" Rothschild Hospital, but it wasn't until 1939 that the Rothschild-Hadassah University Medical Center opened on Mount Scopus. When the State was formed, there were frequent attacks by Arab gunmen on buses driving up to Mount Scopus culminating with a massacre of 77 staff members followed by evacuation of patients into the city. Because the first quarters were makeshift, the Hadassah women resumed fund raising until in 1960 a 700+ bed modern hospital complex opened in the suburb of Ein Kerem with first-rate medical, dental and nursing schools.

I'd like to describe three doctors who were influential in the early 20th century in pre-state Palestine. Albert Ticho (1883-1960) was an observant Moravian Jew who during medical studies in Vienna and Prague took an interest in eye diseases prevalent in the Mid-East. Soon after completing his internship in 1912, he married his first cousin Anna and accepted an offer from a Zionist organization to head a clinic in Jerusalem. In the first year alone, 70,000 patients came to his clinic - both Jews and Arabs, rich and poor, some traveling by donkey or camel, to be seen. His primary goal was to wipe out trachoma which was the leading cause of blindness in the Mid East and the results were remarkable. Ticho supervised the first Hadassah nurses until during World War I he was drafted into the occupying Austrian army but after the war he developed a thriving private practice of ophthalmology in Jerusalem.

In 1929 Dr. Ticho was involved in an extremely important event in the history of the *yishuv* (the name for the Jewish community in pre-state Palestine.) Just as he entered his clinic he was stabbed in the back by an Arab terrorist. It was a serious but not fatal wound and when his wife returned home from seeing him at the hospital, a grief stricken young Arab woman was waiting to offer her own baby to the childless Tichos. The attack followed shortly after wide-spread riots throughout Palestine in which 133 Jews were killed and 339 wounded; Arab casualties were 116 killed and 232 wounded - mostly by British soldiers. The bloody events followed after provocative demonstrations at the Wall between Jewish factions and Arab extremists.

The major clash was in Hebron on August 24 where 67 Jews died - which was about one third of the small community, and many of the survivors were saved by Arab families. These riots marked the end of an idealistic movement called *Brit Shalom* which was led by several well-known friends of the Tichos (Ruppin, Buber, Magnes, Szold, Einstein.) **These idealists were promoting a bi-national state but after the riots of 1929 it was clear that sharing the land would be impractical. Today some people continue to promote a single-state solution, but hard-liners on both sides still make that possibility extremely unlikely.**

In later years, among grateful Arabs the name "Ticho" became synonymous with eye specialist - and in 1956 when a group of captured Egyptian army doctors were asked whether there was anything they wished to see in Israel before being returned home, they said they only wanted to meet the great Dr. Ticho. Their request was granted. His wife Anna, became one of Israel's greatest painters and shortly after her death in 1980 was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize - the country's highest honor.

At a party celebrating the doctor's 60th birthday, the future Nobel Laureate S.Y. Agnon gave an eloquent speech in which, speaking metaphorically, he suggested that Albert Ticho chose to become an eye doctor in order to allow the blind to appreciate Jerusalem as it was depicted in Anna's beautiful paintings and also to permit people to see the beauty of life dedicated to Torah and keeping the *mitzvot*. The Ticho's home became a gathering place for intellectuals; Albert saw patients on the first floor while Anna's paintings and his prize collection of antique menorahs were upstairs. Several years after Anna died, Ticho House was bequeathed to the people of Jerusalem as an art and culture center that's now administered by the Israel Museum. It's a delightful place to visit and dine *al fresco*.

A frequent guest at Ticho House was their friend Helena Kagan who grew up in Uzbekistan and studied medicine in Switzerland. She was a passionate Zionist but when she moved to Palestine in 1914, she spoke no Hebrew or Yiddish and was told by Turkish authorities that women weren't permitted to practice medicine. However, formal registration wasn't necessary so, undaunted, Helena established a clinic in her home and operated there for the next sixty years. In the beginning, neither the doctors or the local population took her seriously and assumed that "the maiden," as she was called, was only pretending to be a doctor.

Several months after Helena Kagen moved in, World War I broke out and many of the men (including Dr. Ticho) left to fight. Living conditions deteriorated and food was scarce, so she took in lodgers, scrubbed floors and milked a cow which she kept in her backyard. When because of poor sanitary conditions malaria, typhus and cholera devastated the community, Helena joined forces with the American nurses to run Hadassah's clinic. Her performance so impressed a visiting Turkish medical delegation that they granted her the first official medical certificate given to a female physician in the history of the Ottoman Empire.

But in 1917 the Turks requisitioned all hospital buildings for their own use and all non-Ottoman medical personnel were expelled. Helena, herself, developed malaria but she never stopped working. Specializing in pediatrics, she opened a nursery for starving children of working mothers. She also attended the residents of Moslem harems and ran a prison ward at the municipal hospital - sometimes seeing up to one hundred patients a day. After the armistice, under the British mandate Helena wasn't permitted to continue in private practice but she continued to do hospital work without salary both for Jews and Arabs. During the Six Day War, at the age of 78, she tended the wounded in a hospital emergency room for 36 hours and she remained active in many programs until her death when she was nearly 90. Eventually Helena Kagen received many honors and in 1975 when she was awarded the Israel Prize she was described as "The First Lady of Israel."

Another close friend of Albert and Anna Ticho was the poet Dr. Shaul Tchernichovsky. He grew up and lived in Odessa until in 1932, at age 57 he made *aliyah* to Tel Aviv and took a job as a humble school doctor. Far more famous as a poet than as a doctor, in time he would be considered Israel's second greatest Hebrew poet after Bialik.

There's a wonderful character sketch of Tchernichovsky in Amos Oz's memoir (*A Tale of Love and Darkness*) when he recalls that as a three year old he sat on Uncle Shaul's lap - writing the vignette a life time later, Oz still could recall the poet's "homely smell...a full, dense body smell, like the taste of chicken soup on a winter day." Tchernichovsky led a frugal existence and his great medical contribution was to complete the first medical dictionary written entirely in Hebrew. He was an ardent Zionist who was imbued with the progressive ideals of the *Haskala*, the Jewish Enlightenment. He sometimes complained about the young generation of mainly German doctors who were becoming numerous in Palestine. He considered them to be too ambitious and insufficiently idealistic as, he believed, the earlier Russian doctors had been.

So far I've discussed how over the centuries Jewish physicians came to the Holy Land for many reasons — Judah Halevi and Tuviah Cohn as religious pilgrims; Rambam and Ramban fleeing oppression; others seeking refuge from the Inquisition and later from pogroms. Albert Ticho came primarily to fight eye diseases endemic in the Mid-East while Helena Kagan and Shaul Tchernicovsky were dedicated Zionists.

I'll close by describing two American Zionists who helped transform the barren land into a modern state with an advanced health system. In 1831 a religiously observant Jewish immigrant from Germany Jonas Friedenwald (1803-1893) came to Baltimore and, at first, made a living as an umbrella salesman. Before long he became a successful business man, but when his son Aaron (1836-1902) announced that he wished to become a doctor, his mother said "You won't make the salt for your bread." However, Aaron persevered, studied medicine at the University of Maryland and later in Europe and eventually became Baltimore's first eye specialist and a leader of the medical community. Aaron and his wife had five sons and their neighbors the Szolds had five daughters - the eldest children of each family, Harry Friedenwald and Henrietta Szold, grew up together and were life-long friends, and Harry following in his father's footsteps also became a prominent ophthalmologist.

Aaron Friedenwald was a great collector of books concerning Jewish medical history and in 1896 his son Harry was in the audience when he gave a lecture about Jewish contributions to medical science that was titled *Lovers of Zion*. In it he predicted -

*The Jew [will] rise again to his full dignity and show the world how much light Judaism has shed and is yet capable of shedding upon all mankind. This is the grand ideal that thousands upon thousands hope for and are willing to work and suffer for.*

“Dr. Harry” was so inspired that he took up his father’s passion for books and, in time, was acknowledged as the leading authority on Jewish medical history. In 1944 at age eighty, he published a three volume text which remains the classic in the field; eventually, the combined collections of father and son, which amounted to more than 3000 ancient documents and books, were donated to Israel’s National Library in Jerusalem. Indeed, the only academic chair in the world that’s entirely devoted to Jewish medical history is at Hebrew University and named after Harry Friedenwald.

In 1893 a group of Baltimore’s young intellectuals, which included Harry and Henrietta Szold, formed America’s first Zionist society and in later years the two collaborated on many ventures in the Holy Land. Both were friends of Albert and Anna Ticho and before the onset of World War I, on several visits to Palestine Harry consulted at Dr. Ticho’s various eye clinics. At Chaim Weizmann’s request Harry Friedenwald chaired the Zionist Committee in Palestine and during bad times he drew solace from his history books which chronicled Jewish medical contributions even in times of persecution. Two of Harry’s brothers also were doctors and later his son Jonas Friedenwald became a distinguished ophthalmologist in his own right.

Emanuel Libman (1872-1946) — known to his friends as Manny or E.L.— was born in this country and was a student of medical history and also a devoted Zionist. He made several trips to the Holy Land on one of which he led a pilgrimage to the forgotten grave of Thomas Hodgkin which I described earlier. He raised funds to open a microbiology research unit in Jerusalem which eventually evolved into the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School. Manny Libman was a generalist before the age of specialization but he also was an academic physician, researcher and pathologist and made a number of important discoveries. At Mount Sinai Hospital in NYC he founded the cardiology department in which many decades later I studied. He was eccentric - never married, probably was gay - and often worked 20 hour days. He was devoted to his students and was a stimulating teacher with a flair for the dramatic.

Libman’s claim to fame was his incredible skill as a diagnostician - his style was dazzlingly fast, unorthodox and brusque. He seemed to have a sixth sense - skeptics called him lucky or just a good guesser. Always a better observer than a listener, he claimed to be able to smell certain diseases and he keenly sought the slightest details. He had a unique method of pressing on a patient’s mastoids to judge their pain threshold.

Manny Libman had many famous patients, including Fanny Brice, Sara Bernhardt, Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein. Einstein sent him an autographed photo with the inscription, "To the noble-minded Dr. Libman with the secret-diving eyes." He correctly diagnosed the fatal endocarditis of Gustav Mahler and just before Franklin Roosevelt's fourth term he remarked to a friend, "It doesn't matter whether he's elected or not, he'll die of a cerebral hemorrhage within six months." When E.L. turned out to be correct, someone asked how he knew? He replied, "I only saw him in the newsreels but I've seen that wasting look many times. He couldn't last six months."

Examination by the great diagnostician could be harrowing for the patient and I'd like to close by reading a portion of an article written about Libman by the playwright S.N. Behrman that appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1939. Here's how Behrman described his own visit to the famous doctor:

*A patient visiting Dr. Libman for the first time is likely to find his method of examination bewildering and incoherent. To go through such an examination is quite worth the price of admission. After he has given you the Libman test, he will jump from one part of the body to another, tapping hard in one place, lightly elsewhere, pulling down eyelids, pressing under ears, running his thumbnail across the chest. His eyes shift everywhere, his movements are jerky, his speech rapid, his questions staccato and continuous, with no time out for answers. It is only when he reaches auscultation that his tempo becomes slightly legato.*

*Then, as like as not, the telephone rings. Someone wants Libman's advice about a student who has been sent to Europe with money from the Emanuel Libman Fellowship Fund, set up some years ago in his honor by patients and former pupils. "I cannot," you hear Libman say, "take the responsibility of sending that young man to Istanbul. However, I've been thinking about him. I have a feeling he should go to Vienna." He returns to his thumbnail torso, acquiescent on the sofa, taps and pokes, asks a few more questions without waiting for the answers. The telephone rings again. This time Dr. Libman only listens. He returns, picks up a derby and claps it on his silver-gray head. "Sorry. Have to go to Brooklyn. Very interesting case - suppuration behind the ear." And he is gone. You get up to put your shirt on, disturbed by the suspicion that without suppuration behind the ear you are an egregious bore.*

In 1942 E.L.'s friend and patient Chaim Weizmann wrote the following in a letter to Rabbi Steven Wise:

*Very few men on the American scene are more deserving than Dr. Libman...More important than anything else, I am attached to Dr. Libman for the great help he has given to our work in Palestine. Even in the days when it was not fashionable to be a Zionist, he lent the prestige of his great name and influence for the furtherance of our cause...As a colleague in the field of science, I can truly say that in his early adherence to the cause of medical science in Palestine has been instrumental in bringing closer to us many who have distinguished themselves in that field as well as in other fields of scientific endeavor. For this we are deeply indebted to him.*

Of course many other Jewish doctors volunteered their services to support medical education and practice in pre-state Palestine (The Yishuv) but, hopefully, this brief review provides a useful introduction.

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