the year of the book's publication. Scholem's dedication of the annunciation of the
published work to his friend Martin Buber was a way Scholem linked bibliography and
academic scholarship in general not as a game with words but as an act of intellectual
friendship.

Scholem put himself at risk, to retrieve and bring back to JNUL confiscated Nazi "loot"
of the treasury of the Rabbinic library that the Nazis wanted for "display" (learning about,
rather than from) a Museum to the murdered Jewish race. Scholem risked all to bring
back these "captive books" likened in Jewish law to having "gone over a waterfall" in a
mabuah (see gemarah) to the Jewish homeland, rather than let them sit unused
unconsulted, merely as so much investment capital on libraries in Europe, whose host
culture has played a significant role in the eradication of the living culture to which these
books in part testify to long living and vibrant cultural presence in Europe. Scholem is
reported for instance to have "wept" while walking in the Jewish cemetery of Prague
home to gedolim such as the Maharal, Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz (author of Shneu Luchot
HaBrit), the Tosafot Yom Tov, and even Franz Kafka, because Scholem took to heart
his dedication and love of the cultural legacy of the Jewish people and Rabbinic elites.

Scholem also in his lifetime supervised the committee of the Hebrew Palaeography
Project. In 1965 his proposal to the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities to
study all dated medieval Hebrew manuscripts (ms) and gather information about their
technical, technological, and graphic features, and then to computerize this data, for
further analysis, to arrive at knowledge of Hebrew typology was a mission in which
Scholem invested great enthusiasm.
Thirdly Scholem supported the project of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew
Manuscripts (ms.) from collections around the world in order to identify and catalogue
them. 25 years before David ben Gurion, initiated the establishment of this Institute,
Scholem wrote to his friend Chaim Nachman Bialik, "the requisite ms.,... must be
photographed... and assembled in a special collection under the aegis of the JNUL, so
that those which are not published (by scholars) will yet be available for all the
generations to come."

Dr. Aryeh Chaim Leib Vilsker 1919-1988

Dr. Vilsker was married to my grandmother Miriam's (zl) cousin Dr. Gita Gluskin. My
grandmother's mother was Keila Lieba Gluskin Helfgott (zl) whose brother was Rav
Menachem Mendel Gluskin (ztsl) the Av Bet Din of Minsk, whose father was Rabbi
Aaron Ori Gluskin of Paritch after Chabad Luminary Rabbi Hillel of Paritch. While Rav
Menachem's father in law was Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitch (ztsl) who was the son in law
of the Minsk Gadol Rav Eliyahu Pearlman (ztsl), one of Rav Menachem's son in law
was Dr. Vilsker. Vilsker's sister-in laws and brother in law were very accomplished. His
wife Gita received a doctorate from St. Petersberg University on the work of Rabbi
Yehudah Alharizi [author of the Takamon] and his sister in law Leah Gluskin Amusin
was formidable expert in 2nd Temple Judaism, and married to Dead Sea Scroll scholar
Josef David Amusin (zl). In January of 1949 Vilsker proposed to my aunt Gita Gluskin
and in December of 1949 there son Dr. Emanuel Gluskin Shlita who became a
prominent Israeli Electrical engineer, getting a visa out in 1975, was born, now living in Jerusalem. The younger son, Boris, with his mother Gita, wife Katya and two sons, had relocated to Israel in 1990. The grandchildren Misha and Sasha grew up and served in the army.

Vilsker had two grandfathers that were Talmud scholars with whom Lev learned. Later a Talmud teacher was employed but his grandfathers also continued teaching and testing Lev on Friday at the end of the week. Meanwhile a grandmother would invite Lejbete to another room where she secretly gave him a small glass of wine and piece of Lekach honey cake as reward for his learning, "a taste fo the world to come." That was an incentive but later he learned lishma. His mother would serve he Talmud teacher with great respect and honor always preparing a glass of tea for the teacher. The Melamed would say, "Gemara never cools down, yet a tea can cool down." Die gemorah vaet nit kalt vern, oon dee tay ken kalt vern." The Talmud teacher initiated Vilsker into the rythms and warp and woof of the Aramaic of the Bavil with its sing song cadences of ממ יא מלי מילא (what does this mean?) and מאי קא מיסעט ל (how do we know this?)

My focus on Vilsker the librarian illustrates how a great scholar drew on his research and linguistic knowledge to unravel one of the most important discoveries, namely 22 unkown poems of Rav Yehudah halevi. Vilsker's example also shows how difficult it was in Russia for Jews to not only pursue scholarly careers in Hebrew philology but also be Jews as Vilsker we will see was surveilled continuously by the KGB. Vilsker in his semi-retirement accessed fragments to the Cairo Geniza that previously had been unknown to the world at large. This is because Firkovitch excavated the Cairo Geniza before Solomon Schechter. Schechter had access to the "left overs" of Firkovitch's gathering of Geniza fragments. Vilsker played a key role in clandestinely disseminating knowledge of these unkown Geniza works that Firkovitch assembled for the Saltkykov Library in St. Petersberg before Schecter's efforts.

In 1950 Lev graduated from the University with a diploma of Linguist-Semitologist and received a position in the State Public Library named after ME Saltykov Shchedrin at the department of Hebrew and Yiddish books, which was later renamed the Department of literatures of Asia and Africa. There he was renamed Lev Yefimovich by the staff. He was a librarian and advanced to senior bibliographic researcher.

Professor Vinnikov wrote a letter of recommendation that Dr. Vilsker saved and later relayed to his son Dr. Emanuel Gluskin who made Aliyah and lives in Jerusalem. Dr. Gluskin sent me the letter in Russian which in translation reads:

Letter of Recommendation
Vilsker, L. H., born in 1919, had entered the Oriental Department of Leningrad State University (named after L. A. Zhdanov and awarded the State medal after Lenin) as a second-year student of the Division of Assyriology and Hebraistics in 1996. Before that, Vilsker had attended the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute of Foreign languages/. L. H. Vilsker have been studying seriously the Semitic languages / Arabic, ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Syrian/ and he also devoted a lot of attention to philosophy and
history by taking a number of both general and special courses of lectures, and by conducting an extensive review of literature. In addition, comrade Vilsker has been studying independently the recently found Ugarit manuscripts that represent the extremely important cultural monuments. These resulted in his course project, "Laryngeal sounds in Ugarit language," which demonstrates a profoundness of the author’s approach to the analysis of the poorly understood and complex linguistic problems.

He dedicated his Diploma project to the *word-formation in Hebrew language* — this is a question of considerable interest for linguistics, which was not explored properly by science. This Diploma project had received the highest praise from the *Committee of the Department of Arabic Philology* in May of 1950.

The solid training received by comrade Vilsker at the University, as well as completion by him, independently, the serious scientific works mention above, give reason to believe that he is thoroughly prepared for conducting scientific work and scientific research.

[Senior researcher of Institute of Oriental Studies of Academy of Sciences, USSR Professor Vinnikov]

Despite strong recommendations, His scholarly life was not easy particularly do to the lack of publishing opportunities in Russia. He was to many an unknown. Who could know the Russian Hebrew philologist Vilsker if there was nowhere for him to be published? Vilsker wrote countless items (100 have been identified) in Russian and other European languages on a great breadth and depth of subjects. Vilsker scorned narrow specialization and his knowledge was broad and immense. His works on ancient manuscripts found in the Dead Sea area and the linguistic works on various Semitic languages, as well as his work in lexicography were just a few of his accomplishments. A total of 100 scientific papers have been ascribed to Vilsker but he had no place often to publish his findings. Some were published in Yiddish in the journal *Sovietish Heimland*, but it was not easy for Vilsker to "find a shtel and forum to share his research." However RAMBI only retains 2 items relating to Vilskers work on the Samaritans and their language: “On Leib H. Vilsker *Manuel d’arameen samaritain* translated from Russian by J. Margain in *Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, 1981, reviewed by Maurice Baillet in Journal of Near Eastern Studies 42, 4 (1983), p. 295-297. Yes, Vilsker taught himself as an auto-didact Samaritan language and Samaritan graphics and like Avraham Berliner took pride as at being an autodidact.

Vilsker as an autodidact Hebrew philologist focused primarily on the linguistic aspects of the Samaritan language. His scholarly interests included the whole *ganut of Jewish studies*. He wrote articles on a wide range of topics. The following are the tip of the iceberg of a few of his essays characterized by thoroughness and depth:

(1) At the root of Pushkiniana among the Jews
(2) Works of *Scholom Aleichem* translated into Hebrew
(3) A review of a bibliography of *Mendel Moykher Sforim*
(4) The *Medzhybizh tombstone (the kever of the Baal Shem Tov)*
Unknown letters of Hayyim Nahman Bialik

etc

The Saltykov's libraries publication, Oriental Collection, included Vilsker's published work that appeared during the years of perestroika, after his passing. This work is called, The Book of Wisdom by Saeed bin Babshad. It became the basis for numerous studies and publications. Babshad was a philosophers and poet who lived in Babylon. Firkovic obtained this book from a grave in the Jewish cemetery in Egypt. Small fragments of the book were found by different archaeologists in different times and are now located in different libraries of the world. The Israeli scientists E Shearman who visited the Leningrad library in 1960 mentioned the manuscrict. Vilsker gave the name to the manuscript Sefer haHokmah. Vilskers knowledge of the literature of the Middle Ages and totality of foreign languages allowed Vilsker to establish a genuine name of the author and the time of his life that belonged to the second half of the 10th century and first have of the 11th century during the bridge between the Geonim and Rishonim.

Dr. Fleischer argued that the author was a Persian Jew and wrote a whole book about Saeed Ben Babshad. Vladimir Lazaris made another translation of 37 couplets from this book chapter "Hymn to Wisdom" which was published in Ariel journal number 15, 1993. The following is a fragment prose translation by Vilsker:

The moon and the sun are shining- thee are the greatest of the stars
But in the light of Wisdom, all stars are pale
The tiaras are numerous, the decorations are luxurious
But Before the crown of Wisdom, all tiaras deterioriate
The pure gold is magnificent, the precious stones are splendid
But before the charm of Wisdom they all fade

In the preface to his book _Mishlei shel Saeed bin Babshad_ Dr. Ezra Fleischer wrote that the Vilsker labors towards rescuing these fragments are simply infinitely invaluable. "I was looking for ways to see Firkowicz manuscripts. Professor Shearman saw them, but did not study them, and I had been waiting for 15 years." In Fleischer's book that number over 300 pages, Fleischer constantly refers to "the conclusions and findings of Lev Yefimovich as invaluable. " Fleischer refers to Vilsker as ha-iluei

Vilsker was known to some extent at the Leningrad State Public Library named after M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, where Vilsker worked for almost 30 years and of course was admired by other Hebraists and friends including Alex Tarn, James Lieberman, Eliezer Rabinovitch,

Dr. Ezra Fleischer, expert in Medieval Hebrew poetry, and pioneer of the Hebrew poems in the Cairo Geniza, memorialized the following about Vilsker in the Yedioth Achronot on March 13, 1988:
"The passing of Leo Vilsker is a great loss. Our world mourns not just the important research of this great man, an aristocrat of spirit, who was a messenger from an unfriendly country that persecuted him and Jewish scholarship. Leo Vilsker was a colleague with a generous and selfless soul. Many Israeli scientists have lost a friend who inspired us from afar (in Leningrad) with his never tiring research and quest for understanding, with his fiery supreme creative passion, and who at the same time astounded us with his knowledge, and rare modesty."

Fleischer had fought hard to bring Vilsker to serve in a joint appointment as Professor and head librarian at the Wiedner Harvard Library. Dr. Isadore Twerski tried to bring Dr. Vilsker to the Harvard Wiedner collection of Judaica, with a joint appointment to lecture on the holdings of the Firkovitch Saltykov library, but could not secure a visa for the scholar/librarian.

Shulamit Shalit writes of this connection with Harvard by noting:

When E. Fleischer was visiting the United States for his research for a whole year, he came to a brilliant idea - to organize a trip for Vilsker to the United States. Finally, he would meet with the dear friend, if not in Israel then in the United States, on the neutral ground. Lev Efimovich was delighted with the official invitation from Harvard University to read lectures about the collection of Hebrew manuscripts in the Leningrad Public Library. He decided to tempt the fate. He was redirected from one office to another, and then to another... He came, he wrote, he was refused, and he continued coming again. Oh, dear naive Professor Fleischer! Maybe it was not worth to start this fight, a fight with not the (don Quixtian) windmills – but with the reinforced-concrete Soviet mills...

The scholarly journal Kiryat Sefer, featured Vilsker’s photo portrait with a long article by Professor Fleischer dedicated to the Vilsker’s discovery of unpublished poems of Rav Yehudah HaLevy and Rav HaLevy’s friendship with Rabbi Moshe ibn Ezra. This article had been ready to send to print, but then came the unexpected and untimely passing of Leib Vilsker suddenly in St. Petersburg. Fleischer made changes in the introduction and footnotes and the editors accepted Fleischer’s request to include a special page with a photo of Vilsker. This publishing of a photo in Kiryat Sefer was the first time in the 62 year history of journal Kiryat Sefer first published since 1926. In this photo Vilsker is wearing a white sweater that he inherited from his scholar brother in Law Joseph Amusin who married my maternal grandmother’s cousin Leah Gluskin Amusin, the sister of Vilsker’s wife Gita Gluskiina. In the article by Dr. Fleischer focus was upon the youthful years of Yehudah HaLevy and to the beginning of his friendship with Rabbi Moses ibn Ezra, a venerable poet. The subtitle reads, “according to the research of Arieh Vilsker.” The article was already sent for printing when a message about the sudden death of Lev Vilsker had arrived from Leningrad. Professor Fleischer hastened to make necessary changes in the introduction, main text, and notes The
present text had to be changed to past tense. Fleischer insisted that for the first time in 62 years the journal allocate a special page for Arie Vilsker's photograph. What followed after Vilsker's passing was a tidal wave of popular newspaper articles and scholarly publications broadcasting the importance of Vilsker's research however clandestinely smuggled out of Russia.

An obituary appeared in Journal "Sovetish Heimland" (Soviet motherland), No 5, May 1988, Translated into by L. Belov on July 6th 1988, Jerusalem and reads:

Obituary for Vilsker

In the beginning of 70-s, there were publication by a new author in a journal "Sovetish Geimland." The readers were immediately captivated by the unusual character of his materials that were published generally under the rubric "Our announcements." It is possible to recognize the wide diapason of the author's research by mentioning only some titles of his papers: "New materials for the History of Jews in Russia," "Hymn to wisdom: chapter from the unknown book by Said ben Babshad," "The unknown selected aphorisms by philosophers," "About the history of printing among Jews," The source of Pushkiniana among Jews," "A recently-found parable of Aesop, a Syrian version written in Jewish shift," "The unknown poems by Yehuda Ha-Levi...."
The author of these materials was Leib Vilsker, a Leningrad scientist, candidate of philological sciences.

Leib Vilsker was born in 1919 in a small town of Shumsk of Ternopol region in Ukraine. / From 1940 and till the end of WWII, he served in the Soviet Army. In 1950, he had completed his studies at the Department of Semitology and Hebraistics of Leningrad University. For several years he was in charge of the Department of Semitology at the Leningrad Public Library named after M. E. Saltykov-Schedrin. In 1970, he had defended his dissertation, "Samaritan Language" and received a degree of "candidate of philological sciences." When this dissertation was published as a book in 1974, it was highly appreciated as an important study in semitology as well as a significant contribution to research in the history of Samaritans.

By dedicating his life to the problems of ancient Hebrew literature, Vilsker chose an unbeaten path. Each of his works, undoubtedly, manifests a unique discovery. Almost all his research papers that were published in the journal "Sovetish Geimland," have been reprinted in Jewish and Hebrew press abroad, particularly his works about Yehuda Ha-Levi.

As a scientist, Leib Vilsker accomplished a lot in a filed of deciphering the unknown ancient Jewish texts which are located in the library archives in our country [Russia] and which nobody but him was able to study with such competence and pedantic attention to details. In this field, his work has the extreme significance for the world culture. Several Vilsker works were left unfinished, on his desk. A few days before he died, he had sent to the journal an article about the unknown letters of H.-N. Byalik, which Vilsker had been working on during last few months of his life.

"Sovetish Geimland" has published two collections of L. Vilsker' works, which were added to the journal publications under the name "Discovered Treasures," and which included only some of his research papers; both these small books made a strong impression on readers. One can tell with confidence that there will be in the future no researchers of ancient Jewish literature, who would be able to do without discoveries made by L. Vilsker. For the history of ancient Jewish literature, his discoveries have made an invaluable contribution.

In bright memory of Vilsker

Journal "Sovetish Geimland" (Soviet motherland), No 5, May 1988

Translation from Hebrew to Russian by L. Belov July 6th 1988, Jerusalem

Unfortunately while Vilsker was alive the importance of his research was relatively unknown, except after the publication in Kiryat Sefer in Israel where he had never been
able to get a VISA out of Russia to go to. Vilsker’s scholarship was obscured due to the difficulties of publishing in Jewish related subjects in Russia where such research during Vilsker’s lifetime was not only not a priority but frowned upon. One could not even publish any letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Vilsker was a relative unknown, who faced discrimination in Russia against Jewish scholarly matters in general which trickled down to his workplace the Leningrad State Public Library, named after ME Saltyskov–Shehidrin. Shalit touches upon the great persecution of Jews under Soviet Hegemony. She writes,

“In 1962 in Leningrad Vilsker visited a cousin of Gita, an Israeli. Gita says, “Leib went to great her, on the street and they met other people from the Israeli group, one of the KGB photographed them. And for the “communication with foreigners”, the head of the library, a hefty anti-Semite made Vilsker to be removed from the department, where he worked in the speciality of Oriental Manuscripts, and was transferred to the acquisitions department. “

The discomfort of surveillance under the Communists manifested itself throughout the Vilsker family as it did for many Soviet Jews. Gita Gluskin Vilsker told Shulamith Shalit:

“At various times she and Lev were summoned by the authorities. He was "asked" to collect readers' conversations. "What kind of readers?" - He asked in response. - “But there are Jewish elders that visit your library – they dig in the Talmud and other religious literature, they converse..." And then he [the official] added that Vilsker must keep this conversation secret. Vilsker replied: "I have no secrets from my wife." He paused and added: "You know, everyone has his vocation, profession. You cannot do my job, and I cannot do yours."

After that, Lev was not summoned anymore.

As for Gita – this is a different story.” Gita’s sister Esther who joined Hashomer HaTzair was sent to Siberia for her Zionist activities. Although HaShomer HaTzair was a secular Zionist organization, in Russia there was not differentiation, for a Zionist was a Zionist of any political stripe. Thus the Baal HaTanya was arrested because of sending funds to Eretz Yisrael and his date of release is celebrated by Chabad Lubavitch to this day as a national and religious holiday. The pattern of the Baal HaTanya’s arrest under the Tsars, repeated itself in a different modality under the communists when Rav Menachem Mendel Gluskin (father of Gita Gluskina Vilsker) and Vilsker’s father in law Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitch were arrested for religious activities. Reports indicate that the Rabbis were kept awake for 48 hours and then made to sign the false form: There is no religious persecution in Russia. It is told that Rav Gluskin’s flock tried to bring their Rabbi his talis and tefillin but the communists would not allow this, as the state was opposed to all religious activities amongst not only Jews but also Christians in their religionless state which Marx had warred against in proclaiming ‘religion as the opiate of the masses.’
Five years later after being transferred to acquisitions, a new head of the department categorically demanded to bring Vilsker back, for without him, the entire special collection became "stripped."

In 1979 Vilsker enjoyed a banquet in honor of his 60th anniversary. That evening, he heard a lot of good things. The next morning he was asked to retire. Vilsker was forced to continue only as a bookbinder. With extra time on his hand Vilsker plowed ahead with Hebraica research in the Firkowicz collection.

Abraham Firkowicz, A lover of antiquities, traveled extensively in different countries of the Middle East. At the end of the XIX century, he sold to the Leningrad (then Imperial Public) Library two collections that were particularly valuable thanks to the manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza. Abraham Garkavi, Paul Kokovtsov, and prof. Khvolson worked with the manuscripts. Scientists from different countries used to come to have a chance to just take a look at the collection. And now Vilsker decided to "to delve into them." Being free from a job, he directed all his energies to the study of Jewish texts of the collection. He was well versed in different handwritings and fonts and he had a sharp eye for the things that were left unnoticed by others. And his labor was bringing discoveries almost every day. He felt that he had found unknown poetry of the medieval Jewish poets, including poems of Yehuda ha-Levi, but he could not know that for sure.

When Lev Efimovich would "stumble" on such a poem, he did not know whether it was known to the world or was it a discovery. It was risky to publicly declare a discovery of the poem, and it was premature to publish about it. What if the poem was already published in some unknown edition?

What did he do? He would write down the cached clandestine first line, only a single line, and send it in a letter to Israel, to Ezra Fleischer; Vilsker knew that prof. Fleischer was the preeminent specialist in medieval Hebrew poetry. The venerable professor, extremely excited, would rush, like a high-spirited young man, to heyhal Shlomo (Solomon’s Palace) to dig for hours in a huge catalogue containing records of all famous poems of medieval poets, and then send a response to Leningrad.

No! Nope! Unpublished! And by this way Vilsker discovers not one or two, but as many as 22 completely unknown poems of the great Yehuda ha-Levy. He analyses them and publishes his findings, with great difficulties, in "Sovetish Heimland" journal, that is, in Yiddish, while feeling undisguised suspicion towards himself. Gita’s reminiscences:

"Lev was not a poet, but he was forced [by the circumstances] to make translations into Yiddish of the words by the great Yehuda ha-Levy! The journal was terribly afraid of any word in Hebrew. As an honest researcher, Lev would supplant the translation with a photocopy of an original. An editorial board’ footnote would say: "Original photo was omitted because of the lack of space."

But there was an instance when, either by mistake or because the superiors were not present, one fragment’ facsimile in Hebrew was printed in the journal and the happy
scientists in Israel, among them Ezra Fleischer, examined and studied every letter in it. What a story!

So, the first publication of Lev Vilsker' research about the unknown poems of Yehuda ha-Levy (born not later than 1075 - died in 1141) appeared in the February issue of "Sovetish Heimland" journal, in 1982. Eight pages altogether. On April 7, there was an announcement about the publication in Israeli newspaper "Maariv".

Among those who first responded to this terrific publication were such connoisseurs of medieval poetry and literary historians and experts in Yiddish and Hebrew as Yosef Haim Crunch and Nagid, lehuda Ratshabi, David Iosifon, Dov Yarden and Nehemiah Aloni. The sensation literally rocked the whole scientific world.

Newspapers were first to respond and then the serious journals started responding. The precious treasure was not buried somewhere in a wilderness in a corner of the earth, not in a cave, but in one of the centers of the civilized world. Many rave responses and reviews reached the author. Inspired by them, Vilsker directed his intelligence and passion of a pioneer on the continued search and analysis of the findings.

A year later, he published a new and almost twenty-page long article entitled "198 poems of Yehuda ha-Levy in unknown edition." This is how the term "Vilsker List" had appeared in the scientific literature, for among the mentioned 198 "first lines" of the works of Yehuda ha-Levy, the 111 were not mentioned in any other indexes, including the classic catalog by Shmuel David Luzzatto, that had been studied by the scientists for more than 150 years.

Among the first who responded to the first and the second publication of Vilsker in "Sovetish Heimland" was a rabbi and scholar David Yosifon, who, among other things, was the editor of three volumes - the books of Tanakh (Torah, Prophets, Writings) - with a translation into Russian (published by "Mossad ha-Rav Kook" in 1978). Originally from Poland, David Yosifon knew both Russian and Yiddish. David Yosifon wrote his second article for the newspaper "ha-Tsofe" on his deathbed. His relatives had sent the article to an editor along with his letter:

"I am writing these words in a hospital fortress" hadassa," after a major surgery. It turned out that while walking on Jaffa street, I fell and lost consciousness. And though I cannot yet get out of bed, I think that this is my duty and pleasure to tell you that the scientist Leib Vilsker, from Leningrad, had made a new discovery and he had written about it in "Sovetish Heimland." I want and must ask for the attention of all the scientists and researchers towards that fact of immense scholarly impact."

Last letter. The words of greeting from one scientist to another – across the Iron Curtain. Of course, they [Vilsker and Yosifon] were not acquaintances.
Later on, others will reference this article by David Yosifon. It is intelligent, insightful, and full of light and love.

In the similar way, "while descending to a grave" (in the same in 1983), Professor Nehemiah Aloni had blessed Vilsker and his labors. That was a reaction to the first article by Vilsker. Professor Aloni wrote in a journal "Sinai"(number 93),

"We are waiting with great impatience (bhe kil' on eynaim) a continuation of his [Vilsker'] work in all its brilliance and depth. We learned more from his concise article than from the thick-winded volumes of other voluble authors." After enumerating orderly the seven discoveries of Vilsker in the eight-page article, while giving them a clear scientific analysis, Aloni adds, "...and the most important discovery is the author himself, who, until yesterday, was not listed among the researcher-experts in the works of Yehuda ha-Levi but who had become the one from today."

Nehemiah Aloni named the poem of Yehuda ha-Levy about pogrom in Toledo in the XII century the fourth discovery in the first article by Vilsker. Aloni writes that the historians knew about the anti-Jewish pogroms perpetrated by Muslims in southern Spain.

"I wondered, why until now there have been no studies on elegies (mournful songs) in the works of Yehuda ha-Levy. And here came Vilsker and presented us with a new poem filled with the clear hints about participation of northern Christians in the pogroms. And he presents two expressions that were competently treated by Vilsker: "am seir" (hairy) – most likely that was a nickname for Christians; and "Yad Esau"- the hand of Esau (recall his hairiness) that could be a hint about Christians as well.

The poem is called "On the pogrom in Toledo." Let me to give you first its rough translation, so that the poem content would become clear for the reader. The phonetics of each strophe in Hebrew (each stanza ends with the word "day" – yom)

Then the poem develops a topic of the former prosperity:

Jews lived in Seira, in Christian Spain, in prosperity and benevolence, their children were counselors for the kings, their elders looked regal and stately, everybody studied Torah, observed the Jewish laws, and lived in peace with the neighbors - " And Esau's hand was with me," but “in his heart, he dreamed about evil deeds, he was thinking about my blood every day."

Here is how Yehuda ha-Levi sounds in Hebrew:

The fifth discovery, according Aloni, is a song of love "Yonim Yaraneinu." Here is a brief story. When this song was not known yet in Israel, Vilsker's friend in Leningrad, the composer Hirsch Paikin, created music for the poem, whereas his wife, Clara Yakovlevna, performed the song. At that time, they both started learning Hebrew with Vilsker, secretly. Inspired by the work of the scientist, Paikin wrote a lot of music for the poems by Yehuda ha-Levy and he even composed an opera about this great poet. They performed this repertoire on many occasions in Israel. But Paikins are not anymore. Clara Yakovlevna made a cassette recording of their songs whose words are:

Yonim Yaron ka-ka-moni chem / Al Bein MASHAV zaaku Mei Mayhew / Homim al Yamim halhu bli hemda / u-Zman payrud Khalaf ki bi-Mayhew / (Here performers repeat the first two lines as the chorus).
Ve-ezkor Dodi dadey Yonati / Ki Emergency aloft bosmeyhem alai ...

(Doves are cooing, and I am like them /. Here is the watering. And the waters are pure and they murmur like a sea. /Joyless is my wandering. It's time to part. / Doves are cooing. I remember my little dove, the scent of her breasts. /)

A great scientific discovery gives impetus to entire scientific field and entails an avalanche of new investigations and publications. Lev Vilsker managed to publish three more articles (altogether five), but there was already written the sixth paper that came out after his death. Professor Yosef Yahalom writes:

"In the last article, Vilsker presents for the first time the entirely message of ha-Levy to his great patron in Granada, the poet Moshe Ibn Ezra, but ... in Yiddish. The text of the Hebrew original of this important manuscript was prohibited for printing, and the death of Vilsker had closed the last window through which we looked furtively, almost like thieves, into the world of Hebrew manuscripts in Leningrad, which was unknown to us."

I hear in these words both anger and bitterness; don't we completely agree with them, while pondering over the fate of such scholars trapped in Communist Russia, and heroes as Lev Vilsker, Joseph Amusin, and many others? Once the Iron Curtain fell, the notable Yosef Yahalom hurried to Leningrad; he then told about the trip and about how he was getting acquainted with the "treasure" of Vilsker ("Pema'm" journal, number 46-7, 1991).

**Conclusion**

The 5 scholar librarians introduced today, namely Steinschneider, Marx, Cassutto, Scholem, and Vilsker were scholars first but saw their research as working in tandem with their being librarians and bibliographers. Today the fusion of librarians who are...