

**The Yizraelite – No 2108 Date:26.5.2023**

**Kibbutz Yizrael**

Translated and edited by Eddie Solow

**Edi-torial**

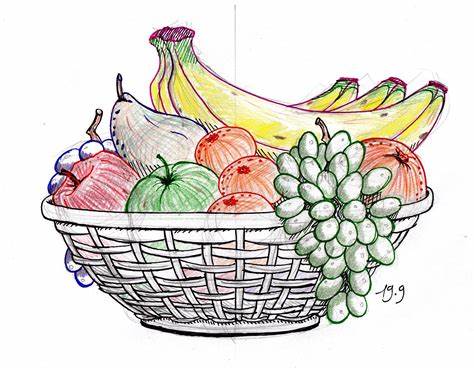
**I attended an unbelievable event on Sunday evening.** The “Music School” held its annual end of year event. I was left speechless. From year to year the level rises and leaves me wondering if it is possible to improve. During the last quarter of the concert, we were treated to a full symphony orchestra of all the more advanced students and their teachers that left me spellbound.

I have to give Annabel Kaplan a special mention. She opened the concert with a Solo performance with all the confidence and virtuosity of a professional.

The Kibbutz Yizrael Music School has surely earned its title of “Musical Academy”

DO NOT MISS THIS EVENT NEXT YEAR. Start saving now. It costs all of 40 shekels.

**Have a great Shavuot.**



**Pool Opening Hours**

**Below are the opening hours of the pool from now and throughout the summer.**

**Sunday to Thursday: 08:00 - 13:00 15:00 – 19:00**

**Fridays and holiday evenings: 9:00 - 12:30 14:00 – 18:00**

**Saturdays and holidays: 10:00 - 19:00 - continuously without a lunch break**

**During the holiday period from: 21.6.23 to 1.8.23 - the pool will be open for night swimming on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays - until 21:00**

**Arnon Matalon**

**From the Staffing Committee Desk**

We appeal to the public to propose three additional members to join the Economic Council.

The choice will be made by a ballot vote.

Members of the staffing committee:

Kinneret Govrin H.R., Albert Rosilio, Liran Penn, Anat Friedman, Uri Ayalon, Tzach Sassi and Nir Segal

**Asefa Report**

**15.5.2023**

Chairman of the meeting: Eddie Solow

Asefa Secretary: Shlomo Cohen

Present: 36 members

**On the agenda:** **Do we want to enter into the examination process of the association's alternative?**

Dagan Yarel, who is in charge of land and construction in the kibbutz movement, presented the topic. Background material was sent to members in advance.

**What is the association's alternative**? The association alternative is an alternative that allows the kibbutz to purchase all housing rights that exist in the kibbutz in "all at one" or in several stages, as a result of which the kibbutz no longer needs the consent of the land authority, in order to exercise these rights (building permits) or granting rights to members with regards these apartments.

Dagan explained the complex issue. He explained the advantages and disadvantages, and what this means in a cooperative kibbutz. The main message is that the issue is primaraly social, and only then, financial. The kibbutz must first decide what its direction is, and act accordingly, i.e. a kibbutz that wants to remain cooperative, has no reason to enter into such a move today, at a cost of tens of millions. The ones who will benefit from its fruits are the inheritors and not those who live in the kibbutz today.

**Shimon Zelas** - according to the last calculation we made, all 450 plots + 100 temporary units will cost the kibbutz about 35 million shekels + VAT, appreciation tax and the improvement levy. The sum may reach 50 million NIS.

Some argue that the price is too steep considering the high interest rates of late. According to Shimon, the kibbutz can pay the amount if necessary. The beneficiaries of the deal will be the grandchildren of the members in one or two generations. There are many complications, because there may be a house in the kibbutz that more than one family has lived in and there will be a conflict between the rights of the various heirs from the various families.

A family that leaves the kibbutz and has ownership rights to the property will be able to sell to someone who has been admitted to membership in the kibbutz or sell the house to the kibbutz. If someone who is not a member comes and offers a high amount - it may not pass the test in court and the kibbutz may be forced to accept people who are not members. As a result, it is possible that within a few years the kibbutz will not be a kibbutz.

**Sigal Hadar** - there are too many question marks. The economic issue is also unclear. I ask what is the purpose of the discussion and where do we intend to go?

**Answer:** The purpose of tonight's discussion is to examine whether or not we want to enter into an in-depth examination.

**Ron Cohen** - Maytronics' market value enables us to discuss decisions that cost money. The question is, is this what we want to do? I think not. We raised this issue in the asefa because it came from the public and the executive committee decided to bring it to the meeting, so that the public would be able to understand the issue and make a considered decision. My recommendation to the public is not to bother with it and take the issue off the agenda (and not because of the economic consideration). If the kibbutz, and especially the veterans, are interested in inheritance - apartment association is a very complicated solution. A very big problem. We heard this evening from Dagan Yarel who said that in his view the decisive date (according to the Rasham) is 2007, and the heirs of members who died between then and the day of our decision will receive rights over heirs from the present.

**Nitzan Feldman** - I also think that inheritance solutions should be sought elsewhere. I would like to remind you that we have dealt with this issue in the past. There is a team that deals with the Life Fund B Foundation, which is supposed to take care of the issue of inheritance, and I request that the issue return to the table for discussion.

**Jeremy** - In a question to Dagan Yaral, if the business is so bad, why did many kibbutzim begin the process?

**Dagan replied** - I remind you that by enlarge, it was renewing kibbutzim that made decisions to associate apartments (in an alternative born in 2014), held the yes/no association debate for many years. Most of these kibbutzim decided to associate apartments.

There is a difference between buying 630 lots at a 100% discount, such as kibbutzim in the Gaza Strip, and payments of millions. This is a one-way decision - with no return possible. Those who may profit from the deal are future kibbutz members in a generation or two. In one of the kibbutzim, they said that it is better to buy a cotton picker that will give a higher yield than the association's alternative.

It is important to hold the discussion, to understand the consequences of decisions such as the association of apartments.

At the end of the meeting, a vote was held:

**"Decision in principle** - entry into the examination process of the association's alternative. In favour - 14, against - 71, abstentions - 1

**Decision:** the issue of the 'association alternative' is dropped from the agenda.

Summarised by: Shlomo Cohen

(**Editor’s note** – Not one person spoke in favour of the proposal. It seems all the “Yes” votes came from people voting from home.)

**H.R. Update Regarding Outside Workers**

Moran Rakir Havshush will replace Inbal Pezaro to deal with the salaries and reimbursements of the outside workers and will be the address for the outside workers during Inbal's maternity leave.

The email address will remain the same: **funds@yizrael.com**, so too, the drawer in the mazkirut.

Direct mobile phone inquiries to Moran, starting in June.

We wish Inbal and Moran much success!!

Kinneret, H.R.

**Social projects from the Social Bonus Funds**

Ladies and gentlemen don't miss the opportunity to take part in a social project so that we can enjoy it together like we recently enjoyed: 0 - 100... or how we celebrated in Lag Ba’omer in the new park at the agricultural farm....

**So, hurry before time runs out.**

**The proposals must be submitted by the end of June -**

a. At the beginning of July, the bidders will be invited to present their initiative.

b. - the list of proposals for that year that will be brought to the attention of the community management will be compiled by the team, below

c. By the end of July, the consolidated proposal will be brought to the asefa for discussion.

We encourage you to submit diverse initiatives - this is a great opportunity that you should not miss...

**The social project team**: Shahar Levy, Shlomo Cohen, Nitzan Rivlin Feldman and Amir Armoza

**The following is the proposal of the H.R. Management (H.R.M.) to update the work procedure. The public is invited to submit comments/references and/or questions to Kinneret by June 8, 2023. On Tuesday, June 6, 2023, an open meeting will be held on the subject. - Kinneret, H.R. (Read this carefully – Ed)**

**Work procedure – Update Proposal**

**Kibbutz Yizrael - 2023**

**Main Changes From the Existing procedure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Present status** | **Proposal** |
| Working hours standard - mothers | 40 hours per week | 42 hours per week when the youngest child reaches the age of 12 |
| Work hours - standard | Weekly only | weekly but it will be possible to transfer excess hours within a calendar month |
| Retirement age | As by law - women: 62  Men: 67 | As by law  women: 62-65 (see table) men: 67 |
| Reduction of working hours | From the age of 60 it is possible to reduce work hours to 36 hours per week  Weekly only | No reduction in working hours until retirement |
| Pricing of working hours in the community (for registration purposes only) | All community workers costed NIS 40 per hour | Pricing jobs in the community realistically for each job (similar to holdings/agriculture) |
| Overtime | No mention | Approved only by the manager of the branch/sector |
| Single parent | No mention | Additional 8 days off until the youngest child reaches 18 years of age |
| Annual leave | 24 days a year and extra days for simchas | 24 days a year  No extras |
| Utilization of Vacation days per year | 60 days | 48 days |
| Transfer of vacation days between spouses | Unlimited | The accumulation is personal and non-transferable except for maternity leave up to 24 days a year |
| Costing of leave days | No mention | The days off will be costed for registration purposes only |
| Recording of work | No mention | The default: Non recorded day will be considered as “Leave” |
| Sick days | In practice - Not recorded | Management, control and limitation of sick days according to the law |
| Noncompliance with minimum work hours  Lowering bonuses in accordance with non-compliance with the duty of work and shifts | Graded table of sanctions | Lowering bonuses in accordance with non-compliance with the duty of work and shifts |
| Shift duties (Toranut) | No mention | Shift duty will be considered part of the compulsory work duty but will not be recorded as working hours |
| Job search period | Up to two weeks | Up to one month |

**Please note that I have not translated the entire new (four page) work procedure, which appears in the Hebrew Newsletter – ED**

****

**H.R. Announcement**

**Wanted - Director, Public Representative on the Kapro board**

We are working on the establishment of a board of directors for the Kapro company that will include a representative of Kibbutz Yizrael.

Anyone who is interested in standing is invited to contact one of the members of the search team by 15.6.23.

Hila Altarlevi, Irit Shemesh, Amir Darom, Ofra Shelef and Kinneret Govrin.

The board of directors (board of directors) is a statuary body with powers and responsibilities. The members of the board of directors are not involved in the day-to-day management of the company but rather in formulating the strategy and overseeing the activities of the CEO.

A director must act in the best interest of the company and be loyal to the company.

Being a member of the board means taking personal responsibility for the board's decisions.

A member of the board of directors assumes responsibility as a member of the board of directors, undertakes to use his time to read and review the background material (before the meeting) and participate in the meetings.

The meetings will be held at Kibbutz Kadarim in the Upper Galilee once a month during the day.

Required skills:

• Ability to read and analyse financial statements

• Preference for a person with a relevant academic degree such as business administration, CPA, economics

• Graduate of the directors' course

• Understanding of a business

• Familiarity with industry - an advantage

• Discretion and integrity

Duration of term: 4 years

Method of selection: formulation of a recommendation by the search team and selection by the holdings board. - Kinneret, HR

**Nearing Completion – Yifat Asaf**

Happily, several processes dealing with social issues are nearing completion.

To make it clearer - here is the summary of the topics and the stage they are in

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Status** |
| Update of the Kibbutz Statutes | Asefa 5.6 |
| Work Procedure | Open meeting. - 6.6. asefa - 19.6 |
| Duty Procedure | After an open meeting. In the hands of H.R.M. |
| Vacation Procedure | Ratified in Community Management – Asefa 26.6.23 |
| Absorption procedure | Ratified in Community Management – Asefa 26.6.23 |
| Residents Procedure | Ratified in Community Management  To be brought to an open meeting and then to an asefa |
| Periodic updates to the organisational structure | Minor changes will be published in the alon, substantial changes will be brought to the Asefa |



**Clarification Regarding the Asefa - 5.6.23**

**Adjustments to the Kibbutz Regulations – Eddie Solow**

In the last newsletter, there was an announcement advertising a meeting to be held on Monday, 5.6.23, after which it will be decided by ballot whether to approve the updated statutes. (Takanon Hakibbutz)

At the beginning of the team's work on behalf of the Management Committee (Jeremy Perling, Eddie Solow, Yitzhak Peleg, Tsach Sassi) we understood that our job was to locate the issues in the old document, where there is a contradiction with the decisions of the kibbutz today, and to propose changes in accordance with the current procedures, as decided over the years in the asefa.

We forwarded our comments to the lawyer, Omer Cohen, who rewrote the statutes, so that they fit the modern language and the period in which we live. When we went through the new version, we discovered that it contained innovations and changes that the lawyer introduced on his own initiative and his extensive experience working with other kibbutzim and with the registrar of associations.

The team presented our comments to Omer Cohen and later, to the members of the Kibbutz Management. Some were accepted and some were not.

In the publication in the newsletter, the process was explained precisely. Although it was not explicitly stated, several members reached the erroneous conclusion that all team members are unanimous regarding all the proposed changes to the kibbutz statutes.

**We, Yitzhak Peleg, Tzach Sassi and I, wish to make it clear that this is not the case. Each of us disagrees with several changes which the Kibbutz Management wants to include in the regulations.**

We were told that there is no point in us returning to the executive committee once more, and that we can submit the reservations at the meeting that will be held on June 5, 2023. And so, we will do this - we will submit the reservations, in advance, to the asefa committee and the chairman of the executive committee.

We, like the members of the Executive Committee, also wanted to emphasise the great importance of reviewing the proposed statutes ahead of time, in order to arrive prepared for the meeting. The old statutes are in the Kehilanet. Also, the proposed changes. Copies of the new regulations are available in the mazkirut.

We ask the Executive committee to reconsider holding an open meeting before the asefa, so that we can exchange opinions without pressure.

Here’s hoping that soon we will have updated kibbutz statutes that reflect our special way of life.

Happy holiday to everyone!

Eddie Solow, Yitzhak Peleg, Tzach Sassi

**Reply to Eddie and Other Interested Parties – Jeremy Perling**

The goal of the Executive Committee in this matter was to adapt the outdated regulations to the way we actually conduct ourselves today, following changes that have been accepted in practice in the last 24 years, without changing the regulations at the time.

Another goal is to adapt our statutes to changes in the cooperative association regulations - something we are obliged to do.

The adjustments proposed by the team (even if not every proposal was acceptable to the entire team), were brought for discussion in the management committee, which took place together with the lawyer.

As we asked all the members of the kibbutz - it is important to read the statutes with the adjustments proposed, and submit questions in advance, so that the lawyer comes prepared with the answers to the meeting.

There is no need for an open conversation on this issue, as the discussion will be open in a meeting with a lawyer, and if necessary, there will be another meeting and even more. In any case, the decision is not made at the asefa, but by a ballot vote, and a special majority is required.

There was an attempt to make a comparison between the regulations before and after the adjustments for public convenience, but we found that it was not possible, because the writing style is completely different.

The adjustments are in various areas, some of them are related to the latest technology, such as the possibility to vote in an asefa vote using a mobile phone instead of being present at the asefa, but it is important to understand that the proposal does not involve any change in our lifestyles.

Jeremy Perling

**Google Translate is not that great**

This one I particularly like – Ed…

**נשמח לראותכם🌷**

**קומונה ה'**

We will be happy to see you 🌷

The Lord's Commune

This week Google seems to have it in for our Domestic Workers

**ביום חמישי 1.6.23 צוות משק הבית יוצא ליום כיף**

בנות משק הבית, שכל השנה עוזרות לנו בניקיון, בסדר, בבתים ובמקומות ציבורים

יוצאות להירגע, לקחת פסק זמן ולהתאוורר מעט

מאחלים להן שתחזורנה עם המון המון אנרגיה, חשק ורצון לחזור לעבודה 💜

תודה לכן!

**On Thursday 1.6.23 the household team goes out for a fun day**

The girls of the household, all year long help us with cleaning, in order, in houses and public places

Going out to relax, take a break and ventilate a little

We wish them that you will return with lots and lots of energy, desire and desire to return to work 💜

Thank you for that!

**And now our version:**

**On Thursday 1.6.23 the Domestic workers are going on a trip**

**for a fun day.**

All year long they keep our homes and public places clean and tidy.

They are going to take a break from their hard work, relax a little and get some fresh air.

We hope you will enjoy yourselves and return to work, batteries recharged, willing and ready.

Thank you for all you do for us.

**The Audit Committee - Monitoring audit reports**

Below is a follow-up of the audit reports of: Electricity Branch, Information Systems and H.R. - conducted in 2021-2022.

Thanks to Erez Peleg, Kinneret Govrin and Maor Persai for passing on the information for publication.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Branch Audited** | **Steps Taken** |
| **Electricity Branch** |  |
| Adjustment of income against expenses | Increasing the price of an hour of work from 35 NIS to 40 NIS and every month, a costing meeting and data analysis from the BI system. |
| Working with a contractor who performs work in the kibbutz | An agreement covering all the terms of the engagement was signed.  There is a price list for routine work and renovation. |
| Work hours | The elements of the job were changed, and the employment agreement was updated, and the working hours are in accordance. Care must be taken to register correctly and continuously in synchronisation. |
| Receipt of goods | Goods are regularly checked against the delivery invoice. |
| The “One ERP” information system | The system still does not provide the data required for work. |
| **Information Systems** |  |
| Organisational structure and procedures | Changes and adjustments were made to the work procedures following the audit. |
| Providing support and work guarantees | Under consideration and in the process of being defined. |
| Data storage and backup | Cloud backup and application changes project completed.  User licenses have been upgraded to support advanced information security functions provided by Microsoft and other software vendors.  In planning: (a) In the short term: penetration studies to test our ability to protect corporate information.  (b) In the second half of the year: dealing with the issue of privacy protection raised in the audit. |
| **H.R.** |  |
| Work Procedure | Appendices will be added to the updated procedure (education, outside work, shift duty procedure, tenure procedure and more). |
| H.R. management | The H.R. management was established. The summaries of the meetings are distributed to the public. |
| Role definitions and database | The definitions of all positions in the kibbutz will be updated, as well as the members' database. |
| Organisational Structure | will be handled by H.R and the updates will be published. |

The coming of the Messiah is near – Ed

**Library**

**New English Books**

Longbourn/Jo Baker

The Leavers/Lisa Ko

Larry's Party/Carol Shields

The Falafel King is Dead/Sara Shilo

Humans of New York/Brandon Stanton

Just a Corpse at Twilight/Janwillem van de Wetering

**Below is a list of books ordered in the last two years and available in Hebrew and English in the library, arranged by the last name of the author according to the Hebrew (some are still in the process of cataloging)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| עברית | English |
| האיש שמת פעמיים/ריצ'רד אוסמן | The Man Who died Twice/Richard Osman |
| מועדון הרצח של יום חמישי/ריצ'רד אוסמן | The Thursday Murder Club/Richard Osman |
| שיעורים בכימיה/בוני גרמוס | Lessons in Chemistry/Bonnie Garmus |
| ילדה א'/אביגייל דין | Girl A/Abigail Dean |
| אהבה חופשית/טסה האדלי | Free Love/Tessa Hadley |
| רומן קיץ/אמילי הנרי | Beach Read/Emily Henry |
| סאלאם, מאמא/גולנאז השמזדה בונדה | What We Owe/Golnez Hashemzadeh Bonde |
| לזמן קצר יש בנו קסם/אושן וונג | On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous/Ocean Vuong |
| משכילה/טארה וסטאובר | Educated/Tara Wetover |
| השתיקות של גברת ויק/צ'ל וסטו | Hagring 38/Kjell Westo |
| מחר ועוד מחר, ועוד מחר/גבריאל זווין | Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow/Gabrielle Zevin |
| החנות למכשירי כתיבה בטהראן/מרג'אן כמאלי | The Stationary shop of Teheran/ Marjan Kamali |
| תשעה זרים מושלמים/ליאן מוריארטי | Nine Perfect Strangers/Liane Moriarty |
| קירקה/מדלין מילר | Circe/Madeline Miller |
| הספרייה בפריז/ג'נט סקזליאן צ'רלס | The Paris Library/Janet skeslien Charles |
| המתנדב/ג'ק פרווד'ר | The Volunteer/Jack Fairweather |
| שלושה/ואלריפרין | Three/Valerie Perrin |
| פינלי דונובן מחסלת/אלה קוזימאנו | Finlay Donovan is Killing it/Elle Cosimano |
| לפני שהקפה יתקרר/טושיקאזו קאוואגוצ'י | Before the coffee gets cold/Toshikazu Kawaguchi |
| סיפורים מבית הקפה/ טושיקאזו קאוואגוצ'י | Before the coffee gets cold: Tales from the Cafe/Toshikazu Kawaguchi |
| הפרחים האבודים של אליס הארט/הולי רינגלנד (העותק באנגלית נקנה השנה) | The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart/Holly Ringland  Angry Judge An illustration of an angry judge cartoon character shouting and pointing at the viewer Judge - Law stock vector  **Continuous power of attorney and preparation of wills**  **Yossi Abadi**  **Lawyer**  **Specialist and qualified**  **Drafting a continuous power of attorney**  **Preparation of wills**  **053-5307228 / Abadi\_y@yizrael.org.ilehcu**  **Kibbutz Yizrael**    **A Tour of Bernie Fink's exhibition**  **In Afula - 15.5.2023**  **Thank you for the invitation to visit**  **Bernie Fink’s exhibition**  A huge thank you to Bernie for the invitation.  to visit his exhibition in Afula  and for the guided tour we received  Monica Brustein  On behalf of all the veterans who visited and had a great time  Shabbat Shalom  Photos: Ilana Shani |

**Save the Date**

**The 75th Anniversary celebrations continue.**

**The Grand Reunion of Kibbutz Yizrael Age Groups**

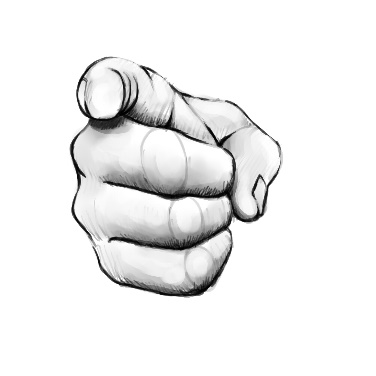
**And the unveiling of our “Tree of Life”**

**22.7.23**

**Let the children know in good time!**

**We need a contact person for each age group.**

**If you are willing, please let Yael Epstein Cohen know.**



**The Stage is calling YOU!**

36 people have already expressed their desire and/or agreement to participate in the 75th show.

And what about you?

The stage is calling you!

No prior experience is necessary. All you need is the will.

You can sing, talk, act or dance.

It is also possible to just be an "extra" - the main thing - to be there.

When? - Saturday, 3.6.23

Where? - in the Moadon

Time? – 10:00 in the morning

You are invited to meet the director - come in droves, before or after brunch

**We invite you to the opening event of**

**Our coffee stand at the vegie farm**

**Saturday - 27.5.23**

**from 09:30 to 12:30**

The stand will sell pastries and coffee.

There is also a drawing station for children

We will be happy to see you 🌷

Commune “Hey” (Shinshins)

**Sevens Rugby Tournament**

**The 47th Dudi Silbovich Memorial Tournament**

**Saturday - 27.5.23**

**starting at 5:00 p.m**

**At the rugby field in Kibbutz Yizrael**

**A huge happening for the whole family.**

**Huge bar**

**BBQ**

**Inflatables**



**Shavuot Events**

**Thursday, 25.5.23, the eve of Shavuot**

17:30 Farming: agricultural games and craft stalls - on the grass outside the moadon

The games will also continue during dinner.

• After the meal - "From our own Hands" cafe

18:30 Shavuot meal: the meal will be served at self-serve booths, seating inside the dining room and outside will be possible

• There will be no separate distribution for those who eat at home, please take home only from 19:30

**Friday, 26.5.23, Shavuot holiday**

9:00 - 12:00 - festive brunch

17:30 Shavuot ceremony - in the field in front of the new GADASH (as last year)

On arrival at the ceremony

\* Pedestrians and bicycles - from the old rugby gate, scooters and club cars, on the new road towards the Gadash - please keep the separation for the safety of all of us

\* Bring a bottle of water and a hat with you - it might be hot.

\* It is recommended to bring a blanket for sitting; Some of the seats are on straw bales, it is better to pad your seat.

\* The dining room will not open for lunch and dinner, food for Friday dinner will be distributed during Thursday

\* Do not smoke or light a fire in the ceremony area.

**Saturday, 27.5.23**

9:00-12:00 Saturday brunch - in the dining room

Happy holiday!

Shavuot team: Avishag Sharoni, Eviatar Assaf, Uri Gilad, Doron Kagan, Hadar Levi-Lavi, Hamutal Assaf, Yuval Agmon, Yotam Assaf, Yifat Segal, Navot Assaf

**English is Fun - with Rahel**

# **Leonardo da Vinci Was Jewish?**

## Italian historian Carlo Vecce set out to debunk rumors of da Vinci’s foreign origins, but a newly discovered document changed his mind.

BY

[MARC WEITZMANN…writing for “the Tablet” magazine](https://www.tabletmag.com/contributors/marc-weitzmann)

CHANCES ARE LEONARDO DA VINCI WAS JEWISH

Italian historian Carlo Vecce set out to debunk rumours of da Vinci’s foreign origins, but a newly discovered document changed his mind.

In all likelihood Leonardo was only half Italian. His mother, Caterina, was a Circassian Jew born somewhere in the Caucasus, abducted as a teenager and sold as a sex slave several times in Russia, Constantinople and Venice, before finally being freed in Florence at age 15.

This, at least, is the conclusion reached in the new book *Il sorriso di Caterina, la madre di Leonardo,* by the historian Carlo Vecce, one of the most distinguished specialists on Leonardo da Vinci.

The official version of da Vinci’s birth is that it was the fruit of a brief fling between the Florentine solicitor Piero da Vinci and a young peasant from Tuscany, called Caterina, of whom almost nothing was known. Yet there had long been a seemingly unfounded theory that Leonardo had foreign origins and that Caterina was an Arab slave.

Six years ago, professor Vecce decided to kill the rumour for good. “I simply found it impossible to believe that the mother of the greatest Italian genius would be a non-Italian slave,” he told me. “Now, not only do I believe it, but the most probable hypothesis, given what I found, is that Caterina was Jewish.”

Vecce was the right man for the job – he published an anthology of da Vinci’s writings and a biography, *Leonardo*, translated into several languages, and he collaborated on the exhibition of da Vinci’s drawings and manuscripts at the Louvre and Metropolitan Museum in 2003. He embarked on the research for his latest book during the reconstruction of da Vinci’s library, which is where he found the document that changed everything. Dated November 2, 1452, seven months after Leonardo’s birth, and signed by Piero do Vinci, in his professional capacity, it is an emancipation act regarding the daughter of a certain Jacob, originating from the Causasian mountains, and named Caterina.

According to the document, Catarina’s owner appears to have been the wife of rich merchant Donato di Filippo, who lived near the San Michele Visdomini church in Florence, and whose usual solicitor for business was Piero da Vinci. The date on the document was underlined several times, as if da Vinci’s hand was shaking as he proceeds to the liberation of the woman who just gave him a child.

Slavery was still current practice in 15thcentury Italy, though on a much smaller scale than in the Ottoman Empire. The city of Florence alone had at least 1,000 slaves – among them Russians, Abkhazes, Turks, Serbs, and, like Caterina, Circassians from the Caucus

WHO WAS THIS WOMAN WHO GAVE BIRTH TO ONE OF THE GREATEST GENIUSES OF THE RENAISSANCE?

……………….more next week