

The FORUM

A Quarterly Publication of the
AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR BASIC RESEARCH IN
ISRAEL (AFBRI)



11
SPRING 2000

c/o PDA, 25 W. 45th St., New York, NY 10136 ● Phone: (212) 840-1166 ● Fax: (212) 840-1514



The sixth night of Chanukah 1999 (5760) marked the fulfillment of a long delayed dream, the dedication of a fitting physical monument to Albert Einstein in Israel, the state he saw as "the embodiment of the re-awakening of the corporate spirit of the entire Jewish nation."

Einstein has deservedly come to symbolize the highest degree of human intelligence and creativity. His major scientific contributions to statistical physics and a quantum understanding of the photoelectric effect, for which he won the Nobel Prize, have been overshadowed by his revolutionary theories of relativity. His Special Theory of Relativity introduced the absolute constancy of the speed of light and boldly shrank or extended length, time and mass to match. It also implied the equivalence of mass and energy ($E=mc^2$), ushering in the nuclear age. His General Theory of Relativity showed how mass could stretch the fabric of space-time itself, serving as a theoretical framework for gravity.

Continued on centerfold (pages 4-5)

Israel Academy Dedicates

(Continued from cover)



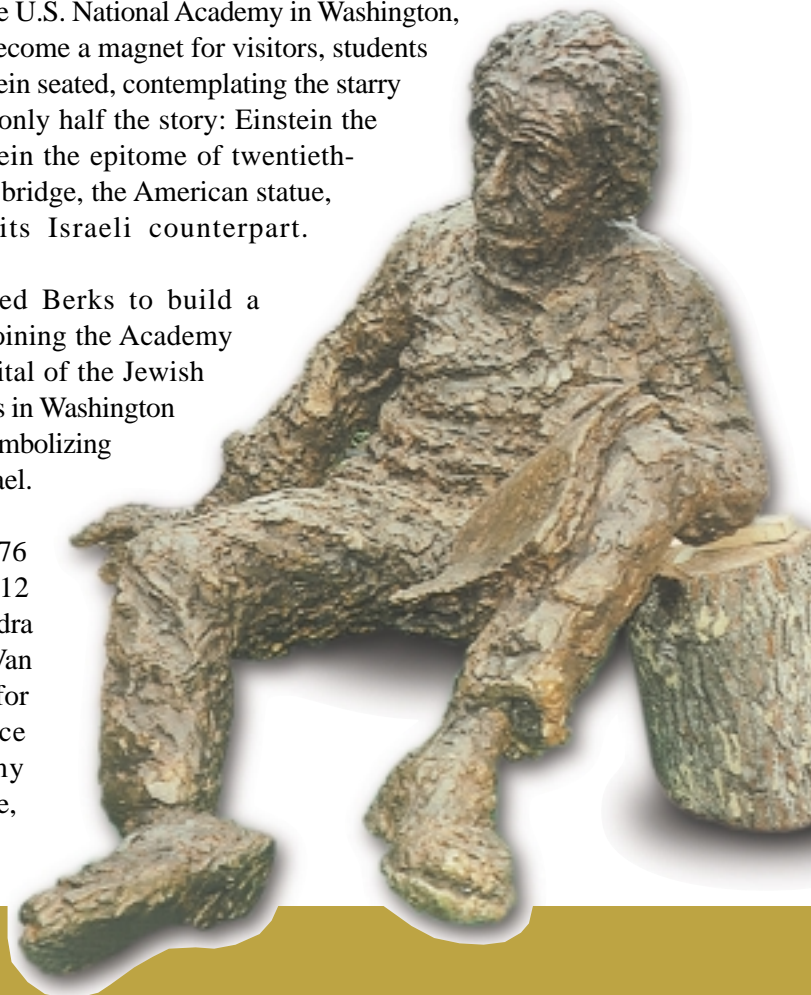
Ironically, although Einstein is universally recognized as a scientific giant and a humanist of great moral sensitivity, his lifelong emotional and intellectual attachment to Judaism, Zionism and Israel are not well known, neither in Israel nor abroad. In fact, Einstein viewed his intellectual strivings and passion for social justice as an inseparable part of his own, very personal, Jewish identity and heritage. He was an ardent Zionist and one of the founders of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The 50th Anniversary of the State of Israel (1998) seemed a particularly appropriate time for the Jewish people to honor Einstein and to preserve his legacy; and the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities agreed to undertake this task, with the generous support of Applied Materials, Inc., the world's largest supplier of manufacturing systems to the global semiconductor industry. The funds were donated in recognition of the vision and pioneering contributions to the Information Age of Dan Maydan, the company's founder.

In 1953 Albert Einstein sat in his Princeton study for a portrait bust by the noted American sculptor Robert Berks. Berk's continuing fascination with Einstein, as both man and symbol, culminated in his giant bronze monument for the U.S. National Academy in Washington, dedicated in April 1979. The monument has become a magnet for visitors, students and tourists alike. Yet, despite its beauty (Einstein seated, contemplating the starry universe at his feet), its location symbolizes only half the story: Einstein the scientist and American by choice, not Einstein the epitome of twentieth-century Jewish and Zionist ideals. Like half a bridge, the American statue, for almost twenty years, has awaited its Israeli counterpart.

In 1998 the Israel Academy commissioned Berks to build a corresponding monument in the gardens adjoining the Academy in Jerusalem, the historical and spiritual capital of the Jewish people. The U.S. National Academy of Sciences in Washington enthusiastically endorsed the plan as a way of symbolizing its long and close ties with its colleagues in Israel.

The monument itself required 1,580 kilos (3,476 pounds) of bronze and depicts a 3.6 meter (12 foot) tall Einstein seated on a semicircular exedra of white granite. The low-set buildings of the Van Leer Center of Jerusalem, the Israel Council for Higher Education (CHE), the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) and the Israel Academy unobtrusively surround the lightly wooded site, forming a perfect backdrop for the statue.

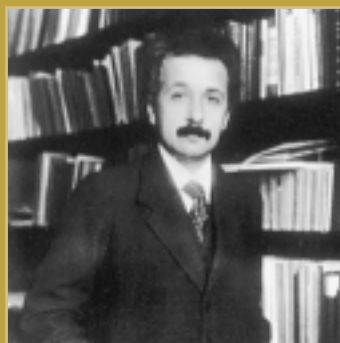


Einstein on Jews and Zionism



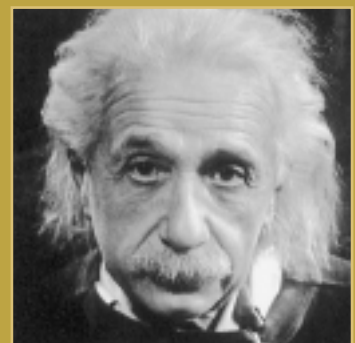
My relationship to the Jewish people has become my strongest human bond, ever since I became fully aware of our precarious situation among the nations of the world.

Statement to Abba Eban (1952)



There are no German Jews, there are no Russian Jews, there are no American Jews. Their only difference is their daily language. There are in fact only Jews.

Speech at the German-Jewish Club of New York (1935)



[Zionism is] nationalism whose aim is not power but dignity.

New York Times Magazine

(1944)

Einstein Memorial

In Einstein's left hand is a pad of paper bearing three of his most important scientific equations. At his feet lies the universe, represented by a star chart representing midnight, May 14, 1948, the date of the establishment of the State of Israel.

Chartered by law in 1961, the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities consists of seventy of Israel's most distinguished scientists and scholars, who, with the help of the Academy's staff and committees, serve as a national focal point for Israeli scholarship. The Academy's tasks include preserving and promoting Israeli intellectual excellence, advising the government on science-related matters, funding and publishing research of lasting merit, and maintaining active contact with scholarly counterparts abroad. The Academy's location, on spacious grounds adjacent to the official state residence of Israel's President appropriately symbolizes two of Einstein's deepest passions: science and Zionism.

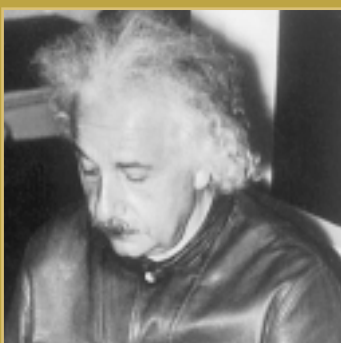
After four months of construction, much of it personally supervised by sculptor Berks, the memorial was ready. Its dedication was celebrated by an official ceremony at the site of the statue, attended by Minister Shimon Peres, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, members of the Israel Academy, the CHE and Applied Materials, the Maydan family, their colleagues and friends. The ceremony was followed by a gala reception at the Israel National Convention Center in Jerusalem.

In his remarks, Israel Academy President Prof. Jacob Ziv noted the Academy's official address at Einstein Square and its longstanding, prestigious annual Einstein Lecture series. In his view, "the Einstein Garden and Monument symbolize the Academy's efforts to pursue scientific excellence and to promote the public awareness of science. The memory of Einstein, the great scientist, humanist and Zionist, stands to provide inspiration for future generations of Israeli scientists."

As if to underscore his remarks, a special exhibit on "Einstein: The Man and the Myth" was set up at the Academy in cooperation with the Albert Einstein Archives, located at the Jewish National and University Library at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the exhibit has served as a magnet for activities to introduce a new generation of Israeli school children to Einstein's legacy. He would, no doubt, have been pleased.

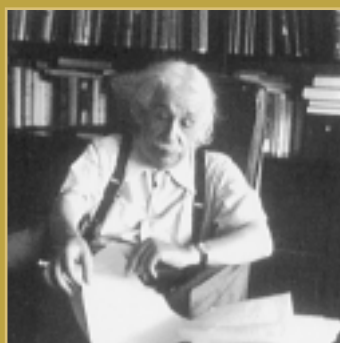


Einstein on Others and Vice Versa



The content of scientific theory itself offers no moral foundation for the personal conduct of life.

Forum 83
(1930)



Einstein explained his theory to me every day, and soon I was fully convinced that he understood it.

Chaim Weizmann
(1929)

