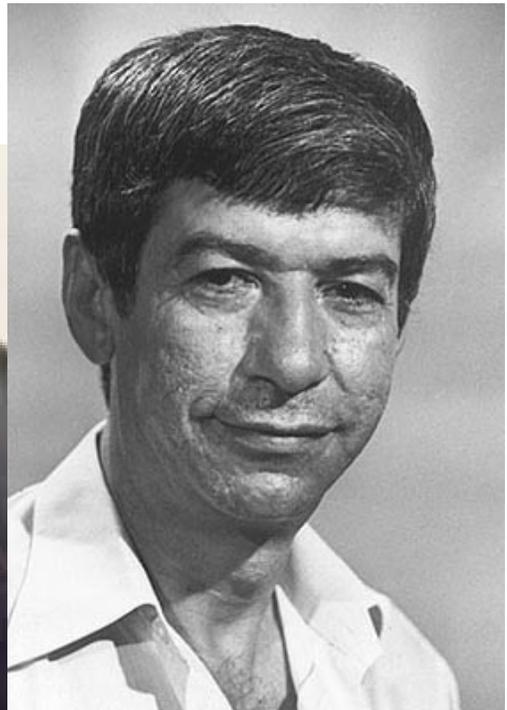


Rebbe For Everybody - Arabs Too

It was the custom of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to write annual general letters on the occasion of various holidays and milestones throughout the year. These letters were addressed to "all Jewish sons and daughters wherever they may be," and delivered an inspiring message pertaining to some aspect of the upcoming holiday. These letters were originally written in Yiddish and were translated into various languages and disseminated throughout the globe. Mr. Machamed Wated Former Knesset Member 1981 - 1988 Rabbi Aaron Dov Halperin Editor in Chief of Kfar Chabad Magazine



The Hebrew translations to these letters were written by renowned author and educator, Rabbi Tuvia Blau. Because he was based in Israel, and internet and fax were not yet in use, the Rebbe did not review or edit these translations. However, when the Hebrew magazine Kfar Chabad began to publish the letters, the Rebbe would review every issue and edit the letters.

Once, after the Rebbe returned the magazine with the edits, Rabbi Blau and the editor of Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Aaron Dov Halperin, noticed something unusual. In the original Yiddish letter, the Rebbe used the term "Yid," ordinarily translated as "Jew," or in Hebrew, Yehudi. But wherever Rabbi Blau had used the term Yehudi in his Hebrew translation, the Rebbe changed it to "adam," person.

Rabbi Halperin could not contain his curiosity and called the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner, to clarify the matter. Rabbi Groner had no explanation. "This is most unusual to me, too."

Several weeks later Rabbi Halperin had occasion to fly from Israel to New York. His flight had a stopover in Paris where he changed planes. During the first leg of his journey, until Paris, Rabbi Halperin was seated next to an Israeli-Arab Knesset member, Machamed Wated of the Labor party (Mapam).

Rabbi Halperin relates:

"I realized that Mr. Wated was a brilliant man with a profound intellect. The purpose of his trip was to meet with members of the PLO in New York. We exchanged views on various political matters, although naturally we disagreed strongly. However, he knew how to present his views in a cultured and fascinating way."

"My biggest surprise came when Wated said to me, 'I must admit that I am captivated by the personality of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Although I disagree with his political views, I strongly admire him as a person. I regularly read his public letters which are printed in the newspapers, and his philosophical views, as they are interpreted for day-to-day life, are restorative.'

"As I was digesting what Wated had just told me, he began to review for me the entire content of the Rebbe's most recent public letter! The very one which the Rebbe had us change the word "Jew" to "Person."

"By the way,' Mr. Wated told me, 'recently Labor party members had protested the inclusion of the Rebbe's letters in a Labor-affiliated newspaper, Al Hamishmar, and almost stopped printing them. I got up and argued that in spite of my fundamental disagreement with all his stances, it would be a shame for this reason to deny thousands of readers the profound philosophical message in these letters, which speaks even to an Arab like me. My words were convincing enough for them to continue the printing...'"

After Aaron Dov landed in New York, he went to the world headquarters of the Chabad movement, the Rebbe's synagogue in Crown Heights, Brooklyn (known by its address, 770). He went into the office of the Rebbe's secretariat and met one of them, Rabbi Binyamin Klein. He told Rabbi Klein about his experiences on the flight, and also shared the fact that the Rebbe had changed the word "Jew" to "person." They both agreed that probably the Rebbe foresaw that an intelligent non-Jew was being positively influenced by his letters, and decided to address them to "people" rather than "Jews."

Later that day, Rabbi Halperin composed a letter to the Rebbe about his in-air encounter with the Arab Knesset member. He gave the update to Rabbi Klein and asked him to give it to the Rebbe.

An hour later, Rabbi Klein found Rabbi Halperin and reported to him that the Rebbe had responded to his letter, without even reading it yet. "I drove the Rebbe from his house to 770. The Rebbe asked me, 'What's new? Did someone just arrive from Israel?' I told the Rebbe that you had just arrived, and told him the story of your encounter with the Arab Knesset member. I also said that you were curious about the changes to the letter." The Rebbe listened to the report with great satisfaction. At the end he smiled broadly and asked, "Did he [the Arab Knesset member] not realize that the letter was addressed to 'All Jewish sons and daughters'? That didn't bother him?"

Biography

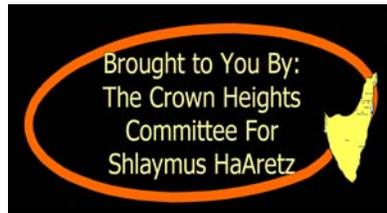
Mr. Muhammed Wated (Arabic: محمد وند, Hebrew: מוחמד ותד; 1 June 1937 – 24 September 1994) was an Israeli Arab politician who served as a member of the Knesset between 1981 and 1988.

Born in Jatt in the Land of Israel during the Mandate era, Mr. Wated was a member of the Israeli Communist Youth

and Hashomer Hatzair. He attended Tel Aviv University, where he took Asian and African Studies.

A member of Mapam, he edited the Arabic-language version of the party's newspaper, Al HaMishmar. In 1981 he was elected to the Knesset on the Alignment list (an alliance of Mapam and the Labor Party). He was re-elected in 1984, shortly after which Mapam left the Alignment. On 12 July 1988 he left Mapam to join Hadash,[1] due to disappointment with Mapam's policy towards the First Intifada. He lost his seat in the 1988 elections. After leaving politics, he managed and edited the Kul al-Arab newspaper, and later ran a public relations firm. Mr. Wated was killed in 1994 in a fatal traffic collision

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