

Education with the National Library of Israel

New Year postcard with a photograph of Emile Zola, 1901

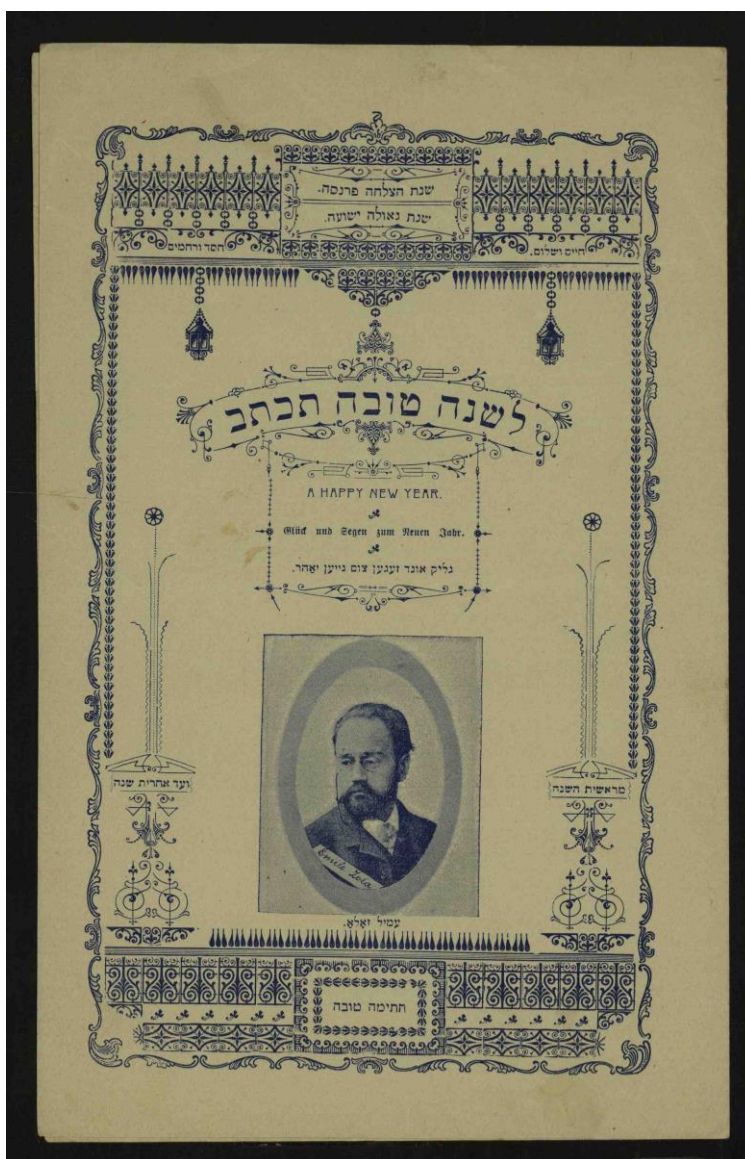
In the second half of the 19th century, Europe began using postcards as a means of communication, influenced by the success in the Christian world of sending illustrated greetings cards for Christmas and Easter, this custom gradually took hold in Jewish society as well, and was expressed by sending letters of greeting for the New Year. The photographs, illustrations and greetings in these letters combined national, political and social ideas – and as such they expressed the spirit of the times.

On the National Library's website you can read about the custom of letters of greeting

<http://tinyurl.com/ozkr2mw>

Have a look at the greetings card with the illustration of **Emile Zola**

<http://tinyurl.com/oagfgn9> at the centre, and answer the questions which follow:





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1. On the postcard there are a number of greetings and wishes for the New Year in Hebrew.

a. What are they?

b. In which other languages do greetings appear on the card?

c. Choose one of the other languages that you know and compare the greeting in Hebrew and the translation. What does the comparison show?

d. Why, do you think, are there greetings in these languages on the postcard?

e. Are most of the greetings on the postcard in Hebrew? What can you understand from this about the worldview of the illustrator?

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2. In the centre of the postcard is a picture of the French author Emile Zola. In 1898, at the climax of the Dreyfus affair, he wrote an open letter to the President of France with the title "I accuse". Zola argued Dreyfus' innocence, and cautioned against the miscarriage of justice that had been carried out in his trial. He then stood trial, was found guilty and forced to flee to England. In this link you can find more information about Emil Zola https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Zola

a. Why did the illustrator choose to display a picture of Zola in the middle of the letter of greeting in 1901?

b. Which values was the greeting illustrator looking to strengthen with this choice?





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3. How does this New Year postcard express the spirit of the time?

4. Who do you think would be the type of people to send this kind of letter of greeting to their acquaintances?

5. In your opinion, why is this source important?

6. What can you infer from this source about the work of the historian?

