

Efraim Halevy

Born: 1934, London, UK

Resides: Tel Aviv, Israel

Occupation: National Security and Diplomacy

Bar-Ilan University bestows an honorary doctorate on Efraim Halevy, for his lifelong dedication to Israel's security. As the ninth Mossad director he has worked to thwart threats to Israel and rescue Jews from hostile lands. His close connections with key world leaders have helped advance Israel's geopolitical interests in the international arena.

Efraim Halevy was raised in a religious Zionist family. His great grandfather was Rabbi Haim Berlin, whose younger brother, Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, is the University's namesake. A month before the birth of Israel, he made *aliyah*. While studying for his Master's degree in Law at Hebrew University, he headed the Religious Students Organization, and ultimately presided over the National Union of Students in Israel. After joining the Mossad in 1961, he rose through the ranks to become director in 1998.

A highlight of his life was his marriage to Hadassa and the birth of his two children and grandchildren: "Such events shape your family essence - your roots," he notes.

Professionally, he is precluded from detailing most of his activities. He did say that during his tenure with the Mossad, the organization faced the challenges of the

Iranian nuclear and worldwide terrorist threats. He cites two milestones in his career: His key role in advancing the effort to secure a peace treaty with Jordan, earning him a personal public acknowledgement from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and a distinguished award from Jordan's King Abdullah II. "The peace-signing ceremony bore historic importance for the People of Israel and its future. My heart was unable to contain the depths of my emotions during those moments."

The second milestone was the rescue operation of Ethiopian Jews through enemy Sudan in the 1980s. "It was an amazing feat, in which so many unnamed heroes and heroines risked their lives to bring Jews to Israel using unprecedented methods. It was a great privilege to command those legendary warriors."

While Ambassador to the European Union, Halevy succeeded in obtaining European approval for Israel's membership in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, at a time of high tension between Israel and the EU.

Based on his extensive experience Halevy believes that "it is possible to make peace with our most bitter enemies. This has now been proven."

Halevy identifies with Bar-Ilan University's unique orientation which links Jewish values with pluralism and tolerance: "In everyday life, Bar-Ilan proves that religious and secular Israelis can come together. It is an example of how the people of the State of Israel can coalesce, even if there is still a long way to go."

