

**PRESS RELEASE - For immediate release**

## **MyHeritage.com, Beit Hatfutsot family tree collaboration**

Tel Aviv/London, December 15, 2009: As the Jewish Festival of Lights is celebrated around the world, MyHeritage.com and Beit Hatfutsot (Museum of the Jewish People) have joined forces to grow the Museum's repository for Jewish family trees and preserve Jewish identity.

Under this collaboration, online family trees built on MyHeritage.com <http://www.myheritage.com/BH> or via its free software, Family Tree Builder <http://www.myheritage.com/BeitHatfutsot> - with the consent of the tree creators - will be transferred to the Museum for digital safekeeping.

MyHeritage.com is a genealogical social networking site with 35 million members and 420 million profiles worldwide. It currently holds some 9 million family trees. It operates in 36 languages, making it ideal for families to connect around the world, as it offers easy and fun tools to enable sharing of information, photos, documents and videos among far-flung relatives. Most importantly, privacy controls can be set according to the wishes of the tree creator.

For 30 years, Beit Hatfutsot has been collecting digital information about the Jewish people in many categories. The goal is preservation for the future of these materials, including family trees with millions of records.

Museum CEO Avinoam Armoni, a strong believer in genealogy, understands Jewish identity as well as the important relationships between Jewish people worldwide.

He believes that this partnership with MyHeritage.com will add millions of data elements to existing databases at the Museum.

"The immediate benefit of the new arrangement," said Armoni, "is to offer the public free software from MyHeritage.com to create family trees, with the option to share those trees with Beit Hatfutsot."

"MyHeritage.com – a site used all over the world – is the most popular genealogy Website in Israel and in much of the Jewish world, making it a natural partner for our projects," Armoni added.

For 14 years, the museum has also conducted the "My Family Story" international family tree competition for young people; over the years, some 200,000 students have participated. The family trees of participants will now be built on MyHeritage.com and become part of this database.

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“Let us build the global world family tree together,” said Armoni. As the museum is a national institute, data entrusted to it, he says, will have a permanent home forever. “I want Beit Hatfutsot to be the *boidum* (storeroom) of the Jewish people. Family history shouldn’t fade away in someone’s attic,” he said, “Share it and preserve it for future generations.”

Armoni is especially interested in this collaboration because he sees the museum’s future in technology. As a museum without artifacts, it serves as a platform for education and discussion. Its databases, including the unique genealogy database, are the jewels in its crown. Armoni calls them “the Mona Lisa of the museum.”

“We are excited to join forces with Beit Hatfutsot”, said Gilad Japhet, MyHeritage.com’s founder and CEO, himself an avid genealogist. “We see it as a privilege to cooperate with Beit Hatfutsot and help it collect family trees from people who wish to participate, and preserve them for eternity. In doing so, we not only take part in a project of significance on a historical scale, but we also fulfill our own goal of proliferating family history, which is an enriching and bonding human experience.”

### About MyHeritage.com:

MyHeritage was founded in 2003 by a team of people who combine a passion for family history with the development of innovative technology. It is now one of the world’s leading online networks for families, and the second largest family history website. MyHeritage is available in 36 languages and home to more than 35 million family members and 420 million profiles. The company is based in Bnei Atarot, near Tel Aviv, Israel. For more information, visit [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com).

### About Beit Hatfutsot:

Beit Hatfutsot (The Museum of the Jewish People) was founded in 1978, thanks to the vision of then-World Jewish Congress president Dr. Nahum Goldmann. Located on the Tel Aviv University campus, the museum presents thousands of years of a flourishing, multifaceted culture, bringing to life the unity that underlies the diversity of Jewish civilization. The Jewish people’s story is told through permanent and temporary exhibits, educational activities, and rich digital database resources (Jewish genealogy, family names, communities, photographs, films, and Jewish music). For more information, visit [www.bh.org.il](http://www.bh.org.il).

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