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In an outburst of Zionist enthusiasm, David Ben-Gurion, the first premier of Israel, once called **Henrietta Szold** of Lombard Street "the greatest Jewish woman in 400 years."

Fifty years after her death, the Jewish Historical Society of Maryland brilliantly brings her to life with an exhibition that opens tomorrow — "Daughter of Zion: **Henrietta Szold** and American Jewish Womanhood."

"This is the most complicated exhibit we've ever done," says Barry Kessler, assistant director of the society and curator of the exhibit.

He's assembled more than 100 objects and 200 visual images tracing **Henrietta Szold's** life from Baltimore, where she was born in 1860, to Jerusalem, where she died in 1945.

And for the first time, a Jewish Historical Society exhibit will have audio-visual production, one a slide show based on Miss Szold's journal of her first visit to Palestine in 1910. She writes of her vivid impressions of the old yishuv, the earliest Zionist pioneers.

**Henrietta Szold**, 84 when she died, was a Zionist almost all her life, a proponent of a Jewish homeland in Palestine almost before Zionism existed.

The exhibit contains a charming olive wood Purim scroll, a souvenir which Miss Szold acquired when she visited Palestine with her mother, Sophie, in 1909. The scroll tells the story of Esther "a Jewish queen in Ancient Persia who saved her people through bold action."

Esther's Hebrew name was Hadassah, which means myrtle tree, and the women's Zionist organization named for her was founded by Miss Szold and 37 other women on the Feast of Purim holiday in 1912.

"**Henrietta Szold** was very interested in the Purim story of a woman who was someone who had power in her own right," Mr. Kessler says.

**Henrietta Szold** was the first woman student at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. She applied the year after her father, Rabbi Benjamin Szold, died in 1902. She would take rabbinical training, but she had to assure the seminary's authorities that she was "not an aspirant to rabbinical honors." Women rabbis were unheard of in 1903.

During World War II, Miss Szold led the Youth Aliyah movement that saved thousands of young Jews from the Nazi Holocaust. She even went into Hitler's Germany herself in 1937 to coordinate the rescue effort. She was 77 years old, and fearless and determined as ever.

Two of the most touching pictures in the exhibit show Miss Szold dancing with Aliyah youth saved from Hitler and then an Aliyah boy reading the kaddish, the mourner's prayer, at her grave on the first anniversary of her death.

The objects from Miss Szold's Baltimore roots are like the artifacts from a lost civilization.

Benjamin Szold, a revered and respected rabbi, brought his 18-year-old bride Sophie from Hungary to their new

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home at 702 West Lombard St., where they lived when Henrietta, their first daughter, was born.

Rabbi Szold had been summoned to America to lead Oheb Shalom, then a progressive Conservative congregation whose synagogue was on South Hanover Street in what had once been the Fifth Presbyterian Church.

When Henrietta was still a girl, the family moved to 206 Eutaw St., where she lived with her family as her father's assistant, student and intellectual heir — almost a "surrogate son," in Mr. Kessler's words — until he died in 1902. And she was 42.

"I find my mind dwelling on the old peaceful, harmonious days on Lombard Street," she wrote her sister, Bertha, in a 1905 letter quoted in the exhibit.

A porcelain art nouveau Royal Copenhagen belt buckle is perhaps the most poignant object in the exhibit. For Miss Szold, the lovely ornament became the symbol of unrequited love.

At the Jewish Theological Seminary, she had fallen in love with Louis Ginzberg, one of the great scholars there. She was then in her late 40s and he was 13 years younger.

She translated his great work "The Legend of the Jews," still the classic reference work, and even his lecture notes for his seminary course. She transcribed them in her small, clear hand into a thick notebook.

"You can't really put love in an exhibit," Mr. Kessler says. "But you can put in something somebody did for love."

The translation of Louis Ginzberg's lecture notes from German to English was clearly a work of love for her.

"They all say that he exploited me intellectually — as I myself say, I was his intellectual mistress," she wrote in her diary in 1908.

And then in November, she wrote: "It is four weeks since my only real happiness in life was killed by a single word."

Louis Ginzberg had gone to Berlin and returned with a lovely young fiancée. He brought Miss Szold the porcelain belt buckle.

She never married. She devoted her life to the Zionist cause. And this woman who never had children became known as "the Mother of the Yishuv."