

Israel-British project makes Hebrew texts available online

3 August 2015, by Miriam Berger

One of the oldest surviving Hebrew manuscripts, a bible dating back more than 1,000 years, will soon be available online in a joint project with The British Library in London, the National Library of Israel said Monday.

Aviad Stollman, the library's chief of collections, said the Gaster Bible would go online as part of a project to digitize all of the 3,200 rare Hebrew [manuscripts](#) at The British Library.

The National Library of Israel has partnered with the British Library in London to digitize its entire Hebrew manuscript collection, considered one of the largest and most significant in the world.

Most of the manuscripts date back to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance era and include rare texts of Hebrew literature, prayer books, bibles, Talmud or biblical commentary, as well as texts on the Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism.

The project is part of the Israeli library's million-dollar global initiative to digitize and disseminate online tens of thousands of rare Hebrew manuscripts currently dispersed between hundreds of collections worldwide. The library has also partnered with libraries in other countries with significant Hebrew manuscript collections, such as Germany and Russia.

"The main textual treasures of the Jewish people are not found in Israel," said Stollman. "They are scattered all over the world."

But thanks to this and similar projects, "all the known textual treasures of the Jewish people will be available at your fingertips," he added.

The project adds to one already underway, funded by the Polonsky Foundation, which is digitalizing 1,250 Hebrew manuscripts from The British Library collection.

The digitized and catalogued images from both projects will be available online within a few years through the British Library's website and the National Library of Israel's International Digital Library of Hebrew manuscripts.

"Researchers, students and other curious members of the public will be able to study these important manuscripts and enjoy their rich content," said Oren Weinberg, the director of the National Library of Israel.

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