A Journey in Israel
Sources & Resources

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Authentic ISRAEL
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EDUCATIONAL TOURS IN ISRAEL
Welcome to Israel! It is our honor to host you on your journey in the Land of Milk and Honey. Israel is a country that can be experienced on many levels. As the birthplace of the Jewish People, Israel is an ancient land – full of archeological stones with colorful stories to tell. Israel is the home of a modern Jewish State – with its multiethnic society, unique democratic system, and vibrant cultural life. At the meeting point of three continents, Israel hosts a breathtaking landscape with alpine meadows, rocky hills, desert canyons, sandy beaches and tropical seas – all compressed within a relatively tiny strip of land. Finally, Israel represents the soul of the Jewish religion – the object of millennia of prayer and the spiritual link connecting all Jewish people to each other. The Torah refers to Israel as the “Promised Land”. This phrase can be interpreted literally, and it can also be understood as a Land of Promise -- a beacon on the winding journey of the Jewish People towards a more perfect world. As you embark on your travels in the Land of Israel, it is our hope that you will uncover your own unique connections and make your own contributions towards this vision of a Promised Land.

About Us. Authentic Israel organizes travel experiences in Israel for the Jewish world. Our projects include Taglit-Birthright Israel’s Israel Outdoors for ages 18-26 (www.israeloutdoors.com), MASA Israel Pathways enrichment experiences for ages 18-30 (www.israelpathways.com), BBYO Passport for high-school teens (www.passport2theworld.org), and many other experiences for adults, families, and grandparents (www.authenticisrael.com). Finally, we partner with synagogues, schools, and other organizations to create custom experiences in Israel on the community level.
THE STORY OF JERUSALEM

For three thousand years, Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish hope and longing. No other city has played such a dominant role in the history, culture, religion and consciousness of a people as has Jerusalem in the life of Jewry and Judaism. Throughout centuries of exile, Jerusalem remained alive in the hearts of Jews everywhere as the focal point of Jewish history, the symbol of ancient glory, spiritual fulfillment and modern renewal. This heart and soul of the Jewish people engenders the thought that if you want one simple word to symbolize all of Jewish history, that word would be ‘Jerusalem.’ - Teddy Kollek (former Mayor of Jerusalem)

THE SHECHEYANU BLESSING IN JERUSALEM

The Shehechiyanu blessing thanks God for sustaining our lives so we could experience this moment of joy. The Shehechiyanu blessing reminds us that life is a gift from God. It reminds us to experience the joy in this moment. And it reminds us to cherish our blessings. For many in the group, this will be the first time they have caught a glimpse of Jerusalem, something that for thousands of years our ancestors could only have thought about in their wildest dreams. This would be a highly appropriate event in our lives for which to make this blessing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEBREW</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>TRANSLITERATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בָּרוּ עֲלֵה בַּעֲלַהּ</td>
<td>Blessed are You, Lord</td>
<td>Baruch atah Adonai</td>
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<tr>
<td>אַתָּה הַעֹלָם אַלֶּה יִהְנֶה מֶלֶךְ הָאָוֶל</td>
<td>our God, King of the world,</td>
<td>Eloheinu Melech ha’o’lam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>שֵהֵחְיָנֻ וְקִיְימָנֻ</td>
<td>Who has kept us in life, sustained us,</td>
<td>sheh’heh’cheh’ya’nu veh’ki’yeh’ma’nu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הִגִּיעָנֻ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה</td>
<td>and brought us to this moment.</td>
<td>veh’he’g’a’nu laz’man ha’zeh</td>
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PERSPECTIVES ON THE KOTEL

2000 years ago, during the times of the Temple, Jews from around the Land of Israel would make pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times each year. During the course of nearly two millennia of exile, Jews would still travel to Jerusalem at great expense and danger – just to have the chance to pray at the Wall. There, they would pour their hearts out to God, beseeching him for Jewish redemption. They watered the Wall with their tears and melted the stones with their kisses.

SUGGESTED READINGS AT THE KOTEL

Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitshak: What is the meaning of what is written [in Scripture], “The Holy One is in your midst and I will not come into the city (Hosea 11:9).” [Surely it cannot be that] because the Holy One is in the midst of you I shall not come into the city! He said to him: Thus said Rabbi Yohanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, said, ‘I will not enter Jerusalem above until I can enter the Jerusalem below.’ Is there
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then a Jerusalem above? Yes, for it is written, "Jerusalem, you are built as a city that is compact together. (Psalm 122:3)" - Talmud Bavli Taanit 5a

The Kotel – moss and sadness
The Kotel – lead and blood.
There are people with hearts of stone,
There are stones with human hearts. - Yossi Gamzu

This wall has heard many prayers
This wall has seen the fall of many other walls
This wall has felt the touch of mourning women
This wall has felt petitions lodged between its stones.
This wall saw Rabbi Yehuda Halevi trampled before it
This wall has seen Caesars rise and fall
But this wall had never seen paratroopers cry.
This wall saw them tired and wrung out
This wall saw them wounded, mutilated
Running to it with excitement, cries and silence.
And creeping as torn creatures in the alleys of the Old City
And they are covered with dust and with parched lips
They whisper, "If I forget thee, if I forget thee Jerusalem
They are swift as eagles and strong as lions
And their tanks - the fiery chariot of Elijah the Prophet
They pass by with noise
They pass by a stream
They remember the 2,000 awful years
In which we had not even a wall to place our tears before
And here they stand before it and breathe in dust
Here they look at it with sweet pain
And tears run down and they look at one another perplexed
How does it happen that paratroopers cry?
How does it happen that they touch this wall with great emotion?
How does it happen that their weeping changes to song?
Perhaps because these boys of 19, born at the same time as the State, carry on 2000 years on their shoulders.
The Paratroopers Cry, by Hayim Hefer

MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT JERUSALEM

It is important to understand that we are not trying to "break" or "demolish" the Jerusalem legends and their beauty. On the contrary, we want to show how traditions form as well as their role in the customs and beliefs of the people throughout the ages.

- Jerusalem was "born" as a Jewish capital some 3000 years ago, with its conquest by King David (1004 B.C.E.). Known until then as "Yevus," Jerusalem was a Canaanite city. Located just south of today's Dome of the Rock, its location was determined by the spring--on its eastern slope--known as the "Shiloach." Before then, the center of Jewish life was located in a number of other Biblical-era cities in the Land of Israel.
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- The story of how King David chose Jerusalem as the capital exemplifies a logic pattern used by different peoples throughout history, even when thousands of years come between them. King David chose Jerusalem since it was a neutral city which belonged to none of the twelve tribes of Israel, thus keeping all of them faithful to it. The same reasoning worked towards the end of the 18th century, when the newly-born United States of America transferred its capital from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. The capital of Australia, Canberra, was also chosen for its neutral role.

- During its history, Jerusalem was conquered more than 100 times, and its walls were destroyed and rebuilt over 50 times. The current walls which surround the Old City are "only" about 460 years old; they were built by the Ottoman Sultan Suliman from 1538 until 1541.

- What is now referred to as Mount Zion is not Mount Zion. Pilgrims from the Middle Ages mistook the location of Mount Zion as being near the modern day Armenian Quarter. It is actually believed to be where the “City of David” site is today.

- What is known as King David's tomb by some...is not King David's tomb. No one knows where it is, although many Christian visitors continue to refer to the place as such.

- The Tower of David is not a tower. It's a minaret. It also has nothing to do with David.

- The Dome of the Rock, also known as the "mosque of Omar," is not a mosque and has nothing to do with Omar. It's also not the holiest site in Jerusalem for Muslims. The Al Aqsa mosque (just to the south of the Dome of the Rock) is the holiest site for Muslims in Jerusalem and the 3rd holiest site for Muslims in the world.

- The Western Wall has no physical connection to the Second Temple itself. It’s an outer retaining wall that supported the raised foundation on top of which the Temple stood.

- Two temples existed during our history, both built on top of Mt. Moriah. The First Temple was built by King Solomon in 965 B.C.E. and functioned as the center for Jewish life until its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. The Second Temple knew a few stages. It was built in 516 B.C.E. by the Jews who came back from Babylon. It was then renovated by King Herod in 19 B.C.E. to become one of the most spectacular buildings in the world at that time. A third Temple was also in a building process, during the 4th century. It was never completed.

The first neighborhood built outside the walls of the Old City was Mishkenot Sha'ananim in 1860 by a wealthy British Jew named Moses Montefiore. It was intended to give people relief from the overcrowded conditions in the Jewish quarter. The windmill there was originally built to serve the milling needs of the residents of Montefiore's new developments, but it was never operational because of the lack of wind where it was situated.

**JERUSALEM IN THE EYES OF OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS**

*Jerusalem as a city of three monotheistic religions: The ways in which Jerusalem became holy for the Christians and the Muslims as well are fascinating. We will not go into details here, but we will try to give you some background as to the main eras which made Jerusalem so important to both of them:*

**Christianity:** Jesus started to spread his ideas towards the end of the 1st century B.C.E. and died after the beginning of the Common Era (the calendar we use today, which is known as the "Gregorian Calendar," was
invented some 400 years later). Since he died and was buried in Jerusalem, the city became of extreme religious importance to his followers. The main Christian site in Jerusalem is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which hosts his tomb. The church was built in 325 C.E. by the Byzantine emperor Constantine the First and has been renovated a few times since. It is the main station of the 14 stations of the Via Dolorosa ("the path of agony"), which follows Jesus’ footsteps towards his death.

The second time Christianity becomes a potent factor in Jerusalem is during the time of the Crusaders, which started in 1099 C.E. and ended in 1244 C.E. (in Jerusalem). The Christians built their "Kingdom of Jerusalem" and spread all over the country, living here for 200 years. Throughout your tour of Israel, you will see many of the sites they have left behind them after losing the land to Salahadin (aka - Salaadin) and his Muslims army.

Islam: The Muslims came to being in 632 C.E. through Mohammed, and they started in the area known today as Saudi Arabia (then known as "Hedjaz"). According to the Muslims, Mohammed came to Jerusalem and after a meeting with an angel went up to Heaven from the rock on top of Mt. Moriyah, where the Dome of the Rock is now situated. The Muslims governed Jerusalem from 638 C.E. until 1099 (when the Crusaders came along), and then again from 1244 until 1917 (World War I).

“YERUSHALAYIM SHEL ZAHAV” - BY NAOMI SHEMER

| The mountain air is clear as water     | Avir harim zalul kayayin     |
| The scent of pines around             | Ve-rei’ah oranim             |
| Is carried on the breeze of twilight, | Nissa be-ru’ah ha’arbayim    |
| And tinkling bells resound.           | Im kol pa’amonim             |
| The trees and stones there softly slumber, | U-ve-tardemat ilan va-even   |
| A dream enfolds them all.             | Shvuyah ba-halomah           |
| So solitary lies the city,             | Ha-ir ash er badad yoshevet  |
| And at its heart -- a wall.            | U-ve-libbah homah            |
| Chorus:                               | Yerushalayim shel zahav      |
| Oh, Jerusalem of gold,                 | Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or  |
| and of light and of bronze,            | Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh      |
| I am the lute for all your songs.      | Ani kinnor.                  |
| How the cisterns have dried           | Eikhah yavshu borot ha-mayim |
| The market-place is empty             | Kikkar ha-shuk reikah        |
| And no one frequents the Temple Mount  | Ve-ein poked et Har ha-Bayit |
| In the Old City.                      | Ba-ir ha-attikah             |
| And in the caves in the mountain      | U-va-me’arot ash er ba-selah |
| Winds are howling                     | Meyallelot ruhot             |
| And no one descends to the Dead Sea   | Ve-ein yored el Yam ha-Melah |
| By way of Jericho.                    | Be-derekh Yeriho             |
| Oh, Jerusalem of gold,                 | Yerushalayim shel zahav      |
| and of light and of bronze,            | Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or  |
| I am the lute for all your songs.      | Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh      |
| But as I sing to you, my city,         | Ani kinnor.                  |
| And you with crowns adorn,             | Akh be-vo’i ha-yom la-shir lakh |
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| I am the least of all your children,                  | Ve-lakh likshor ketarim               |
| Of all the poets born.                               | Katonti mi-ze’ir bana’ikh             |
| Your name will scorch my lips for ever,              | U-me-aharon ha-meshorerim             |
| Like a seraph's kiss, I'm told,                      | Ki shemekh zorev et ha-sefatayim      |
| If I forget thee, golden city,                       | Ke-neshikut saraf                     |
| which is all gold.                                   | Im eshkakhekh Yerushalayim             |
| Oh, Jerusalem of gold,                               | Asher kullah zahav                     |
| and of light and of bronze,                          | Yerushalayim shel zahav                |
| I am the lute for all your songs.                    | Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or           |
| We have returned to the cisterns                     | Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh               |
| To the market and to the market-place                | Ani kinnor.                           |
| A ram’s horn (shofar) calls out (i.e. is being heard | Hazarnu el borot ha-mayim             |
| on the Temple Mount                                  | La-shuk ve-la-kikkar                  |
| In the Old City.                                     | Shofar kore be-Har ha-Bayit           |
| And in the caves in the mountain                     | Ba-ir ha-attikah                      |
| Thousands of suns shine -                            | U-va-me’arot asher ba-selah           |
| We will once again descend to the Dead Sea           | Alfey shemashot zorhot                |
| By way of Jericho!                                   | Nashuv nered el Yam ha-Melah          |
|                                                      | Be-derekh Yeriho                      |

Yerushalayim shel zahav
Ve-shel nehoshet ve-shel or
Ha-lo le-khol shirayikh
Ani kinnor.

THE LONGEST EXILE

A HISTORICAL TIMELINE – THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN ISRAEL

63 BCE: Pompey conquers the Land of Israel and Romans take control.

37-4 BCE: Reign of King Herod
The half Roman and half Jewish “king” (appointed by Rome) expands and renovates the Temple using 10,000 workers and 1,000 kohanim (Jewish priests)

6-66 CE: Rule of Roman procurators (governors)
Period of heavy taxation and Roman persecution. The Jewish nation divided into sects, each with a different approach to Roman authority and culture:

- **Saducees**: Accepted Roman rule as well as many aspects of the culture like the gymnasium and bathhouse.
- **Pharisees**: Accepted Roman rule (only because they believed that rebelling was futile) but not Roman culture.
- **Zealots**: Reject Roman rule and culture, in favor of militant opposition.
Essenes: Reject Roman culture, live an ascetic life in the desert.

66-70 CE: Jews revolt against the Romans in what is called the “Great Revolt”
On the 9th of Av in 70 CE, the Temple is destroyed and pillaged. In total, almost one million Jews are killed or sold into slavery

132 CE: Emperor Hadrian rebuilds Jerusalem as a Roman city dedicated to Jupiter and names it “Aelia Capitolina.”
Under the leadership of Shimon bar Kochba, the Jews revolt again and are victorious at first, capturing many Roman strongholds, including Jerusalem. Hadrian sends in legion after legion to fight the Jewish rebels.

135 CE: Roman forces prevail over the 2nd revolt.
The Romans recapture strongholds from the Jews and the revolt formally ends with the fall of Beitar (also on the 9th of Av) – Bar Kochba’s headquarters and the seat of the Sanhedrin (Jewish High Court).

- Jerusalem is made into a Roman pagan city.
- Jews were forbidden to live in or enter into Jerusalem, except on the 9th of Av.
- Judea is renamed Syria Palestina, after the ancient enemies of the Israelites.
- Hadrian orders anti-religious decrees against the Jews banning Shabbat observance, circumcision, Torah study, meetings in synagogues, eating matzah on Pesach, wearing tefillin, affixing a mezuzah and other ritual practices. Many Jews assimilated as a result while other, like Rabbi Akiva, continued living a Jewish lifestyle at the risk of being killed.

The long exile of the Jewish People begins here – an exile which did not end in full until the advent of the Aliyah Movement in the 19th Century and the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel in 1948!

THE KABBALAH MOVEMENT AND TSFAT
During the period of the Exile, Jews continued to inhabit the historical Land of Israel in relatively small numbers. Their presence was mostly concentrated in a few cities – such as Tsfat (aka - Safed). Despite the constraints, Jewish thinkers during the Exile made many important contributions – in particular the development of Kabalistic thought centered in the Tsfat.

What is Kabbalah? Well, in a nutshell...
Kabbalah (Hebrew = "receiving") is a discipline and school of thought concerned with the mystical aspect of Rabbinic Judaism. It is a set of teachings meant to explain the relationship between an eternal and mysterious Creator and the mortal and finite universe (His creation). Kabbalah seeks to define the nature of the universe and the human being, the nature and purpose of existence. Kabbalah originally developed entirely within the realm of Jewish thought and constantly uses classical Jewish sources to explain and demonstrate its teachings.

Creation of the World According to the Kabbalah
- At the beginning there was nothing but G-d. G-d was everywhere. There was nothing else. Nothing.
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- There then arose the “desire” by G-d to create something, a world, a creation. But there was no room for anything else, because G-d was everywhere. So, in order to make room for this new creation, G-d contracted and made empty space in which Creation could occur. This process was called tzimtzum.

- Divine “light” then flowed into this empty space through ten vessels called sefirot (pictured to the right). And then something went cosmically wrong. The light was too intense for these vessels and the lower seven vessels exploded, shattered, and fell.

- As a result of this shattering, a division was created between upper worlds and lower worlds. With this separation came the possibility of evil in the world. This evil feeds off the fallen sparks of holiness from the original shattering of the vessels.

So now what do we do?
According to Kabbalah, everything happens for a reason. Nothing is random or by chance, including the first “woops!” of the universe. The shattering of the vessels had to take place in order to allow for evil into the world in order to allow human beings to have the opportunity to choose good over evil. This choosing of good over evil elevates those fallen sparks of holiness from the beginning of creation and thus brings redemption to the world. In the language of Kabbalah, this is called tikkun olam. It involves not only doing good deeds but mitzvot in general. The teachers of the Kabbalah taught that when a Jew is involved in any type of Jewish ritual activity, whether that be saying a blessing over food, giving tzedakah or putting up a mezuzah on one’s home, he/she is involved directly with the fixing of all of creation. Under this Kabbalistic view, ethical behavior and the performance of mitzvot take on a new cosmic significance.

THE RETURN TO ZION

Golde! Golde, darling!
I had to see you before I left, because I have such news for you.
Remember, Golde, yesterday I told you I didn’t know where to go, what to do with these old bones.
Now I know. You want to hear? I’ll tell you.
All my life, I’ve dreamed of going to one place.
Guess where? Nah, you’ll never guess.
Every year at Passover, what do we say?
Next year in Jerusalem, next year in the Holy Land.
You’re going to the Holy Land?
You guessed!
Goodbye, Yente.
Be well, and go in peace.
And so, goodbye, Golde.
Sometime, maybe we’ll meet on a happier occasion.
Meanwhile, we suffer.
Oh-ho-ho, we suffer.
Excerpted from “Fiddler on the Roof”
THE FIRST ALIYAH MOVEMENT

Why were Golde and Yente leaving their homes? Like most Jews, Golde was headed for America, the land of freedom and opportunity. What motivated Yente to go to Palestine, an undeveloped land where only through hardship did people survive?

This scene from “Fiddler on the Roof” is a glimpse of the beginning of the Zionist movement and the slow, but steady return of Jews to their ancient homeland in the land of Israel. This is the First Aliyah. Sparked by pogroms and increased anti-Semitism, Jews in Russia emigrated in mass between 1880 and 1920. The vast majority rolled onto the shores of America in search of a new life. At the same time, a very small group of Jews decided that it was time to leave the exile behind and go back home to the land of Israel.

THE SECOND ALIYAH AND THE BRITISH MANDATE ERA

- 1917: British forces defeat the Ottoman Empire in 1917 at the conclusion of World War I and initiates a period of control in the Middle East. The British Government supports establishment of Jewish home in Palestine through the issuance of the “Balfour Declaration”.

- 1922: League of Nations approves British Mandate for Palestine, under which the British government would oversee the process of creating a Jewish sovereign state in Palestine.

- Mid 1930’s: Hundreds of thousands of Jews flee Nazi Germany and come to Palestine.

- 1936-1939: Arabs launch a large revolt against the Jews as a protest against increased Jewish immigration.

- 1939: British government releases the McDonald White Papers, in which it continues the policy of limited Jewish immigration to Palestine but now even more extremely to just 75,000 over the next five years. This takes place just months before WWII breaks out at a time when millions of Jews in Europe were desperately looking for a place of refuge as Hitler’s plan for a Final Solution became clear.

- 1945-1948: Survivors of the Holocaust intensify their efforts to immigrate looking for a new home.

From 1934 to 1948, approximately 100,000 Jews attempted to enter Palestine illegally as a result of the tragedy in Europe. There were 142 voyages using 120 ships. Over half of the Jews were stopped by the British and put into detention camps in Cyprus, Mauritius, as well as Atlit – which often reminded Jews of the concentration camps they fled in Europe. Over 1,600 Jews drowned at sea.

LEADERS AND THINKERS OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

#1 – Theodor Herzl: Founder of Modern Zionism / 1860-1904

Born in Budapest, Hungary, on May 2, 1860, Herzl was educated in the spirit of the German-Jewish “Enlightenment.” In 1891 he became Paris correspondent for the New Free Press (Vienna), the influential liberal newspaper of the time. Herzl was in Paris to witness the rise of anti-Semitism which resulted from the court martial of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer, who was divested of his rank in a humiliating public ceremony in
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January 1895, as a mob shouted “Death to the Jews.” After considering a number of possibilities, Herzl became convinced that the only solution to the Jewish problem was the mass exodus of Jews from their places of residence. Originally he wrote that it didn't matter where Jews went. He eventually realized that a national home in Palestine was the answer.

He published a pamphlet, The Jewish State in 1896. Although others had suggested solutions to anti-Semitism, Herzl was the first to call for immediate political action. Jewish reaction to his plan was mixed. Many Jews rejected it as too extreme, although there were those who responded with enthusiasm and asked him to head what was to become the Zionist movement. He succeeded in convening the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, August 29-31, 1897. The congress adopted the Basle Program and established the World Zionist Organization to help create the economic foundation for the proposed Jewish state. Herzl was elected president of the organization and chaired the first six Zionist congresses. He spent much of his time in his remaining years meeting with world leaders, both Jewish and non-Jewish, trying to enlist financial and political support for his dream of a Jewish state. He died in 1904 before his dream could become reality.

#2 – Eliezer Ben Yehuda: Father of Modern Hebrew / 1858-1922

Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jewish people was once known as “loyshen kodesh” or the Holy tongue. Hebrew was used solely for prayer, and not as a spoken language. With the birth of Zionism, came the dream to revive Hebrew and modernize it so that it may become the international spoken language of the Jewish people.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was the man who modernized the Hebrew language. He was born in Lithuania and studied Hebrew as the language of the bible and prayer. He believed in the right of the Jewish people to have their own homeland and speak their own language. When he settled in Jerusalem in 1888, his dream of reviving the Hebrew language began. His three methods of achieving success with Hebrew as a spoken language was through “Hebrew in the Home”, “Hebrew in the School”, and “Words, words, words”. Ben Yehuda noticed that although many people in Palestine tried to fluently converse in Hebrew, the language wasn’t modern enough to make it accessible for the modern tongue. He set to work creating new words and sorting Hebrew into ‘families’ (binyanim) and roots. Ben-Yehuda described with great enthusiasm his first conversations in Hebrew when he and his wife disembarked from the boat in Jaffa, and he talked with a Jewish money-changer, a Jewish innkeeper, and a Jewish wagoneer, all in Hebrew. Here he had encountered simple people who could speak Hebrew, perhaps with mistakes, but still more or less naturally and freely. With his son being the first native Hebrew speaker, Ben-Yehuda recognized that “if a language which has stopped being spoken, with nothing remaining of it save what remains of our language – (if there is such a language) can return and be the spoken tongue of an individual for all necessities of his life, there is no room for doubt that it can become the spoken language of a community.” (Introduction, Eliezer Ben Yehuda Hebrew dictionary)

#3 – David Ben Gurion: First Prime Minister of Israel / 1886-1973

Ben-Gurion settled in Eretz Yisrael in 1906, first working in orange groves and wine cellars. As a watchman and farm worker, he became convinced that true Zionism meant settling the land.
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When Great Britain issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, Zionist hopes for a national home received an important boost. Ben-Gurion helped organize the Jewish Legion for Britain. He enlisted in Canada in 1918, but the war was over by the time he reached Palestine.

After the war, he became general secretary of the Histadrut labor federation in 1921; in 1930 he formed Mapai, the Zionist labor party; and in 1935 he became chairman of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. When Britain limited Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1939, a decade of Zionist warfare began. Ben-Gurion was unrelenting, and finally in Tel Aviv, on May 14, 1948, he proclaimed independence for the State of Israel.

He continued as prime minister for 15 years (except 1953-1955), during which time the young country fought two wars (the War of Independence and the Sinai Campaign) while tripling its population from 1/2 million to 1 1/2 million. Even after he lost the leadership of his party, he remained in the Knesset until he retired from politics in 1970. Ben-Gurion’s dream was to make the Negev Desert, which comprises the majority of the southern half of Israel, a blooming, industrious and lively area of Jewish inhabitance.

Ben-Gurion died on his kibbutz, Sde Boker in the Negev, during the Yom Kippur War, on December 1, 1973.

#4 – Hannah Senesch: Haganah Fighter, Partisan & Poet / 1921-1944

Through her brief but noteworthy life, Hannah Szenes became a symbol of idealism and self-sacrifice. Her poems, made famous in part because of her unfortunate death, reveal a woman imbued with hope, even in the face of adverse circumstances. Although her family was assimilated, anti-Semitic sentiment in Budapest led her to involvement in Zionist activities, and she left Hungary for Eretz Yisrael in 1939.

She studied first at an agricultural school, and then settled at Kibbutz Sdot Yam. While there she wrote poetry, as well as a play about kibbutz life. In 1943 Szenes joined the British Army and volunteered to be parachuted into Europe. The purpose of this operation was to help the Allied efforts in Europe and establish contact with partisan resistance fighters in an attempt to aid beleaguered Jewish communities. Szenes trained in Egypt and was one of the thirty-three chosen to parachute behind enemy lines. With the goal of reaching her native Budapest, Szenes was parachuted in March, 1944 into Yugoslavia, and spent three months with Tito’s partisans. Her idealism and commitment to her cause are memorialized in her poem "Blessed is the Match," which she wrote at this time.

On June 7, 1944, Szenes crossed the border into Hungary. She was caught almost immediately by the Hungarian police, and although tortured cruelly and repeatedly over the next several months, refused to divulge any information. Even the knowledge that her mother was at risk and that she too might be harmed did not move Szenes to cooperate with the police. At her trial in October of that year, Szenes staunchly defended her activities and she refused to request clemency. Throughout her ordeal she remained steadfast in her courage, and when she was executed by a firing squad on November 7, she refused the blindfold, staring squarely at her executors and her fate.

In 1950, Szenes' remains were brought to Israel and re-interred in the military cemetery on Mount Herzl. Her diary and literary works were later published, and many of her more popular poems, including "Towards Caesarea" and "Blessed is the Match," have been set to music.
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#5 – Menachem Begin: Warrior & Peacemaker / 1913-1992

Born in Brest Litovsk (now Byelorusr), on August 16, 1913. He studied law at the University of Warsaw. Active in the Zionist movement, he became head of Betar in 1939. When the Germans invaded Poland, he fled to Lithuania, but was arrested and held in a Soviet concentration camp (1940-1941) until he joined a Polish army formed in the USSR to fight the Nazis.

By 1942 he was in Palestine, where he became a commander of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, an underground group seeking to oust the British from Palestine by force.

After British withdrawal, he was on the Irgun ship Altalena which approached Tel Aviv with a consignment of arms, contrary to the orders of the newly-formed Israel Defense Forces. The government ordered the ship to be shelled. Begin transformed the Irgun into the Herut (Freedom) party in the Knesset in 1948.

In 1952 he led the party's protest against the reparations agreement with West Germany. On the eve of the Six Day War, he became a minister-without-portfolio in the national unity government. He left the government in 1970 when a majority in the government accepted the U.S.-sponsored concept of what was to become relinquishing territory for peace.

In 1973, the Likud (Unity) bloc was formed and Begin was a leader. When they won the elections in 1977, he became prime minister. It was during this tenure that in 1978, he and Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat received the Nobel Peace prize for the peace treaty they would sign the following year, after returning much of the Sinai to Egypt.

In 1981, he was re-elected and in 1982 he authorized the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In failing health and following the death of his wife, Aliza, he stepped down in September 1983.

#6 – Rachel: Poetess & Farmer / 1890-1931

Rachel Bluwstein was born on September 20, 1890 in Saratov, on the Volga River in Northern Russia. Her father, a former soldier in the Czar’s army, was a rich merchant known for his piety and his generosity. Her mother, born into a long line of rabbis, was an educated woman. Rachel spent her childhood and youth in Poltava, in the Ukraine, where she learned Hebrew with a tutor, wrote her first verses in Russian, and became interested in painting.

In 1909 she and one of her sisters visited Palestine for what she thought would be a short visit before she returned to her studies in Europe. In Jaffa, she met Hannah Maizel, one of the first pioneers who had decided to create an institution where young women could learn agricultural techniques. The two sisters first moved to Rehovot, little more than a small village or moshava at the time, determined to learn Hebrew and spending only one hour a day speaking Russian for the ordinary tasks of every day life, and to recite poetry.

A year later, Rachel decided to find Hannah Maizel who was a salaried worker in an olive grove at the foot of Mount Carmel. Under her leadership, Rachel began to work in agriculture, seeking both self-realization and
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salvation in working the land, 'playing the shovel and painting on the earth.' In April 1911, Hannah and her students moved to Kinneret; Rachel is generally considered to be the first student in her agricultural school.

Rachel literally fell in love with the landscapes and personalities around Kinneret, including A.D. Gordon who lived in the country’s first kibbutz, in Deganya, whom she called grandfather and to whom she dedicated her first poems in Hebrew.

In 1913, on the advice of A. D. Gordon, she journeyed to Toulouse, France to study agronomy and drawing. When World War I broke out, unable to return to Palestine, she returned instead to Russia where she taught Jewish refugee children. After the end of the war in 1919 she returned to Palestine. However, shortly after her arrival she was diagnosed with tuberculosis, then an incurable disease. Now unable to work with children for fear of contagion, she was expelled from Degania and left to fend for herself. She spent the rest of her life traveling and living in Tel-Aviv, and finally settled in a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in Gedera.

Rachel died on April 16, 1931, at the age of 40. She is buried in the Kinneret cemetery in a grave overlooking the Sea of Galilee, following her wishes as expressed in her poem If Fate Decrees. In recent years, poetess Naomi Shemer’s was buried near Rachel, according to Shemer’s wish.

Perhaps
Perhaps all this never was,
Perhaps I never rose at dawn to till
The garden by the sweat of my brow?

Nor even on long burning harvest days
Atop a sheaf-laden cart
Raised my voice in song?

Never purified myself in the quiet blue and innocence
Of my Kinneret,

Oh Kinneret,
did you truly exist?
Or were you only a dream?

#7 – Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook: Religious Zionism / 1865-1935

Rav Kook was born in Griva, Latvia in 1865. His father was a student of the Volozhin Yeshiva, the center of 'mitnagdut,' whereas his maternal grandfather was a member of the Hassidic movement. He entered the Volozhin Yeshiva in 1884, where he became close to the Rosh HaYeshiva, Rav Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (the Netziv). Already in his youth, he was well-known as a prodigy. At the age of 23, he entered his first rabbinical position.

Kook’s personal outlook led him to espouse the Musar (personal piety) movement and to employ Hebrew instead of Yiddish for daily use. He saw no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular and insisted that the most menial tasks are replete with religious overtones. He continued to study after his marriage and did not hesitate to include German philosophy and modern Hebrew literature in his curriculum. His fame grew as an expert in Jewish law, and he was given the title of gaon (excellency).
In 1904, he came to the Land of Israel to assume the rabbinical post in Jaffa, which also included responsibility for the new secular Zionist agricultural settlements nearby. His influence on people in different walks of life was already noticeable, as he attempted to introduce Torah and Halakha into the life of the city and the settlements. He insisted that all Jews must work together. He sought to encourage the use of Palestine products, especially for ritual purposes. He lectured widely in the academies, and he insisted on adding a daily discourse on the Kuzari (a medieval philosophical work) to the lecture on the Talmud.

The start of World War I found Kook in Europe, and he could not leave until it was over. He employed his time in the furtherance of Zionist aims and in the issuance of the Balfour Declaration (1917), in which England assured the Jews of its favorable attitude toward the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. He returned to the Holy Land and organized the Banner of Jerusalem movement in support of Judaism in Palestine. He became chief rabbi of Jerusalem in 1919 and 2 years later chief rabbi of Palestine.

Kook’s incumbency coincided with the initial growth of the Jewish community, which eventually achieved its independence in 1948. He sought to pave the way for this historic event by breaking down barriers between groups. Many extremists refused to recognize his authority, but he won the admiration of the masses, for whom he had a great affection. He could find no reason for not being a Zionist, "seeing that the Lord has chosen Zion." Kook wrote articles and brochures on a range of subjects; some were published during his lifetime and many posthumously. His poetry was beautiful and tender and his excursus into the realm of mysticism most elevating.

Rav Kook was a man of Halakha in the strictest sense, while at the same time possessing an unusual openness to new ideas. This drew many religious and nonreligious people to him, but also led to widespread misunderstanding of his ideas. He wrote prolifically on both Halakha and Jewish Thought, and his books and personality continued to influence many even after his death in Jerusalem in 1935. His authority and influence continue to this day.

#8 – Joseph Trumpeldor: Pioneering on the Frontier / 1880-1920

Born in a small town in the northern Caucasus, Trumpeldor was strongly influenced in his youth by the model of collective communal life which he witnessed at a nearby farming commune established by followers of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. In Trumpeldor's mind, the idea of collective living became merged with the Zionist ideal of settling Eretz Israel, and he dreamed of establishing agricultural communes in Erez Israel which, if necessary, would be defended by armed force.

He was however, drafted into the Russian army and lost an arm while fighting in the Russo-Japanese war. In 1912 he went to Erez Israel and worked for a while at kevuzat Deganyah, and participated in the defense of the Jewish settlements in the lower Galilee. When World War I broke out, he was deported to Egypt after he refused to join the Turkish army. In Alexandria, he called for the formation of a legion of volunteers drawn from the Erez Israel deportees to be at the disposal of the British and help liberate the country from the Turks.

The British allowed the formation of a Jewish brigade (the "Zion Mule Corps") of which Trumpeldor became the deputy commander and which participated in the Gallipoli campaign of 1915. Between 1915 and 1919 Trumpeldor traveled widely, spending much time in England and Russia, promoting the organization of Jewish regiments to fight the Turks and Jewish self-defense units to protect the settlements in Erez Israel.

In 1919 he returned to Erez Israel and in January 1920 was called to the northern Galilee to help organize the defense of the settlements there which had come under increasingly fierce Arab attack. On March 1 he was
mortaly wounded while participating in the defense of the settlemenets at Tel Hai; his dying words were: *Ein davar, tov lamut be'ad arzenu* (“Never mind; it is good to die for our country”).

His lifestory served as an inspirational model to both the pioneering socialist youth movements and the right-wing youth groups. One of the largest and most successful of the latter was named in his honor: Betar, an abbreviation of Berit Trumpeldor.

**HA-TIKVAH – ISRAEL’S NATIONAL ANTHEM**

"Hatikvah" ("The Hope") is the national anthem of the State of Israel. It was composed by Naphtali Herz Imber and originally published under the title "Tikvateinu" ("Our Hope") in 1886. "Hatikvah" was introduced as a possible anthem in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Conference. By the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, everyone knew "Hatikvah" and ended the meeting with a communal singing of it. "Hatikvah" did not receive official recognition as the Zionist anthem until the 18th Zionist Congress in 1933.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEBREW</th>
<th>TRANSLITERATION</th>
<th>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kol ‘od balleivav penimah</td>
<td>Kol ‘od balleivav penimah</td>
<td>As long as in the heart, within,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nefesh yehudi homiyah</td>
<td>Nefesh yehudi homiyah</td>
<td>A Jewish soul still yearns,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U(e)l(e)fa’atei mizrach kadimah</td>
<td>U(e)l(e)fa’atei mizrach kadimah</td>
<td>And onward, towards the ends of the east,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ayin letziyon tzofiyah;</td>
<td>‘ayin letziyon tzofiyah;</td>
<td>An eye still looks toward Zion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘od lo avdah tikvateinu,</td>
<td>‘od lo avdah tikvateinu,</td>
<td>Our hope is not yet lost,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim,</td>
<td>Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim,</td>
<td>The hope of two thousand years,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lihyot ‘am chofshi be’artzeinu,</td>
<td>Lihyot ‘am chofshi be’artzeinu,</td>
<td>To be a free nation in our land,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eretz-tziyon vy(e)rushalayim.</td>
<td>Eretz-tziyon vy(e)rushalayim.</td>
<td>The land of Zion and Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Points to Ponder**

1. If you could re-write Hatikvah, what would it say?
2. Can you imagine what it is like to hope and dream about something for 2000 years?
3. In what way is Hatikva a prayer?
4. What is the meaning of the phrase “to be free in our own land“? Do you think it means something different to an Israeli than it does to an American or Canadian?
5. This song was written many decades before Israel became a sovereign state. Has the hope of the song been fulfilled? If not, what work remains? If yes, what is the meaning of the song today?

Compiled by Amy Dorsch, USY Education Coordinator
THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND “THE LAND”

JEWS HISTORY IN THE GOLAN

- In Biblical times, the Golan Heights was referred to as "Bashan;" the word "Golan" apparently derives from the biblical city of "Golan in Bashan," (Deuteronomy 4:43, Joshua 21:27). The area was assigned to the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 13:29-31).

- In the late 6th and 5th centuries BCE, the region was settled by returning Jewish exiles from Babylonia (modern Iraq). In the mid 2nd century BCE, Judah Maccabee and his brothers came to the aid of the local Jewish communities when the latter came under attack from their non-Jewish neighbors (I Maccabees 5). Judah Maccabee's grandnephew, the Hasmonean King Alexander Jannai (reigned 103-76 BCE) later added the Heights to his kingdom.

- Gamla became the Golan's chief city and was the area's last Jewish stronghold to resist the Romans during the Great Revolt, falling in the year 67 CE.

- Organized Jewish settlement on the Golan came to an end around the year 636 CE when Arab armies crushed the Byzantines and established Islamic rule.

- The Jewish presence on the Golan was renewed in 1886 and in 1891 Baron Rothschild purchased approximately 18,000 acres of land in what is now Syria. First Aliyah (1881-1903) immigrants established five small communities on this land, but were forced to leave by the Turks in 1898.

- After the 1948-49 War of Independence, the Syrians established control of the Golan and built extensive fortifications on the Heights, from where they systematically shelled civilian targets in Israel and launched terrorist attacks. 140 Israelis were killed and many more were injured in these attacks between 1949 and 1967; heavy property damage was also inflicted. For Israelis living in the north under the shadow of the Golan Heights, life was treacherous. An entire generation of children grew up going to sleep each night in bomb shelters. When the Six Day War broke out in 1967, residents of the north begged the Israeli government to finally take the Golan Heights out of Syrian hands and restore peace to their lives.

THE PROMISE OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Genesis 13:14-17

14. And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him: 'Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;

15. For all the land which you can see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever.

16. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered.

17. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto you will I give it.'

Ezekiel 36:8-11

8. But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches, and produce your fruit to My people Israel; for their return is near.
9. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown;

10. And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel in its entirety; and the cities shall be resettled, and the ruined cities shall be rebuilt;

11. And I will multiply upon you man and animal, and they shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be resettled as in your former times, and will improve you compared to your beginnings; and you shall know that I am the LORD.

Points to Ponder
- According to these verses in the Book of Genesis, the Land of Israel has been promised to the Jewish people as an eternal possession. Do you think this source can be used as an argument for the Israeli-Arab conflict?
- Is there a connection between verse 16 and the promise of the Land?
- Do you think verse 17 is the blueprint for our own journey?
- The verses in Ezekiel allude to the Land of Israel in a state of ruin. What caused this?
- Do you think this prophecy has been fulfilled?
- Why do you think Israel was only resettled in our generation and not before?

The Political Future of the Golan

Should Israel give back the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Peace with Israel’s neighbors should be top priority even if it means giving up land.</td>
<td>o It will necessitate the removal of about 20,000 Israelis from their homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Israel will gain favor in the eyes of the world as it sees what Israel is willing to do for peace.</td>
<td>o Military presence on the Golan Heights serves as a constant deterrent to any Syrian aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The Golan will be a demilitarized zone. No Syrian troops will be allowed on the Golan.</td>
<td>o Topography of the Golan allows for a small Israeli force to hold back a large invading force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o According to one plan, the Golan will become a large nature park, open to Israelis and Syrians alike.</td>
<td>o Strategic depth of the Golan provides crucial time in case of war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Peace agreements have worked in the past with neighboring Arab nations like Egypt and Jordan.</td>
<td>o Uncertain if peace agreements will be honored by future Syrian governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Under any agreement, Syria will have to stop supporting terror organizations like Hizbollah and Hamas and distance itself from Iran.</td>
<td>o The Golan controls more than 30% of Israel’s water resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The Golan is an integral part of Israeli life and culture with its combination of history, wineries, agriculture and eco-tourism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ELI COHEN STORY
One of the most memorable and daring attempts to infiltrate Syria, which at the time controlled the Golan Heights and frequently shelled the Israeli settlers down below is that of Eliahu ben Shaoul Cohen an Egyptian born Jew.

Eliahu ben Shaoul Cohen, worked as a Mossad agent in Damascus, Syria under the alias of Kamal Amin Ta'abet from 1962 until his exposure and execution on May 18, 1965. Cohen was able to supply considerable details on Syrian political and military matters because of his strong interpersonal skills and abilities to build close ties with business, military, and Ba'ath Party leaders, and Syrian President Amin el Hafiz. He was hanged in Martyr’s Square with the television cameras rolling for the entire world to see. Eli was privy to secrets of the Syrian elite including those of national security. Eli was considered to be named the Syrian Deputy Minister of Defense. He was the only civilian to receive private tours of military installations, even being photographed in the then Syrian controlled Golan Heights with high ranking Syrian officials looking over into Israel.

As a result Eli sent highly informative reports back to Israel detailing the Syrian project to divert waters that fed Lake Kinneret, decreasing the amount of water available for Israel’s needs. This led to the successful bombing of the project by Israel in 1964.

Eli’s influence on Syrian officials helped Israel beyond measure. Eli suggested that the Syrians plant trees on the Golan near each of their fortifications. Based on the eucalyptus trees, Israel knew exactly where the Syrian fortifications were.

Two years after his death, in June 1967, the intelligence Eli Cohen provided enabled Israel to capture the Golan Heights in two days as part of Israel’s victory in the Six Days War. Eli Cohen was the greatest Mossad agent Israel has ever known. He was greatly admired by all, including the Syrians. His deeds fed and are still feeding the imagination and fantasy of many. He is a hero who sacrificed his life for the sake of Israel, his fellow Jews, his children and his family.

THE NEGEV DESERT AND JEWISH ENVIRONMENTALISM

BaMidbar: On Finding Torah Truths in the Desert / By Amy Eilberg

Have you ever noticed how much of the Torah takes place in the wilderness? Think about it. From the middle of the Book of Exodus, when the Israelites are redeemed from Egypt, the drama of Torah unfolds in the wilderness.

The narratives of the Israelite community’s birth and growth, their complaints and conflicts and faithlessness, are all set in the context of their journey through the desert. And the teaching of biblical law, the visioning and structuring of Israelite life, are all given as the Israelites move through their years in the desert.
The wilderness. The desert. A place of emptiness, uncertainty and unpredictability -- not to mention directionlessness and fear. A strange place to set a holy book, perhaps. But then again, how much of life does unfold in the wilderness?

The essence of the wilderness is its emptiness…a person or a people who wish to receive God's revelation must empty themselves of routine concerns in order to be truly prepared to receive the word of God. Through the life of Torah one can transform the wilderness -- whether the wild, frightening external landscape, or the inner terrain of aridity, emptiness and fear -- into a garden of Eden, a land of lush richness and beauty.

The image of the desert [acts] as a perfect prelude to the acceptance of Torah. In order to truly receive revelation from God, one must make oneself like the desert -- flat, blank, humble, motionless and without direction, such that words from God may enter.

The image of the wilderness is so much like life. Life so often unfolds with the dry, uncertain quality of the wilderness. We don’t know where we’re going, we ache for clear landmarks, or guideposts along the way, we long for an oasis and instead we find more danger, more storms, more unpredictable events, more fear.

But if life is like the desert, life also contains the possibility – no, the reality – of Torah, of support and guidance from God, no matter where we find ourselves in our journey. In the midst of the desert, we as a people receive Torah: law, justice, ethics, structure, certainty, truth. As individuals, if we make ourselves ready to notice Mount Sinai when it suddenly rises in the midst of the flatness of the desert of our lives, then we too can receive messages of God's presence and love and guidance, no matter how threatening the external terrain, no matter how uncertain the path on which we find ourselves.

BEN GURION’S VISION FOR A DESERT BLOOM

David Ben-Gurion, born David Greun on October 16, 1886, was the first Prime Minister of Israel. Ben-Gurion’s passion for Zionism, which began early in life, culminated in his instrumental role in the founding of the state of Israel. After leading Israel to victory in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Ben-Gurion helped build the state institutions and oversaw the absorption of vast numbers of Jews from all over the world. Ben-Gurion was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century.

Upon retiring from political life in 1970, he moved to Sde Boker, a kibbutz in the Negev desert, where he lived until his death in 1973. In addition to his political achievements, Ben Gurion is well known for pioneering efforts to “make the desert bloom”. Read him in his own words...

- “The supreme test of Israel in our generation lies, not in its struggle with hostile forces without, but in its success in gaining dominion, through science and pioneering, over the wastelands of its country in the south and the Negev.”

- “It is obvious why the forefathers of our people went to the Negev: this was the most sparsely settled and populated part of the country, as it is in our own days. [Avraham] found in the Negev a free and empty expanse, such as he could not find in any part of the Promised Land. In his new home he had to engage in constructive work: the search for water and the planting of trees, and in that desolate expanse he comprehended the supreme unity of existence.”
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- “The Negev offers the Jews their greatest opportunity to accomplish everything for themselves from the very beginning. This is a vital part of our redemption in Israel. For in the end, as man gains mastery over Nature, he gains it also over himself. That is the sense, and not a mystical but a practical one, in which I define our redemption here.”

During the 1948 War of Independence, David Ben Gurion had a choice to make: Focus limited forces on capturing East Jerusalem and the Old City or taking control of the Negev. He chose the Negev.

THE CHALLENGE OF WATER

The Myth of Water
Making the Negev Desert bloom once seemed like a good idea, but it's killing the Dead Sea.
By Kevin Peraino and Joanna Chen | July 7-14, 2008 issue

Israel ranks 49th on the green index but first among desert nations.
Few notions are more deeply rooted in Zionism’s founding mythology than the exhortation to "make the desert bloom." The earliest Zionist pioneers arrived in Palestine with a strong faith in science and technology, shaped by the Jewish enlightenment that began in the late 18th century. They also brought an earthy sense of self-reliance that made growing their own food—even in the bleak Negev Desert—a high priority. Amid the ashes of the Holocaust, that determination only deepened. "For those who make the desert bloom there is room for hundreds, thousands, and even millions," Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, wrote in 1954, when he moved to the Negev himself. As Israeli society grew increasingly devout in the 1970s, the prophet Isaiah provided further inspiration: "The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

At first glance, today the parched land indeed looks glad. The arid coastal plain sprouts with fields of watermelons, tomatoes and sunflowers, and Israel has earned a reputation for creative use of sparse water supplies. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Israelis pioneered the use of "drip irrigation"—which delivers water directly to a plant's roots. More recently, Israeli experiments with desalination and water recycling have drawn attention around the world. The Yale/ Columbia Environmental Performance Index ranks Israel 49th overall and best among desert nations, in part for managing the stress irrigation puts on water supplies. Still, some scientists worry about the environmental cost of building an economy in the desert.

Israel consumes 1.8 billion cubic meters of water each year; 15 years from now, it will need an additional 1.5 billion cubic meters to meet demand rising due to population and economic growth, according to Israeli water experts. About half of Israel's clean water is used for agriculture, yet farming accounts for only 2 percent of Israel's GNP. Considering those numbers, some environmentalists are beginning to question whether agricultural growth in a desert climate like Israel's is really sustainable. The question, says David Brooks, a Canadian water expert and environmentalist, "is not whether water is used efficiently in Israeli agriculture, but whether agriculture is an efficient way to use water in Israel."

Water has long been a deeply political issue in the Levant; wars are waged over it. Aquifers and other sources of water tend to straddle political boundaries. Levi Eshkol, Israel's prime minister during the Six Day War, was a water-company executive who spent long hours poring over maps of potential sources. According to "The Iron Wall," a history by Avi Shlaim, Eshkol believed that "without control over the sources of water the Zionist dream..."
could not be realized.” In 1964 Israel completed the National Water Carrier, designed to pipe drinking water from the Sea of Galilee, in Israel’s north, to the Negev in the south. Syria and other Arab states then moved to divert the headwaters of the Jordan, igniting fierce clashes that included Syrian-sponsored Palestinian guerrilla attacks. The water wars were one of the key factors in the establishment of the PLO in 1964.

Diverting water from the Galilee has contributed to another devastating environmental consequence: the drying of the Dead Sea. Much of the water that once made its way down the Jordan River is no longer available to replenish the body of water downstream. Before 1964, the Dead Sea used to receive 1.3 billion cubic meters of water each year, according to Eilon Adar, who heads the Water Research Institute at Ben-Gurion University. Now "at most it gets 200 million cubic meters a year." Since the inauguration of the National Water Carrier, the sea level has fallen by 21 meters, and continues to drop at a rate of roughly one meter each year. "The Dead Sea is dying," says Adar. "There's an environmental toll here, and we're really worried." There's also an economic toll: the dangerous sinkholes developing under the Dead Sea have badly hurt the region's tourism industry, according to Adar.

Israel's romantic notions of making the desert bloom have encouraged heavy government subsidies for farming. Israeli farmers pay roughly 40 percent as much for their water as those who use it for nonagricultural purposes, says Hillel Shuval, a water expert at Jerusalem's Hadassah Academic College. The subsidies help Israeli farmers export much of their produce, which makes little environmental sense in an arid country. Exporting one kilogram of wheat is equivalent to exporting 1,000 liters of water, which means Israel in effect exports 100 million cubic meters of water each year, about as much as its desalination plants produce. Two years ago Israel inaugurated a massive desalination plant in the coastal city of Ashkelon, but desalination is costly and energy intensive; each cubic meter of clean water costs roughly 60 cents to produce, according to Adar. "Subsidizing water for agriculture results in irrational use, in growing crops which otherwise wouldn't be economically feasible," says Hillel.

The Negev is the laboratory for new technologies Israelis hope may solve their water troubles. Some of the most ambitious recycling experiments are found there, just minutes from the cabin where Ben-Gurion retired to the desert. In a sun-bleached sandlot surrounded by date palms and desert scrub, 41-year-old Amit Ziv explains how his kibbutz pumps 500,000 cubic meters of warm, brackish water each year from an aquifer 800 meters below ground. The water is first cycled several times through man-made ponds for growing fish including sea bass, tilapia and barramundi, then funneled to fields of wheat, olive and jojoba. "We wrote the book on this stuff," says Ziv.

Experts, though, wonder how far technology can boost supply. Drip irrigation and desalination can only do so much. Making the desert bloom was a good idea "in its time," says Brooks, but now “the very idea of developing the Negev is wrong.” The day to rethink Israel's romance with desert farming may be here.

THE MYSTIQUE OF MASADA

“Masada is not merely an archeological site. It is primarily a chapter in the history of our people, a chapter at once glorious and tragic which has symbolized over many generations the determination of Jewish militants not to become slaves, even at the cost of “dying as free men.” In our own times Masada has become a challenge and warning as well as a symbol. In the words of the poet, “Masada shall not fall again”: we do not declare our determination to die as free men but rather, and this is a clear sign of our national renaissance, that we intend to “live as free men.” - Yigal Yadin, Chief Archaeologist at Masada
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Masada Timeline

- **37-31 BCE**: King Herod builds Masada as a refuge for himself should he need such a place. Eventually becomes a Roman desert fortress.

- **66 CE**: At the beginning of the Great Revolt, Jewish Zealots take over Masada led by Elazar Ben Yair.

- **70 CE**: After the Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed, additional surviving Zealots come to Masada, about 960 people in all now living there.

- **72CE**: Roman governor of Judea, Lucius Flavius Silva, lays siege to Masada looking to wipe out this stubborn pocket of Jewish resistance.

- **Spring 73 CE**: The Romans finally breach the walls of Masada.

The Dilemma

With the arrival of the Romans to the top of the mountain just hours away, the Jews living on Masada found themselves in the most awful dilemma. They saw their new reality as presenting them with two choices: fight the Romans and risk a torturous death, their wives and daughters being raped and taken away as prostitutes and their sons sold as slaves, or leaving this world on their accord, taking their own lives before the Romans could ever touch them.

Elazar ben Yair, the zealots’ leader, had already made up of his mind on what he wanted to do. He gathered his closest and toughest comrades and tried to convince them of his plan. Here is some of what he said:

“My loyal followers long ago we resolved to serve neither the Romans nor anyone else but only God, who alone is the true and righteous Lord of men. Now the time has come that bids us prove our determination by our deeds. At such a time, we must not disgrace ourselves. Until now we have never submitted to slavery, even when it brought no danger with it. Now we must not choose slavery, for with slavery will come penalties that will mean the end of everything. For we were the first of all to revolt, and shall be the last to break off the struggle. And I think it is God who has given us the privilege to die nobly and as free men, unlike others who were unexpectedly defeated. In our case it is evident that daybreak will end our resistance, but we are free to choose an honorable death with our loved ones. This our enemies cannot prevent, however earnestly they may pray to take us alive, for we cannot defeat them in battle.

Let our wives die unabused, our children without knowledge of slavery. After that, let us do each other an ungrudging kindness, preserving our freedom, as an excellent funeral monument for us. But first let our possessions and the whole fortress go up in flames. It will be a bitter blow to the Romans, that I know, to find our persons beyond their reach and nothing left for them to loot. One thing only let us spare our store of food. It will bear witness when we are dead to the fact that we perished, not through want but because, as we resolved at the beginning, we chose death rather than slavery.

If only we had all died before seeing Jerusalem utterly destroyed by enemy hands, the Temple so impiously uprooted. But an honorable ambition deluded us to thinking that perhaps we should succeed in avenging her of her enemies. Now that all hope has fled, abandoning us to our fate, let us at once choose death with honor.”
Points to Ponder

1) Do you think the Jews on Masada made the right decision by killing themselves instead of fighting?

2) What would you have wanted to do in this situation if you were there?

3) What lessons, if any, are there for the Jewish people today from the Masada story?

4) Do you see parallels between the story of Masada and the situation the State of Israel finds itself in?

REMEMBRANCE, REDEMPTION AND STATEHOOD

REFLECTIONS AT YAD VASHEM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

The Butterfly - Paul Friedman / Age 11 (written at Theresienstaadt Ghetto)

It was the last,’ truly the last one
Its yellow coloring was bitter and blinding,
Like the tears of sunlight striking shattered on stone
Such was its queer color.
How easily it fluttered, soared upwards,
As if to kiss my vanishing world.

It is seven weeks that I am here
Ghettoized.
My dearest friends have found me here:
Daisies are beckoning to me,
And the white branched of the chestnut tree in the yard
But a butterfly I have not seen.
That one, was truly the very last one.
There are no butterflies here
In the ghetto.

REFLECTIONS AT MT. HERZL NATIONAL CEMETERY

"The state will not be given to the Jewish people on a silver platter."

– Chaim Weizmann, shortly after the passing of the U.N. Partition Plan on November 29, 1947.

Israeli poet Natan Alterman expressed Weizmann’s feelings in a poem entitled “The Silver Platter”, in which he puts into words the tragic understanding of the sacrifices that everyone understood would have to be made for Israel’s independence.

The Silver Platter By Natan Alterman

And the land grows still, the red eye of the sky slowly dimming over smoking frontiers
As the nation arises, Torn at heart but breathing, To receive its miracle, the only miracle
As the ceremony draws near, it will rise, standing erect in the moonlight in terror and joy
When across from it will step out a youth and a lass and slowly march toward the nation
Dressed in battle gear, dirty, Shoes heavy with grime, they ascend the path quietly
To change garb, to wipe their brow.
They have not yet found time. Still bone weary from days and from nights in the field
Full of endless fatigue and unrested,
yet the dew of their youth. Is still seen on their head
Thus they stand at attention, giving no sign of life or death

Then a nation in tears and amazement
will ask: "Who are you?"
And they will answer quietly, "We are the silver platter on which the Jewish state was given."
Thus they will say and fall back in shadows
and the rest will be told in the chronicles of Israel.

DEFINING A JEWISH DEMOCRATIC MODERN STATE
Source: www.huka.gov.il

Jewish and Democratic is the Israeli ethos. First employed in the State Education Law of 1952, the phrase captures both the Israeli aspiration to reconcile Jewish and democratic values, and the conceptual and ideological tensions that this attempt raises- both challenges stand at the core of Israeli existence. It is the phrase most frequently used in current political debates and it has immense legal, cultural and educational significance.

The tensions inherent to "Jewish and Democratic" are both theoretical and practical. At the theoretical level, the challenge is to reconcile two very different traditions. The one is rooted in religion faith, the other is secular in nature; one is a nationalistic tradition, focused on the preservation of a particular people, the other focuses on the equal worth of all human beings; one is exclusive and communal, the other is inclusive and universal. The challenges stem from two main sources. First, non-Jewish ethnic, most notably Israeli Arabs, make up one-fifth of Israel’s population. Second, even among Jews, the meaning of Judaism, Jewish heritage and Jewish values is highly controversial. The question then arises: Can a state that explicitly defines itself as a Jewish state also respect the fundamental democratic value of equal citizenship to all? How does the Jewish national identity and collective ethos of the state affect the individual identities of citizens who cannot or do not share in this identity? Who will define what Judaism is and means in modern-day Israel?

Israel’s Jewish and democratic values are both grounded in constitutional documents. In the Declaration of Independence, Israel’s founders proclaimed both the Jewish and democratic nature of Israel. The opening paragraphs of the Declaration assert the natural right of the Jewish people to self-determination in its sovereign state, connect the historic Children of Israel to the modern ones, and emphasize the historic, political, cultural and religious ties of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. The first half of the Declaration concludes: “Accordingly, we, members of the People’s Council, representatives of the Jewish Community of Eretz Yisrael
and of the Zionist movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Yisrael, and by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael, to be known as the State of Israel.”

The Jewish nature of the state is also evident in the section of the Declaration establishing Israel to be a state of Jewish immigration and of the “ingathering of the exiles.” This principle was set forth in legal and practical terms in the Law of Return passed two years later (1950).

The Declaration of Independence proceeds to include explicit commitments to democratic values, declaring Israel to be a state based on the principles of freedom, justice and peace; a state in which all the inhabitants shall enjoy equal social and political rights, as well as freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.

The Declaration derives the principles of equality and freedom from those “envisaged prophets of Israel”, underscoring the nature of Israel as a Jewish state and suggesting that there is no necessary tension between Jewish and universal values. Furthermore, the Declaration assures not only the rights and equality of the individual citizen, but also the collective, political, cultural and religious rights of minority groups. However, the attempt to reconcile the Jewish nature of the state with the political rights of the Arab minority faces serious challenges.

**Current Issues and Controversy**
The symbols, holidays and anthem of the State of Israel represent Jewish history, culture and Zionist ideology; the debate over these symbolic elements stands in for the larger debate over the definition Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. The symbols are exclusive, representing the majority and not the minority. The questions are clear: may Israel’s symbols remain exclusively Jewish and Zionist, or might they be changed to represent the Arab minority? Does the minority have a right to demand a crescent be placed beside the Star of David, a stanza about the Naqba (“catastrophe”, the term by which Arabs generally refer to the founding of Israel and the displacement of Arabs) added to the anthem, or national day of rest on the ‘Eid Al-Fitr? Or, alternatively, does the Jewish majority have the right to define its symbols at will? If Israel’s demographic balance shifts, will this affect its symbols, or will they be safeguarded by the constitution?

Some, including several Members of the Kenesset (MK’s), believe the symbols should be ensconced in the constitution unchangeable. MK Gideon Sa’ar (Likud) serves as chairman of a subcommittee for Jewish symbols in the constitution, and has told the committee he believes Israel must safeguard its Jewish character lest the two state Israeli-Palestinian solution become a “state-and-a-half” solution wherein one state would be Palestinian and the other half Palestinian and half Jewish. This school of thought interprets Israel’s democracy to include a full protection of the minority groups’ freedoms to practice their religion and culture but does not compel the state recognize their collective symbols in its own- the symbols constitute neither interference with nor discrimination against non-Jewish groups. Its adherents generally consider Israel’s Jewish character inalienable.

A second school of thought is described by Professor Ruth Gavison in her article, “The Jews’ Right to Statehood: A Defense” (2003). This approach, shared by several MK’s and many Jewish and Arab Israelis, states that the majority in a democracy retains the right to define the symbolic elements that characterize its community, even when such symbols are exclusionary—so long as this does not infringe on the basic rights of any citizen. This approach differs from the first in that it posits the right to Jewish symbols in Israel as conditional upon the
maintenance of a Jewish majority. If, at any point in the future, the majority were to cease to be Jewish, Jews would lose their right to define the state’s symbols.

The third school of thought, supported by many Arab citizens and MKS as well as some Israelis, believes Israel’s current symbols unjustly ignore its non-Jewish minorities. They say that every citizen population has a communal right to be represented and proud of the symbols of their state regardless of whether they are in the majority or in the minority. The constitution, some Arab scholars have argued, can be an instrument of granting a sense of belonging to the Arabs, and it should. The alternative is a harsh and complex frustration of a large, indigenous minority.

The Law of Return
Zionist ideology was premised upon the reconstitution of the Jews as a free, self-determining nation in their own state. In recognition of this aspiration, Israel’s Declaration of Independence declared that “The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews and for the ingathering of exiles from all countries of their dispersion.” In 1950, this principle was given shape as the Law of Return, enshrining this Zionist principle within Israeli law.

The Law of Return did not stem from ideology alone; it was also a practical measure. In the wake of the Holocaust, the first act of the new Israeli government was to abolish all restrictions on Jewish immigration. Israel, the government declared, would provide Jews the world over with a haven from anti-Semitism.

The Law of Return has also functioned as a means of maintaining a Jewish majority within the State of Israel by promoting aliyah. During the 1940’s and 50’s, Israel’s population balance was decisively shifted through the immigration of millions of Jews. Today, even within the pre-1967 borders, more than twenty percent of Israel’s citizens are non-Jewish. As a result of higher birth-rates, the demography of the country continues to shift in their favor.

The Law of Return has not escaped controversy. It has been suggested that an immigration policy which explicitly gives priority to one ethnic or religious group cannot be justified in liberal democratic terms, and is incompatible with Israel’s mandate as a democratic state.

Additionally, the arrival of over a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union since 1989 has demonstrated that unrestricted waves of immigration can place huge economic, social and cultural pressures upon the state (despite the long term benefits of population growth for the Israeli economy.)

The immediate and automatic granting of citizenship may also undermine the national identity of the state and its democratic process by enabling new immigrants to influence Israeli politics before demonstrating either their commitment or a basic grasp of the relevant issues.

There is also fierce debate surrounding the question of “Who is a Jew”, and by extension, who is eligible to make aliyah under the Law of Return. At present, the definition is based on Hitler’s Nuremberg Laws: the right of Return is granted to any individual with one Jewish grandparent, or who is married to someone with one Jewish grandparent. As a result, thousands of people with no meaningful connection to the Jewish people theoretically have the right to immigrate.

To make matters more complicated, the Israeli Rabbinate, a purely Orthodox body, is far more stringent about its definition of who is a Jew, leaving thousands of “Jewish” immigrants ineligible for marriage and unrecognized by the state authorities, since all marriages in Israel must be conducted by the Rabbinate.
Despite its centrality to Israel's civic ethos, the Law of Return exists as a regular law with no special constitutional status. It is therefore vulnerable to the partisan pressures of Israeli politics, and can be amended or repealed by a simple majority vote in the Knesset.

Proposals from across the political spectrum to amend the Law of Return and resolve these issues have included:

- Abolition and replacement with an egalitarian immigration policy.
- Liberalization so as to include all Jews on the basis of self-definition
- Tightening to include only those whose Jewish status is recognized by halacha.
- Instituting a formal naturalization process including a waiting period and an oath allegiance before the granting of citizenship.
- Entrenchment as a Basic Law of Constitutional provision that would require a special majority for amendment or repeal.

Points to Ponder

1. Do you think that it is possible for Israel to be a Jewish state and democratic at the same time? Where have you seen successes and/or failures in manifesting this dual nature?

2. Do you think that Israeli Arabs’ ethnic and religious symbols and holidays should become officially recognized by Israel as part of the State’s identity and institution?

3. Why was the Law of Return created? Does it go against democratic values?

The Law of Return brings up a very serious and sensitive question in Israeli society about who is considered a Jew. What are your thoughts? Who should be considered a Jew under the Law of Return and in the eyes of the Israeli Rabbinate for purposes of being able to be married in Israel?

ISRAEL’S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Eretz Yisrael/ The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'pilim - immigrants coming to Eretz Yisrael in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the
First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz Yisrael, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Yisrael; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.


WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel".

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz Yisrael.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz Yisrael in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.


Points to Ponder

1. How many connections and justifications for our presence in this Land can you find from the above text?

2. Which do you think is most compelling?

3. Why do you think it was important for Ben-Gurion to make these justifications?

4. Do you think the world agreed with these points?

5. In this respect, has anything changed in the last 60 years?

6. Is G-d mentioned in the document? Why yes or no?

7. Does the Declaration of Independence imply that Israel is a Jewish State or a state for the Jews?

"After I signed, I cried. When I studied American history as a schoolgirl and I read about those who signed the Declaration of Independence, I couldn’t imagine these were real people doing something real. And there I was sitting down and signing a declaration of establishment." Golda Meir, Israel’s 3rd Prime Minister

RETURNING TO JERUSALEM, RETURNING HOME

By the rivers of Babylon, there we wept when we remembered Zion….

How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?

- Excerpted from Psalms 137
JERUSALEM DILEMMAS
Jerusalem is a complicated place in a lot of different ways. Which of the thoughts below best represent your own point of view?

Jerusalem and the peace process:
• Jerusalem can only exist as a united city.
• Jerusalem should be internationalized and administered by the United Nations.
• Jerusalem should return to its pre-1967 status (divided).
• Jerusalem must be the capital city of a Jewish and a Palestinian state.

Security:
• Jerusalem’s Arab citizens should have free access to the whole of the city.
• There should be a security checkpoint on the border between east and west Jerusalem.
• There should be a strong military presence in East Jerusalem for reasons of security.
• Jewish settlers should be forcibly removed from East Jerusalem and the Old City.

Religion:
• Jerusalem is the holy city to the three great monotheistic faiths.
• Jerusalem is not of historical or religious importance to Muslims, and the Mosque of Omar and al-Aksa should be demolished in order to rebuild the Temple.
• Jerusalem is the sovereign capital of the State of Israel which is a secular concept. Religion has no importance when considering Jerusalem’s status.
• Jerusalem is only important to religious Jews but largely irrelevant to everyone else.

Shabbat and religious tensions:
• The whole city of Jerusalem should observe Shabbat – all facilities must shut down on shabbat.
• Public transport SHOULD operate on Shabbat in Jerusalem, but public places of entertainment should remain closed.
• Streets in Ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods should be closed to traffic and public transport NOT run but the rest of the city should be free to do as they please
• The state has no right to get involved in private or public religious observance – all public facilities should be open and run as normal.

Jerusalem and the politics of the capital:
• Jerusalem should be the capital of both a Jewish and a Palestinian state.
• Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people.
• Jerusalem will only become the capital of the Jewish people when the Messiah arrives.
• Israel's capital should be moved to Tel Aviv.

Jerusalem is...
• Jerusalem is special because of her history.
A Journey in Israel

SOURCES & RESOURCES

- Jerusalem is special because of her beauty.
- Jerusalem is special because of her Holiness.
- Jerusalem is not special at all... rather it is just a source of suffering!

CONTEMPORARY ZIONISM

You can't sit in Manhattan and be a Zionist just because you like oranges, felafel and come here once a year to argue in Jerusalem about "Where is Zionism going?" There is only one answer: Zionism is going on here... Zionism as I see it, exists only in its practical form. And as a person who likes shoes isn't a shoemaker, so a Jew who likes Israel isn't a Zionist." - Yonatan Gefen (author, poet, journalist)

There is an unavoidable tension in the relationship between an Israeli Jew and a Diaspora Jew, a relationship which is ideally an adversary one since the Israeli is living in a community of faith which holds that it alone is the natural place for a Jew to live, and this tension can only be resolved by dealing with it directly. A Diaspora Jew and an Israeli can talk to each other as ordinary human beings about anything they wish, but if they are to talk to each other meaningfully as Jews, there is only one relevant question with which such a conversation can begin: Why don't you really come home? - Hillel Halkin (author and political analyst)

It's time to say that America is a better place to be a Jew than Jerusalem. If ever there was a Promised Land, we American Jews are living in it. Some Israelis tell American Jews that America, like the fleshpots of Egypt, is no place for a Jew - we're all going to die in gas chambers, singing Christmas carols. The message is that we are not supposed to feel secure because Anti-Semitism will catch up with us, as it has the Jews everywhere else throughout history... For American Jews - now Jewish Americans - the American dream has come true. I wonder how many Israelis think the Zionist one has come true, too. - Jacob Neusner (academic scholar)

The Diaspora communities that remain are for the most part, free of immediate fear of unrest and persecution. Israel may face danger in the future. So may Jews in the Diaspora. Yet the great drama of survival has, one hopes, passed its peak. Israel has turned to negotiations for peace with its Arab neighbors. The Diaspora is turning to its domestic crisis of continuity... Future generations will look back at the strange ideological wars fought between Israel and the Diaspora before they reached a symbiotic, mutually supportive relationship. They will be perplexed by Israel's need to negate the Diaspora. They will be yet more amazed at the Diaspora's tendency to negate itself by devoting its energies to Israel in a way that weakened rather than strengthened its own resources and thus ultimately endangered its long-term support for Israel... Israel surely is our ultimate destination. But the immediate question is less whether Jews are at home in London or Jerusalem than whether they are at home in their Jewishness. That is likely to become the leading concern in Israel and the Diaspora alike as both turn their attention to continuity.
- Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Chief Rabbi of Great Britain)

Points to Ponder

- A Zionist protects Israel at all times.
- A Zionist donates to Israel.
- A Zionist serves in the army.
- A Zionist must make aliyah
- A Zionist must visit Israel.
- A Zionist must be Jewish.
VIS-À-VIS THE DIASPORA

Tourists (Part 1), Yehuda Amichai
Visits of condolence are all we get from them.
They squat at the Holocaust Memorial
They put on grave faces at the Wailing Wall
And they laugh behind heavy curtains
In their hotels.
They have their pictures taken
Together with our famous dead
At Rachel's Tomb and Herzl's Tomb
And on Ammunition Hill.
They weep over our sweet boys
And lust after our tough girls
And hang up their underwear
To dry quickly
In cool, blue bathrooms.

Tourists (Part 2), Yehuda Amichai
Once I sat on the steps by agate at David's Tower, I placed my two heavy baskets at my side. A group of tourists
was standing around their guide and I became their target marker. "You see that man with the baskets? Just
right of his head there's an arch from the Roman period. Just right of his head." "But he's moving, he's moving!"
I said to myself: redemption will come only if their guide tells them, "You see that arch from the Roman period?
It's not important: but next to it, left and down a bit, there sits a man who's bought fruit and vegetables for his
family."

Points to Ponder
This poem, written by Yehuda Amichai, one of Israel’s most celebrated Hebrew poets, presents an Israeli
approach to Jewish tourists visiting Israel. It explores how Jewish tourists from the Diaspora relate to the sites
they visit, and how Israeli’s may perceive them as they go through the motions. The paragraph of prose in the
second half of the poem contrasts the sites with the living people, suggesting that seeing Israelis should be seen
as inspiring themselves for what they achieved in Israel and what they represent (the rebirth of Jewish life) as
well as the tension between history and the individual (the sites represent history, the man represents the
worth of the individual).

1. How do you think Israeli Jews view Diaspora Jews?
2. What right (if any) do you think Jews in the Diaspora have to voice their opinions regarding Israel, or to try
to affect what goes on in Israel?
3. To what degree does Israel “belong” to world Jewry and to what degree is it “owned by” Israeli Jewry?
4. Do you think the continuity of Judaism in the Diaspora is a top priority of Israeli Jews? Should it be?
5. Do you think Diaspora Jews have an obligation to support Israel (vocally, financially, etc.)?
6. Do you agree with the statement that “Israel surely is our ultimate destination”?
7. How do your views and attachment to Israel affect your Jewish identity?
REFLECTIONS ON RETURNING HOME

Judaism offers to everyone the unique opportunity to be an integral part of building upon and continuing a tradition that goes back to the days of Abraham and Sarah—a tradition unparalleled in the history of the world.

In modern day, we have a choice to make. Do we choose to continue our Jewish identity or do we allow it to disappear, to assimilate, to become just like everyone else. How much of our identity do we allow to become Jewish? What do we do that is Jewish? How do young adults begin to decide? Soon, you may be off to college or university. The decisions in your lives will be yours, not that of your parents.

Many Jews believe that if there was a visitor from another planet who was seeking the kind of religious identification that would make the most sense from a rational standpoint and would have the most positive impact on civilization, she or he would find that Judaism would be the most appealing. If you were to add to this the emotional satisfaction, warmth, and support that come from being a part of the Jewish family—the Jewish community—with its religious traditions, culture, and history unique among all peoples of the earth—there is little doubt among most Jews who have experienced these feelings that Judaism is very special and there is nothing else like it in our world.

Obviously, the warmth and emotional attachments underlying these feelings cannot be gained overnight. Like most good things, it takes time and effort, but the rewards of personal satisfaction and growth can be great.

If during this trip, your appetite has been whetted to learn more about Judaism—the religion and the culture—and what it can mean for you; if, on the basis of what you have experienced, you believe that there is much about Judaism that is compatible with your own personal philosophy; then, seek to learn more. The more you learn about Judaism, the more appealing it will be and the more it can contribute to your life and to your personal search for happiness. We hope that this trip has just begun to touch on the many possibilities of what Judaism offers for you.

You have an opportunity to be part of the continuance of a remarkable tradition that is 4,000 years old but is yet so relevant and meaningful to modern times. You have an opportunity to know the fullness of the love, compassion and understanding that are integral parts of Judaism. You have an opportunity to be part of a unique religion, culture and community of people that emphasizes this world, rather than the next, that pursues social justice and freedom for all as part of the Jewish tradition of universalism.

Ultimately, "the answer lies in your hand." It is your decision what type of person you decide to be. It is your decision what type of Jew you decide to be. It is your decision to be “you!” Here in Jerusalem on the last night of this journey, we hope you can explore more of your Jewish journey. It’s a path we are all on.
APPENDIX #1: ISRAEL IN MAPS

1947 – United Nations Partition Plan
In 1947, Great Britain relinquished to the UN the power to make decisions relating to the status of the Land of Israel. The General Assembly appointed a special committee that collected evidence and decided unanimously that Israel should be granted independence. Most of the committee members favored partitioning the land into two states, a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem under international supervision. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly accepted the partition resolution, 33 to 13.

1949 – Armistice Lines
In the spring and summer of 1949, agreements were signed between Israel and its neighbors establishing Israel's armistice lines. To some extent, these lines overlapped the borderline of Palestine during the British Mandate period, or they were close to it, with the exception of the Judea and Samaria region, and the surrounding area of the Gaza Strip. These lines were drawn up, on the assumption that they would be temporary, and would be replaced within a few years by permanent borders.
1967 – Six Days of War
With tensions mounting, the Straits of Tiran blocked, and Arab armies poised to strike, Israel decided (on June 5th 1967) to launch a pre-emptive attack on the massive Egyptian forces aimed at her. Within 190 minutes the backbone of the Egyptian airforce was broken, and by the end of the first day of war 298 Egyptian airplanes were destroyed. Backed by complete air superiority, Israeli army divisions then thrust into the Sinai desert approaching the bank of the Suez Canal. At the same time, Israel issued an appeal to Jordan to stay out of the war. Jordan refused and opened a heavy artillery barrage on both west Jerusalem and the Tel-Aviv area which forced Israel to counterattack. By June 8th the Israel Defense Forces defeated the Jordanian forces and captured the whole of Judea and Samaria. On the morning of June 9th, Israel attacked the Syrians and captured the Golan Heights. The six days of fierce fighting ended in Israel’s occupation of the Sinai desert and the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the West Bank, providing Israel’s cities with a much needed buffer zone. Furthermore, victory had a special religious meaning because of the unification of Jerusalem and the return of Jews to Judea and Samaria which was part of biblical Israel.

1967 – A Unified Jerusalem
A few days after the end of the Six-Day War, on June 27, 1967, the Israeli Parliament passed a law that Israeli administration and jurisdiction apply to all the territory of Jerusalem acquired in the war. The following day, the Jerusalem municipal boundaries were extended to include eastern Jerusalem, as well as Atarot and Neve Yaakov in the north and Gilo in the south.
1993 – Today – The Oslo Agreement

Based on agreements reached between Israel and the Palestinians in the 90s, arrangements for Palestinian self-government were established. The Palestinians rejected the proposals made at the Camp David Summit of July 2000, which would have resulted in the establishment of a Palestinian state in most of Judea and Samaria (as well as in the Gaza Strip). The Palestinians followed their rejection with a bloody terror campaign. Israel in 2003 accepted the Roadmap which would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, provided the Palestinians fulfill their obligations to end terrorism and incitement. The final status of Judea and Samaria - determining the borders between Israel and the Palestinian state, and those parts of Judea and Samaria which are to be correspondingly under Israeli and Palestinian jurisdiction - is yet to be resolved and is currently the subject of negotiations between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.