



BUILDING YOUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH ISRAEL

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Every individual has a different connection with the State of Israel, and each person's own story is what creates a homeland with beautiful diversity. No connection with the land is "wrong", rather different connections reflect different peoples' values and experiences.

FIND ISRAEL ON THE MAP



THAT'S GREAT.
BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS?



WELL, THAT ALMOST HAPPENED...

Theodor Herzl sought support from the great powers for the creation of a Jewish homeland. He turned to Great Britain, and met with Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary and others. The British agreed, in principle, to Jewish settlement in East Africa "on conditions which will enable members to observe their national customs."



At the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basel on August 26, 1903, Herzl proposed the British Uganda Program as a temporary refuge for Jews in Russia in immediate danger. By a vote of 295-178 it was decided to send an expedition ("investigatory commission") to examine the territory proposed.

Thank G-D, this plan was not executed. Let's understand why through examining 3 essential aspects of Israel.

ISRAEL:

As a Homeland

As a Legal Country

As a Thriving Economy

#1

ISRAEL: OUR HOMELAND

What does Israel/ישראל mean? Where does the name come from?

Israel¹ (Pronunciation: ['izrēəl; 'iz,rāl] (Dictionary)

(also children of Israel) the Hebrew nation or people. According to tradition, they are descended from the patriarch Jacob (also named Israel), whose twelve sons became founders of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel. ORIGIN from Hebrew **Yiśrā'ēl** **'he that strives with God'** (see Gen. 32:28).

If this is our land, named after our ancestors, then why are we faced with this?



And why do we, unlike almost every other country in the world, have to deal with this?



PRAYER TO THANK G-D FOR KEEPING HIS PROMISE TO GIVE US THE LANDS OF
ALL THE OTHER NATIONS RESIDING IN ERETZ YISRAEL.

וְכָרוֹת עָמּוֹ הַבְּרִית לְתֵת אֶת אֶרֶץ הַכְּנָעָנִי .הַחֲתִי הָאֹמְרִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁי לְתֵת לְזָרְעוֹ .
וְתָקַם אֶת דְּבָרֶיךָ כִּי צָדִיק אָתָּה:

“...to establish the covenant with him to give him (Abraham) the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizites, the Jebusites and the Girgashites, to give it to his descendants, and You upheld Your word, for You are righteous”

- ❖ What about this seems unfair?
- ❖ How does this make our job harder when declaring the State of Israel inherently a Jewish State belonging to the Jewish people?

WHAT IS THE FIRST ENCOUNTER, EXPERIENCE, OR CONNECTION YOU EVER HAD
WITH THE LAND OF ISRAEL?

Whether it is a political, emotional, or religious tie you have to the land of Israel, you have some connection. Let's learn how to articulate that!

**TORAH SOURCES AS EVIDENCE FOR THE JEWISH CLAIM
TO ISRAEL**

Bereishis 1:1	בראשית א:א
In the beginning of God's creation of the heavens and the earth.	א. בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ
Rashi's commentary	רש"י
In the beginning: Said Rabbi Isaac: It was not necessary to begin the Torah except from "This month is to you," (Exod. 12:2) which is the first commandment that the Israelites were commanded, (for the main purpose of the Torah is its commandments, and although several commandments are found in Genesis, e.g., circumcision and the prohibition of eating the thigh sinew, they could have been included together with the other commandments). Now for what reason did He commence with "In the beginning?" Because of [the verse] "The strength of His works He related to His people, to give them the inheritance of the nations" (Ps. 111:6). For if the nations of the world should say to	בראשית: אמר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל [את] התורה אלא שמות יב ב (מהחודש הזה לכם, שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו בה [ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בבראשית, משום] תהלים קיא ו (כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים, שאם יאמרו אומות העולם לישראל לסטים אתם, שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, הם אומרים להם כל הארץ של הקב"ה היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו:

Israel, "You are robbers, for you conquered by force the lands of the seven nations [of Canaan]," they will reply, "The entire earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it (this we learn from the story of the Creation) and gave it to whomever He deemed proper When He wished, He gave it to them, and when He wished, He took it away from them and gave it to us.	
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Bereishis 15:18	בראשית טו:יח
8. On that day, the Lord formed a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt until the great river, the Euphrates river.	ח. ביום ההוא כרת יְהוָה אֶת אַבְרָם בְּרִית לֵאמֹר לְיִרְעָךְ נִתְּנִי אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מִנְּהַר מִצְרַיִם עַד הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר פָּרָת:

- ❖ Why did the Torah begin with the creation of the world according to Rashi?
- ❖ What do we gain from this? What are the obvious downsides of evidence like this?

#2 POLITICAL APPROACHES TO THE JEWISH CLAIM FOR THE LAND OF ISRAEL

IMAGINE THE FOLLOWING

A great king needed more land to expand his country's roadway system. Unfortunately the land he chose was the farmland of the innocent Chief Powhattan. Without his land, the Chief will be penniless and unable to provide food for his 8 children. The king decided to move the Chief and his family to a new home.



Moore Texas by Roger T. Moore July 31, 1854: The U.S. Congress creates a reservation in Texas for the Caddo, Waco, Tonkawa and others.

As the chief explains the situation to his son, his son innocently asks him, if the new land is as great as the king promised them, then why doesn't the king just keep that land for himself instead.

❖ *Who do you sympathize with and why?*

Now, is story of Israel and the Palestinians any different and how so?

Let's examine some integral documents to the history of the Jewish State to help us understand our longstanding connection with the State of Israel.

HISTORY OF THE JEWISH POLITICAL CLAIM TO ISRAEL

This letter to Lord Rothschild, by the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour, was aimed at Jewish support for the Allies in the First World War. The letter, known as the "Balfour Declaration" became the basis for the movement to create a Jewish state in Palestine. The letter was published a week later in The Times of London.

***Foreign Office
November 2nd, 1917***

Dear Lord Rothschild:

I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet:

His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

***Yours,
Arthur James Balfour***

- ❖ *What impact did this have on Jewry around the world?*
- ❖ *How did you think this affected the worldview of Jews and the State of Israel?*

With Jews now coming into Israel in large numbers, the United Nations general assembly developed the partition plan:



To partition Palestine into two states: a Jewish state, which would consist of the whole of Galilee and the coastal strip, up to a point south of Rehovot; and an Arab state, which would comprise Samaria, Judea, and the entire Negev. Jerusalem and its environs, linked to the coast at Jaffa by a corridor, were to remain in British hands, for the supervision of the Holy Places.

It is vital to recognize that the Jewish people accepted this plan, and the Palestinian's did not. All actions taken against Israel in the following months would therefore be considered offensive attacks against Israel and certainly NOT pre-empted by the Jewish state.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



"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 the Jewish State in Eretz-Yisrael, to be known as the State of Israel.



- ❖ Did David Ben Gurion have the right to do this? Why or why not?

What happened the day after Israel's independence was declared?

Over the next few days the armies of Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Lebanon, and Syria invaded Israel, officially militarily threatened to occupy the whole of the former Mandate territory, and thereby started the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, known in Israel as the War of Independence. A truce began on 11 June, but fighting resumed on 8 July and stopped again on 18 July, before restarting in mid-October and finally ending on 24 July 1949 with the signing of the armistice agreement with Syria. By then Israel had retained its independence and increased its land area by almost 50% compared to the 1947 UN Partition Plan.

A THRIVING ECONOMY TO SUPPORT A BOOMING COUNTRY

When I think of Israel, I see my home, a land that is as vibrant and diverse as it is creative. Every time I land at Ben Gurion Airport after a long sojourn abroad, I am amazed at how much Israel has changed in my own lifetime.

From our humble rebirth in the tragic aftermath of the Holocaust, we have, in just 64 years, evolved from a largely agrarian nation of the Third World to a developed nation. Whereas Israel was once the land of Jaffa oranges and raisins, today it is - as one New York Times bestseller coined it - the "Start-up Nation," the land of Intel microchips and nanotechnology.

In just over six decades, our population has grown more than ninefold, from roughly 800,000 in 1948 to just over 7.8 million today. With immigrants and refugees from 120 countries and an Arab minority numbering about 20 per cent of the population, Israelis are proud to celebrate our different ethnic backgrounds, languages and traditions. We are equally proud of our country's thriving democracy and robust society.

These strides are all the more remarkable if one examines just how far we have come in

the last 20 years. Since the 1990s, our economy has grown by 270 per cent, despite global economic downturns, a deadly five-year terror campaign that claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis and two major wars with the terrorist Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Gaza respectively.

During the last five years alone, Israel's economy has grown 21 per cent, the second highest rate of any nation in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and unemployment is at its lowest ever at 5.4 per cent. If all goes well, the recent discovery of large natural-gas reserves in the Mediterranean Sea should see Israel go from a resourceless nation to a net exporter of fuel by 2018.

These leaps have been nothing short of miraculous. Yet much of the world continues to relate to my country through the negative headlines they read, our longstanding conflict with the Palestinians and other neighbouring states and stereotypes that distort reality. That is why we must broaden public discourse to encompass what Israel really is: an innovative nation that has much to offer.

With the most Nobel Laureates per capita, Israel has the world's highest rate of research and development investment of GDP (4.5 percent) and is a global leader in annual patents. The business climate in Israel has been rated the 4th most positive toward globalization.



- **Israel is a leader in business innovation.** Israel has more companies listed on NASDAQ than any country outside of North America. As of 2011, there were 60 Israeli companies listed.
- **Technology from Israel is used everywhere.** This includes Intel Pentium processors, USB data storage, medical and biotech devices, generic drugs, and advanced voicemail systems.
- **Israel is a pioneer in alternative energy and environmental sustainability.** The country is a leader in geothermal, solar power, and most recently, electric-powered cars with Project Better Place, which is developing and launching some of the world's first city-wide electric car systems.
- **Top companies invest in Israel.** Google, Microsoft, Cisco, Motorola, Intel, HP, GE, Phillips, and IBM to name a few.
- **Israelis value education.** Israel enjoys the highest percentage in the world of engineers in the workforce and one of the highest ratios of university degrees and academic publications per capita.



Questions for further discussion:

- ❖ *What are other emotional connections you can create with the state of Israel?*
- ❖ *How has it helped maintain world Jewry in the 20th and 21st century?*



- ❖ *How has Israel helped not only Jews find religious freedom in this tumultuous world?*

- ❖ *With all this new information, how would you now articulate your connection with the State?*