

# Jewish Life From the Enlightenment: The 200 years that brought us where we are

## The Dream of Israel

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*"There is hope for your future — says  
Adonai — and your children shall return  
to their borders."*

— Jeremiah 31:17

## The Dream

### Eliezer "Ben-Yehudah" Yitzhak Perelman (1858–1922)

In 1879 publishes "A Weighty Question" in *hashahar* ("The Dawn,") which may have been responsible for the BILU movement.

In 1881 moves to Jerusalem.

*"Yisrael b'artzo uvilshono."*

### Theodor "Binyamin Ze'ev" Herzl (1860–1904)

Born in Budapest, moved to Vienna.

Covers the Dreyfus affair (1894) as a journalist, and comes face to face with antisemitism.

Publishes *Der Judenstaat* in 1896.

Convenes First Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897. He later writes, "In Basle I founded the Jewish state... Maybe in five years, certainly in fifty, everyone will realize it."

Publishes his Utopian socialist vision of Israel in his novel, *Altneuland*, in 1902.

At the Sixth Zionist Congress (1906), Herzl presents the British Uganda Program as a temporary solution to antisemitism.

*"Im tirtzu, ein zo agada."*

### **David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973)**

Born in Plonsk, Poland. Moved to Israel in 1906.

## **The Politics**

### **Ottoman Rule (1517–1917)**

Generally favorable to the Jews.

First Jewish community outside the walled city of Jerusalem built in 1860.

### **The Suez Canal (1869)**

Made Palestine a commercial center again.

Something like the Suez Canal dates to the 13th C BCE, to the time of Ramesses II. Pharaoh Senusret III (19th C BCE) may have constructed something similar.

Napoleon wanted a canal but thought it would be too difficult and expensive to build.

### **British Rule (1918–1947)**

Balfour Declaration (1917): "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours 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."

From the British Mandate (passed June, 1922): "Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally

made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might 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; and...

[...]

Article 2.

The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

[...]

Article 22.

English, Arabic and Hebrew shall be the official languages of Palestine. Any statement or inscription in Arabic on stamps or money in Palestine shall be repeated in Hebrew, and any statement or inscription in Hebrew shall be repeated in Arabic.”

### **Independence (May 14, 1948)**

From the Israel MFA:

ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - the Land of Israel, Palestine] 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 [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel 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-Israel, 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-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel 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.

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL 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-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

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-Israel.

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 neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, 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-Israel 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.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE "ROCK OF ISRAEL", WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14TH MAY,1948).

David Ben-Gurion

Daniel Auster Mordekhai Bentov Yitzchak Ben Zvi Eliyahu Berligne Fritz Bernstein Rabbi Wolf Gold Meir Grabovsky Yitzchak Gruenbaum Dr. Abraham Granovsky Eliyahu Dobkin Meir Wilner-Kovner Zerach Wahrhaftig Herzl Vardi Rachel Cohen Rabbi Kalman Kahana Saadia Kobashi Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin Meir David Loewenstein Zvi Luria Golda Myerson Nachum Nir Zvi Segal Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hacohen Fishman David Zvi Pinkas Aharon Zisling Moshe Kolodny Eliezer Kaplan Abraham Katznelson Felix Rosenblueth David Remez Berl Repetur Mordekhai Shattner Ben Zion Sternberg Bekhor Shitreet Moshe Shapira Moshe Shertok

## **Who**

### **First Aliyah (1882–1903)**

35,000 Eastern European Jews (and some Yemenis). About half left. Secular BILU movement.

### **Second Aliyah (1904–1914)**

40,000 Eastern European Jews, mostly socialists. About half left. Founded Kibbutz Degania in 1909.

### **Third Aliyah (1919–1923)**

40,000 Eastern European Jews. Most stayed. Started building Israel by draining swamps, building roads, building towns.

Haganah founded.

### **Fourth Aliyah (1924–1929)**

82,000 Jews, mostly Eastern European. About one third left. Middle-class immigrants, some with nowhere else to go. (The US imposed strict quotas on Jews.)

### **Fifth Aliyah (1929–1939)**

250,000 Jews. Ninety percent stayed. German Jews joined the Eastern Europeans in coming to Israel. Between 1933 (Hitler's rise to power) and 1936, 175,000 Jews came to Israel. The period is marked by increased tension with the British and with the Arab locals.

"Tower and wall" settlements.

Violent Arab attacks in 1929 and again from 1936 on. Haganah strengthened.

British limits on Jewish immigration resulted in clandestine immigration. ("Aliyah Bet.")

### **Israel and the Law of Return (1948–1951)**

The end of the Holocaust (1945), the founding of Israel (1948), and signing of the Law of Return (1950) brought 650,000 Jews to Israel between 1948 and 1951.

In 1949, about 250,000 Jews arrived in Israel. At an estimated cost of \$3,000/person, the immigration should have cost Israel \$750,000, considerably more than the entire State budget for the year.

### **Operation Magic Carpet (1949)**

45,000 Yemenite Jews airlifted to Israel. 380 flights brought them “home.”

### **Operation Ezra and Nechemia (1951–1952)**

130,000 Iraqi Jews airlifted from Baghdad (“Babylonia”) to Tel Aviv.

### **Operation Moses (1984–1985)**

Brought 8,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel via Sudan, but 15,000 remained, as the operation was leaked to the media and Sudan shut the operation down.

The CIA-sponsored Operation Joshua brought another 800 Ethiopian Jews to Israel in 1985.

Operation Solomon (1991) rescued another 14,324 Ethiopian Jews over the course of 36 hours. Yitzhak Shamir authorized El Al to fly on Shabbat.

### **Russian Immigration (1989–present)**

The fall of the Iron Curtain (1989) and the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) brought almost a million Russian “Jews” (about 2/3 of them were Jewish) to Israel.

## **How Many**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Immigrants</b>	<b>% Increase/year</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1882–1903	25,000		
1904–1914	35,000	14%	
1915–1918			WW I
1919–1923	35,000	20%	
1924–1931	82,000	14%	
1932–1938	197,000	18%	
1939–1945	82,000	3%	
5/15-12/31, 1948	102,000	12%	
1949	240,000	20%	
...			
1989	262,000	5%	