

A joint project of the
DEPARTMENT FOR ZIONIST ACTIVITIES, WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS STATE OF ISRAEL

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World Zionist Organization
Department for Zionist Activities



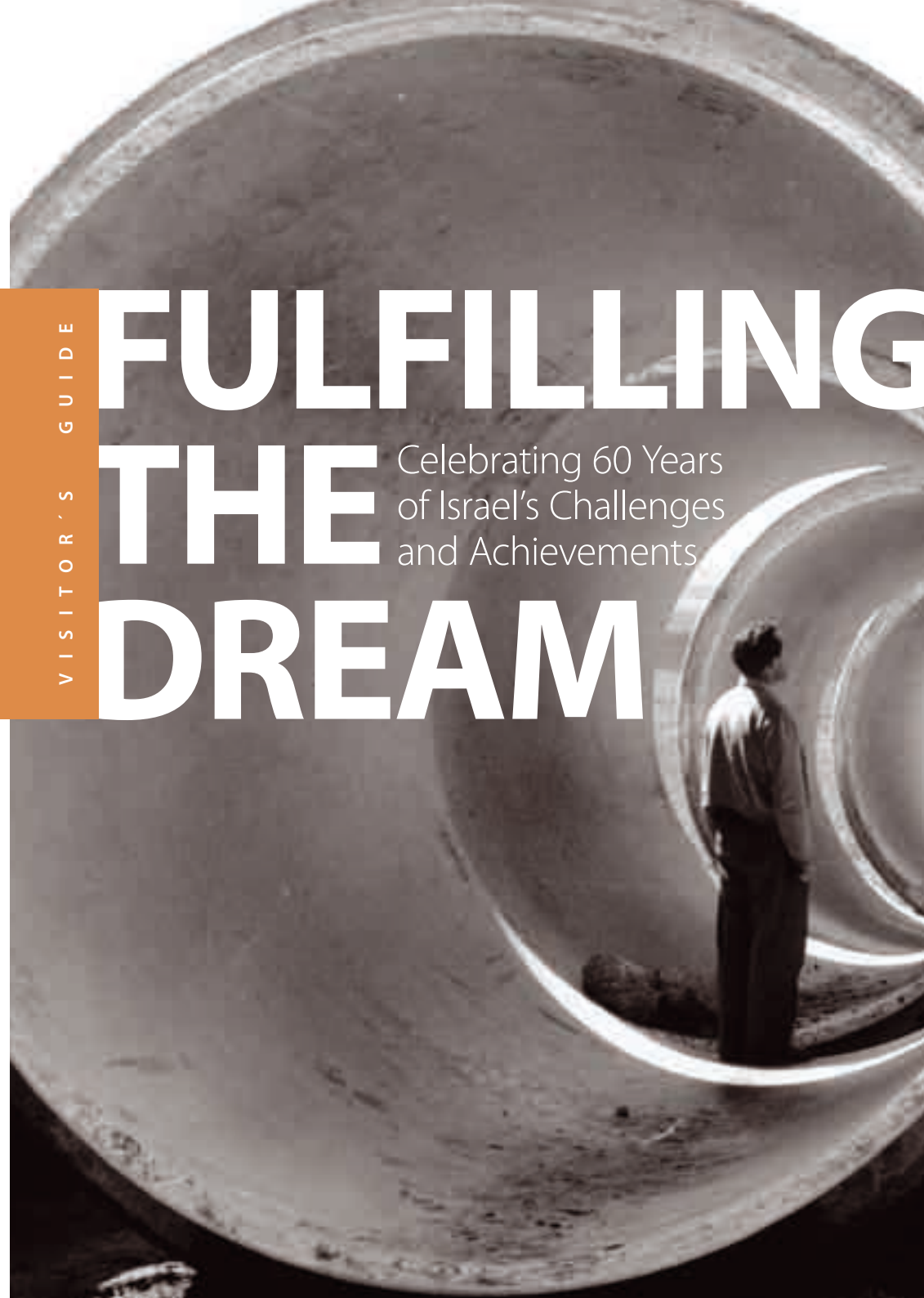
State of Israel



V I S I T O R ' S
G U I D E

FULFILLING THE DREAM

Celebrating 60 Years
of Israel's Challenges
and Achievements





Welcome to the exhibition

FULFILLING THE DREAM

What we see when we look at things often depends on the angle from which we view them. That is certainly the case with Israel – which is why we have utilized the technology we have in presenting this collection of photographs spanning the six decades of Jewish statehood.

As you move back and forth among the panels, you will quickly see that the past and present overlap inseparably and that from the vantage point of today, 60 years of struggle and triumph appear to pass by in the blink of an eye.

We have prepared this visitor's guide to slow things down a bit. So much effort has been invested in making Israel what it has become that we think it important to take a moment to consider its achievements against the background of the challenges it has faced in the past, as well as to reflect on those it continues to contend with today. Here, then, are the basics to get you started.

The exhibition is comprised of 14 panels, each dedicated to a particular theme. Each poster consists of two photographs juxtaposed on one another, one in black and white from the first years of Israel's independence (or even earlier), and the other, in full color, from the present.

The explanatory notes in this visitor's guide provide a context from within which to view the photographs. The narrative relates to the theme of the panel as a whole and to the captions for each of the pictures, all of which appear in bold.

We hope that as you peruse this material you will develop a greater appreciation for all that Israel is, and that you will be inspired to deepen your understanding of the country even further. There is no better way to do that, of course, than to come and visit. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a trip here has got to be worth a million pictures.

In any case, we hope you enjoy the journey, whether you limit yourself to the time travel we have set out here before you, or actually decide to drop by during this exciting year in which we are celebrating 60 years of challenges and achievements.

Dr. David Breakstone

Member of the Zionist Executive
Head of the Department for Zionist Activities
World Zionist Organization



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

Israel's Declaration of Independence

The story of Israel is the story of a dream come true. It is a dream few believed could be realized when the first practical steps were taken just over a century ago to create the infrastructure on which a Jewish state would eventually be built. When Theodor Herzl published his political manifesto *Der Judenstaat* in 1896, asserting that the only answer to the Jewish question was for the Jewish people to have a state of its own, his ideas were generally rebuffed by Jews and gentiles alike. Even when he managed to gather some 200 delegates at the First Zionist Congress in Basle a year later, he was aware that his ambitions were the object of ridicule. "In Basle I founded the Jewish State," he wrote in his diary. "Surely if I were to declare this aloud today I would be mocked everywhere, but within five years, certainly within 50 years, the entire world will recognize it." These prophetic words were penned in 1897, precisely half a century before the United Nations provided the international recognition for Jewish statehood that Herzl had so tenaciously sought. Ever since, we have been engaged in **fulfilling the dream**. This exhibition constitutes a modest documentary of those efforts. It is dedicated to **celebrating 60 years of Israel's challenges and achievements** as an opportunity to reflect as well as to rejoice.



Almost 2000 years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Jews had been dispersed to the four corners of the earth. The common assumption was that until the Messiah should appear, there was little reason to believe that this condition would change. After being forcibly exiled from our land following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E., we had become accustomed to living in a fragile relationship with those in whose midst we dwelled. We wept quietly by the rivers of Babylon, all the time longing for the eventual return to Zion. In the meantime, all that remained of the Temple, once the proud symbol of Jewish sovereignty, were the mammoth awe-inspiring blocks of quarried stone that had served to enclose the mount on which it stood. For centuries these were the focus of our prayers for the resurrection of **a Jewish state**, but they were also the symbol of our exile and became known as the **Wailing Wall**. Since the city of Jerusalem was reunited in 1967, these same stones, now referred to as the **Western Wall** (or Kotel in Hebrew), have become a source of inspiration for Jews everywhere, and *a tangible representation of the physical and spiritual challenge of maintaining Jewish independence today.*

ERETZ-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

Israel's Declaration of Independence



We believe that salvation is to be found in wholesome work in a beloved land. Work will provide our people with the bread of tomorrow, and moreover, with the honor of tomorrow, the freedom of tomorrow.

Theodor Herzl
Address to the Zionist Congress

Land of mine, I have never sung to you nor glorified your name with heroic deeds or the spoils of battle all I have done is plant a tree on the silent shores of the Jordan

Rachel

When David Ben-Gurion officially declared Israel's independence on May 14, 1948, it was the culmination of nearly seven decades of pioneering efforts that gave tangible expression to the age-old yearning for return. Already in 1882, a group of 14 idealistic ex-university students left Czarist Russia for the Land of Israel, determined to radically transform their lives – and the life of the Jewish people – by working in agriculture and becoming self-sufficient. Many who came in their wake were equally committed to this new **“religion of labor”** that would revitalize and reinvigorate the Jewish people, and purposefully engaged in **working the land**, reforesting hills that had been barren for centuries and **bringing life to the dessert** under the harshest of circumstances. They cleared millions of stones by hand, ploughed untold acres of fields with the most primitive machinery (that they had to pull themselves when donkeys weren't available), and contended with the most adverse climatic conditions in struggling to bring vitality to this barren land. *Who could have imagined back then that the challenge of making every drop of water count in a region where rain is less than scarce would give rise to the development of the most sophisticated computerized drip irrigation system in the world?* Now that system, along with revolutionary techniques and innovative technology in the “green” fields of agriculture, forestry, water conservation, horticulture, and environmentalism are being exported to developing countries everywhere.

While the Land of Israel that the Jews returned to was indeed generally barren and abandoned, it wasn't always ownerless – though as a rule the owners were either absentee landholders or the Ottoman Empire itself. Accordingly, from the earliest days of the Zionist enterprise, every effort was made to establish legal title over any territory that the pioneers sought to inhabit. In order to implement this policy, the 5th Zionist Congress established the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael) for the express purpose of purchasing land that would be “the property of the Jewish people as a whole.” But ownership was only part of the story. **Settling the land itself has always been integral to the ethos of the Zionist enterprise, as well as one of its major challenges from the earliest days of the movement.** While the **temporary tent camp** of yesteryear has long ago been replaced by residential complexes that are now the end product of the most sophisticated **contemporary town planning**, the emotional connection to the land, expressed most unequivocally through its physical settlement, continues to be fundamental to the Israeli psyche today. Calls to settle Israel's periphery, whether in the Negev, the Galilee, or the country's southern border, continue to resonate with the idealism of the pioneering spirit that brought the state into being in the first place.

Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'apilim (immigrants who arrived prior to 1948 in defiance of the British) 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.

Israel's Declaration of Independence



The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles

Israel's Declaration of Independence

[Among] the foundations of Zionism [is]...aliyah to Israel from all countries and the effective integration of all immigrants into Israeli Society.

Jerusalem Program

All of this settlement, of course, has only been made possible by the determination of the millions of Jews who hearkened to the age-old prayer, "Next year in Jerusalem." All in all, more than 3,500,000 immigrants have arrived since the Zionist venture began, more than 250,000 in Israel's first year of statehood alone. Many of them came fleeing Arab countries that were at war with the nascent Jewish state; even more were refugees from Europe - Holocaust survivors, countless orphans among them, who generally arrived destitute and broken in body and spirit. *Despite the social and economic burden that this human tidal wave imposed on the indigenous population of just some 630,000 (many of whom were new immigrants themselves and all of whom had just fought a difficult and costly war of national liberation for which they were ill-prepared), the government of Israel never hesitated in striving to meet this challenge.* Not only did it respond by **opening the gates** wide in order to fulfill the age-old dream of the **ingathering of the exiles**, but also by providing the new arrivals with extensive assistance. Indeed, immigration, or aliyah in Hebrew, has always been the life-blood of the Zionist cause, and so it remains today with **idealistic new immigrants** from western countries making up the majority of those who continue to arrive. Leaving comfortable lives behind them, they are determined to take an active role in the ambitious endeavor of Jewish state building, an undertaking still in great need of those ideologically committed to the task.

Ideological passion notwithstanding, *it has been an ongoing challenge for Israel to absorb so many immigrants, particularly as they have come from such varied backgrounds and have arrived speaking so many different languages – everything, of course, other than Hebrew.* (It has been said about Israel that it is the only country in the world where parents learn the mother tongue from their children.) The difficulty of forging a cohesive society out of such diversity has only been made more complicated by the fact that almost 20% of the country's population is Arab, many of whom define themselves as Israeli by citizenship but Palestinian by nationality, with connections – including family ties – to the populations of the West Bank and Gaza. Despite all this complexity, Israel has steadfastly maintained its deep-rooted commitment to being not only a Jewish state, but also a **democratic state**, a fundamental tenet of its self-definition eternally entrenched in its declaration of independence. Accordingly, **universal suffrage** has always been a given and **equal opportunity** for all of its citizens is guaranteed by law. Still, given the ongoing tensions in the region, there is no denying that mistrust and suspicion between Jews and non-Jews are commonplace. A major challenge facing the state today is ensuring that social attitudes do not undermine legal statutes, and that Israel's minorities will not be subjected to the sort of treatment from which Jews suffered when they themselves were "strangers in a strange land."

The State of Israel... 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.

Israel's Declaration of Independence



The existence of the entire world rests on the breath of a child in the schoolhouse.

Babylonian Talmud:
Shabbat, 119b

The results of Israel's determination to ensure quality education have been impressive. Despite the phenomenal budgetary and sociological challenges that might have caused the collapse of the entire system, all seven of Israel's universities are listed among the top ten in the Middle East, while four of them are also included among Europe's top 100.

Another challenge that the massive entry of immigrants placed before the new State of Israel was their effective assimilation into a cohesive society. **Emphasizing education** that would be free and compulsory was key to enabling them to take their places as responsible citizens of a society in which those of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds could coexist in an atmosphere of mutual respect. A fully functioning school system had already been established by 1948. It was the pride of the pre-state community, which had internalized the traditional Jewish value attributed to education as well as recognizing its pragmatic role in assuring a flourishing future. But the need since then for **integration in the classroom** of hundreds of thousands of newcomers from over 70 countries has required innovative programs that our limited resources have been hard-pressed to sustain. The mass immigration of the 1950s was succeeded in the 1960s by a large influx of Jews from North Africa. In the 1970s, the first wave of Jews from the Soviet Union arrived, followed by a million more in the 1990s. In the meantime, almost the entire Jewish community of Ethiopia was brought to Israel during two dramatic operations in 1984 and 1991. Throughout, a constant inflow of Jews from the Americas, South Africa, Australia, and Europe brought another 250,000 arrivals. Still, from its beginnings, Israel has maintained a commitment to upholding the highest academic standards and, more recently, to **bridging the digital divide** in order to ensure that the skills essential for the country's continued development would be accessible to all.

Providing health care for so many newcomers was no less an arduous challenge than giving them an education. Within the first two years of statehood, Israel's population doubled to 1.2 million people. Within a decade it reached 2.1 million. Many of those who came arrived penniless and in ill health. Still, from its infancy, the state managed to provide care for 90% of its population through a system of **socialized medicine**, the cornerstone of which has been the **neighborhood health clinic**. Today that number is even higher. In 1995 the Knesset passed the National Health Insurance Law, providing an advanced basket of medical services for virtually every one of Israel's citizens. This was possible because of the solid medical infrastructure that the country had developed. Between the graduates of its four medical schools and the many doctors who migrated to the country, Israel today has one of the highest numbers of physicians per capita in the world. It also has two dental schools, 20 nursing schools, and a school of pharmacology, as well as 47 hospitals. Recently, Israel's health care system has also demonstrated openness to practitioners of complementary medicine, trained in a number of well respected institutions throughout the country. Underlying all of this is Israel's highly sophisticated program of medical research, which has led to the development of revolutionary medical procedures and some of the world's most technologically **advanced diagnostic equipment**, innovative therapies, and ground-breaking medications – all utilized by physicians and patients around the globe, much as was envisioned by Zionism's founding visionaries.

In his utopian novel *Altneuland* published in 1902, Herzl's imagination gives shape to the Jewish state he believes will ultimately come into being. Among other things, he describes a nationalized health care system that provides for the medical needs of all of its inhabitants, researchers who are looking for a cure for malaria, and "the greatest eye clinic in the world" under the direction of a female physician.

"People come from all over Northern Africa and Asia to have their eyesight saved or restored there. The blessings bestowed by our medical institutions have won us more friends in Palestine and the neighboring countries than all our other industrial and technical progress combined."



What this country needs is not only science and technology, but the spirit of pioneering - and we shall need it for many, many years. The spirit of pioneering is the moral power which springs from vision and the belief in vision, and which allows those imbued with it to overcome obstacles that appear insurmountable to the ordinary person... And this is the purpose of Midreshet Sde Boker. We seek to build a scientific research and teaching center which will be a source of moral inspiration and courage, rousing people to a sense of mission, noble, creative and fruitful.

David Ben Gurion

All of this cutting-edge medical know-how has resulted in Israel having more patents for medical devices per capita than any other country in the world. Still, its remarkable achievements in this field give expression to only a fraction of its impressive **scientific expertise** and technological proficiency. Perhaps some of the most striking evidence of this is that on the eve of its 60th anniversary of independence, Israel has 70 companies listed on the tech-heavy Nasdaq Stock Exchange, more than can be claimed by any other country in the world outside the United States and Canada. Given that Israel's 7,000,000 inhabitants constitute only some 0.1% of the world's population, this statistic is absolutely extraordinary. *Perhaps it was the limited natural resources at its disposal that created the sort of challenge that resulted in Israel - and Israelis - investing so much in the development of an economic infrastructure that would be dependent only on **human ingenuity**.* Necessity, apparently, really is the mother of invention, and whether in the area of agricultural technology, optics, biomedicine, computer science, military engineering, genetics, environmental studies, physics, solar energy, or telecommunications, Israelis can be found **at the forefront of innovation**. In the last five years alone, four have been awarded a Nobel Prize. Given this impressive set of achievements, is it merely a coincidence that Israel's first president did not come from a background of politics, diplomacy, law, or the military, but rather was a prominent scientist?

Israel's success in the fields of science and technology has been the result of conscious design. The country has made a huge investment in technological education and has a higher concentration of scientists and engineers - and spends a greater percentage of its Gross Domestic Product on hi-tech research and development - than any other country in the world. The result has been not only international recognition of our achievements, but also the influx of foreign investments and venture capital that have sustained a rate of economic growth that in 2007 outpaced that of the United States, Great Britain, Europe and Japan. All of this is even more impressive if one considers that these accomplishments have been racked up against the background of a military conflict imposed upon Israel by its neighbors with which it has had to contend since its inception. One can only imagine what will yet emerge in an era of peace. Still, this is only part of the economic picture in Israel. The country also has far too many children living below the poverty line, and the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" has grown in recent years to proportions that were unthinkable in Israel's early days when it was far more socialist in its orientation than is the case in today's atmosphere of free-market economics. *The challenge today is ensuring equal **economic opportunity** for all.* While the days of **rationing eggs and butter** are gone forever, we must now strive to create a society in which all of Israel's citizens will be able to enjoy the country's general **financial prosperity**.

We neither reward nor punish our children for their fathers' business transactions. Each generation is given a new start. Therefore, all our educational institutions are free from the elementary schools to the Zion University. All the pupils must wear the same kind of simple clothing... We think it is unethical to single out children according to their parents' wealth or social rank.

Theodor Herzl,
imagining a future Jewish state
in his utopian novel *Atneuland*



We Jews possess an exceptional gift for physical activity. It may be that this will appear paradoxical since we have been accustomed for generations to view ourselves in the mirror that our enemies have held up to us, and so to discover any number of physical blemishes. It is true that our muscles have been weakened and that our attitudes and postures are not always satisfactory... but when Jews do engage in sport their defects vanish, their postures improve, their muscles become strong and their general health gets better.

Dr. Max Nordau, making an impassioned plea for Muscular Judaism at the second Zionist Congress, 1898

One thing that financial prosperity affords is the opportunity to engage in more leisure time activity. But the truth is, sports have been a major part of life in Israel even during periods of austerity. In fact, nurturing **athletic prowess** has been a part of the Zionist ethos since its early years. *Those who sought the national liberation of our people also concerned themselves with the challenge of creating a "new Jew" who would emerge revitalized in both body and spirit from the ghettos to which we had been confined.* It is no wonder that the proud Maccabees, prepared to fight for their right to self-determination more than 2000 years ago, were regarded as heroes of the Zionist movement. And it is no wonder that the first Jewish sporting organization, founded in 1895, was named after them. Originally concerned with **animating the body**, the World Maccabi Union has also played a vital role in **animating the nation**, both through the international Maccabiah games now held every four years in Israel, and through the hundreds of athletic clubs it sponsors around the world. The most famous of them is undoubtedly Maccabi Tel Aviv, which put Israel on the map of international athletics when it won the European basketball championship in 1977 – a title it has gone on to capture four more times since then. Such achievements, along with the six Olympic medals won by Israeli athletes, and the numerous trophies collected by others in fields ranging from judo and wrestling to windsurfing and tennis, have kept Israel prominently in view on the stage of world sports.

Sports is only one aspect of the dynamic, multifaceted, ever-evolving Israeli way of life. Literature, music, art, film, theater, dance, and gastronomy comprise other dimensions of the rich **cultural innovation** and prolific creativity that have characterized the Zionist venture since its inception. (Today, Israel purportedly has more museums per capita than any other country in the world, and publishes the second largest number of books relative to the size of its population.) While much of Israel's cultural scene is the evolutionary outcome of the spontaneous expression of those who make up the society, some of it is also the product of a revolutionary effort on the part of movement ideologues concerned with *the challenge of **creating a tradition** that would meld elements of the Jewish legacy with the contemporary experience of return.* The Bezalel Academy of Art, founded in Jerusalem back in 1906 and arguably Israel's oldest prominent cultural institution, is a classic example of this, named as it is after the accomplished Biblical sculptor and artisan. Undoubtedly, however, the revival of the Hebrew language was the single most important contribution to this effort, enabling the millions of immigrants who came speaking so many different languages to connect not only with one another, but also with their heritage. This has had a profound influence on Israeli culture. Despite the variety of customs, rituals and beliefs characteristic of the communities from which Israel's diverse Jewish population derives, we are all linked to a common past – an essential factor in preserving our unity as we go about **choreographing the future** together.

[Among] the foundations of Zionism [is] ensuring the future and the distinctiveness of the Jewish people by furthering Jewish, Hebrew and Zionist education, fostering spiritual and cultural values and teaching Hebrew as the national language.

Jerusalem Program



[Arthur] Ruppin took me for a walk over the dunes to the north of the town. When we had got well out into the sands – I remember that it came over our ankles – he stopped, and said, very solemnly: ‘Here we shall create a Jewish city!’

Chaim Weizman
First President of Israel,
recalling the founding
of Tel Aviv

The center of Israel’s cultural scene is undoubtedly Tel Aviv – not surprising considering that upwards of 35% of the country’s population lives within its greater metropolitan area. What is surprising, however, is the statistic itself. When the city was founded in 1909, it was literally nothing more than empty sand dunes on which a few dozen families sought to create a “Hebrew urban centre in a healthy environment, planned according to the rules of aesthetics and modern hygiene.” It was conceived of as part of the “garden city movement,” an approach to urban planning that came into vogue at the end of the 19th century when the first Zionist Congresses were held. *Garden cities were intended to meet the challenge of developing in a manner that we might refer to today as **sustainable urbanization** – as planned communities surrounded by greenbelts with broad boulevards and carefully balanced areas of residences, industry, and agriculture.* Further reflecting this optimistic and confident outlook towards the future is the city’s name itself, borrowed from the Hebrew translation of Theodor Herzl’s utopian novel **Old-New Land** (*Altneuland*) published in 1902 in which he described in glorious detail what the Jewish State he imagined coming into being would look like 20 years hence. Now, less than a century later, **Tel Aviv** has been designated by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage Site.

Israel today represents a blending of two impulses that are fundamental to the ethos of the Jewish state. On the one hand, there is the penchant for “normalization,” a watchword of the Zionist movement since its beginnings. We wanted nothing more than to be “a nation like every other nation” enjoying the same basic rights and conditions to which every ordinary people is entitled: a land, a language, and a culture of our own, as well as a reasonable measure of control over our destiny so that we might endeavor to be masters of our own fate. On the other hand, we have also been motivated by a sense of mission embedded deep within our tradition to become “a light unto the nations,” striving to fulfill our responsibility to the family of nations by creating an exemplary society that might benefit all of humanity. *Herein lies yet another challenge of Jewish statehood: reconciling the natural partiality towards parochialism with our predilection for universalism.* Perhaps it is in the words of the great sage Hillel the Elder that we might find some guidance. ‘If I am not for myself, who will be for me?’ he asked more than 2000 years ago, but went on to caution, “If I am only for myself, what am I? Israel seems to have internalized that message, striving to be a **caring nation both at home and abroad**, not only concerning itself with those dwelling within its borders but also extending a helping hand overseas through its extensive program of outreach to developing countries, its readiness to receive refugees, and its generous participation in international relief efforts.

[Among] the foundations of Zionism [is]. . . strengthening Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state and shaping it as an exemplary society with a unique moral and spiritual character, marked by mutual respect for the multi-faceted Jewish people, rooted in the vision of the prophets, striving for peace and contributing to the betterment of the world.

Jerusalem Program

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THE VISITOR'S GUIDE

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