

# ישראל 50

A MODERN MIRACLE

נס בימינו

First Fruits of Zion





# 50

# Israel

## A Modern Miracle

What is required to build a nation? In the case of Israel, it was a combination of factors. Primarily, it called for a Jewish people who were scattered and persecuted throughout the world in need of their homeland, the determination and faith of many who reminded the God of Abraham of His promise thousands of years before, and finally, an inexplicable miracle by the hand of the Eternal, who keeps His promises for all generations.

Once again, the Lord has done mighty things for our people. He has seen fit in His infinite knowledge to return us to our own country; to bless us once again with a homeland and to revive our strength and desire to fight for her existence.

Many decades have passed since the early pioneers saw their dream become reality. We as a people, have endured with the help of God. We invite you to now travel with us through recent history as we relate the awesome story of our "Jewish Legend."

# Israel

1948–1957

There are no words monumental enough to describe the birthing of the nation of Israel: home land to the Jewish people dispersed throughout the world. It was against incredible odds and great enemies (both spiritual and physical) that our Land became a recognized nation.

From the very onset of the official declaration of a Jewish homeland by David Ben Gurion, our nation fought and strove earnestly, in blood, tears and prayer. Only hours after his speech to the world declaring our independence, attacks upon all military fronts of our small nation began, and have continued, relentlessly and unceasingly for years.

The first decade of existence for the infant nation of Israel was marked by insurmountable difficulties. Many of the new immigrants arriving in the Land had no more than the clothes on their backs and the dream to live in the country which was promised to their fathers generations before. In addition, there was no government system, no established currency, and a scarce military structure. In order for our Land to survive, we needed all the protection we could get, and within a short time, the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) was established. Men *and* women were serving to protect this precious gift that so many people had yearned for throughout the exile.

The first population census took place in September 1948 where 600,000 Israelis were counted and cherished. This included civilian and military alike. Of this number, more than 65% were illiterate in our national language—Hebrew. The government recognized this urgent need and implemented all-day schooling for its citizens, provided food rations for them as they studied or performed military services, and established a Jewish educational system for their children.

Without a doubt, it was only by the hand of God that the frail, yet vigilant nation of Israel rose in the face of immense adversity to be the place of protection and life that He had intended it to be thousands of years ago.



## Born in a Day

May 14, 1948

Ben Gurion announces the establishment of the State of Israel. “Who has ever heard of such a thing?... Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?” (Isaiah 66:8).



## War of Independence

Armored half-tracks from the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade on maneuvers, 1948.

The infant State of Israel had to fight for her right to exist during the War of Independence after having been invaded by seven Arab countries: Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

“Come,” they say, “let us destroy them as a nation that the name of Israel be remembered no more.” (Psalm 83:4)



## The East

New arrivals from Teharan, 1951.

“Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger... And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children.” (Jeremiah 32:39)



## Eser “10”

1958 – Israel’s ten year poster celebrating a decade of independence and statehood in the face of tremendous opposition.



Zion’s Gate. Bullet marks testify to the battle which raged here in 1948 for possession of the gates of Jerusalem’s Old City. Zion’s Gate was recaptured from the Jordanians in 1967.

“Be gracious to me , O Lord... Thou who dost lift me up from the gates of death: That I may tell of Your praises, that in the gates of the Daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Thy salvation.” (Psalm 9:13)



Haganah recruits standing guard in 1948



## They Will Come!

Oldest Yemenite to survive the desert trek. Many of his comrades are buried in Aden. In December 1949, Operation Magic Carpet enabled practically the entire Jewish community of Yemen to be air-lifted to Israel. Most of them, like the prophet Isaiah, had never seen an airplane before: “Who are these that fly along like clouds, like the doves to their nests?... bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel....” (Isaiah 60:8–9)



Buses, cars, bicycles and camels on Allenby Street Tel Aviv, 1948.

# Israel

1958–1967

In the continued struggle to survive as a nation and to define who our nation was, the Israeli government spent the last months of 1958 issuing identification cards to the citizens of Israel. Controversy arose with regard to the question, “Who is a Jew?” and many Orthodox rabbis were outraged that the ID cards stated “Jewish” as the nationality, rather than “Israeli.”

This was one of the first times that our people acted in opposition to each other in this matter. While dispersed among the nations, we were accustomed to standing tall together in defense of a Jewish nationality.

The second decade of our existence brought great hope, but at the same time a conspiracy arose against our people. Early in the 1960’s, the first organized terrorist group, the Palestinian Liberation Organization was formed, with Yasser Arafat as leader, and carried out several attacks against the Jewish people in Israel. Our helplessness to defend our children was pacified for a time by the victory God handed our nation in the Six Day War. This war, fought in 1967 in defense against another major attack by the neighboring Arab countries of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, restored almost 50% more land which God had promised as an eternal possession. In addition we regained the Western Wall (the *Kotel*)—a place to come and pray which was as close as possible to the former site of the Holy Temple.

One can never know, without having been there, the surge of emotion and gratitude that flowed forth to the Lord as His people once again rekindled the flame of worship and praise from His Holy City, on His Holy Mountain. All pain, fighting, tears and anguish must have momentarily died as the Jewish people heard, “The Kotel is ours! We have claimed Jerusalem!”



## *Es'rim “20”*

1968, Israel’s 20-year poster. The light of this nation’s existence continues to burn only because the Lion of the tribe of Judah “neither slumbers nor sleeps.” (Psalm 121:3)



Outskirts of Rafa, June 1967



Teddy Kollek was elected mayor of Jerusalem in 1965, an office which he held for the next 29 years. He will be remembered for his words, “We are making Jerusalem beautiful for the Messiah.”



## Sound The Shofar!

Rabbi Goren blowing the shofar at the Western Wall on June 7, 1967. After almost 2000 years of longing and waiting, this moment signaled the return to Jewish sovereignty of this holy site and the city of Jerusalem. Rabbi Yeshua prophesied and said, "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:24)



The Six Day War, 1967. Struck with awe, these young paratroopers stood gazing at the Western Wall. Sounds of tears and laughter were heard as they tried to fathom the miracle of having regained this ancient site.



## From the North— They Will Come!

The *aliya* continues: Newly arrived immigrant children from Russia at Ben Gurion Airport. September 19, 1965.



## By My Spirit

Menorah by Benno Elkan standing opposite the new Knesset building in Jerusalem dedicated in 1966. On it the following Scripture is a constant reminder that the Holy One of Israel will bring to pass what He has spoken, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord Almighty." (Zechariah 4:6)

# Israel

## 1968–1977

Our third decade, in comparison, seemed a bit more quiet and uneventful after our first pioneering twenty years. The Yom Kippur war occurred in the mid-seventies with a simultaneous attack against us by both Egypt and Syria. Fighting and struggles continued for weeks, gaining land and losing it again. As discouraging as the outcome of this war may have seemed, it was the venue through which the Lord provided our nation with a physical means of protection in the North—the Golan Heights. Without the recapturing of such grandiose mountains and valleys, our lower valleys are nearly defenseless.

Waves of terrorism also marked this decade. Murderous attacks were repeatedly committed against school children, mothers and infants, young teenagers and soldiers by PLO terrorist groups. As if war itself were not bad enough, our people were thrown into constant fear and concern because of the threat of terrorism against their own homes.

A turning point and a time for maturity occurred when David Ben Gurion passed away in late 1973. In many ways, he was the earthly father of our nation. He had lived in pre-Israel Jerusalem, fought wars and protested for her, and then proclaimed her as the capital of the newly born State. His famous and heartfelt speech to the world in defense of Israel's very existence, can be compared to the pride and concern that a new father has for his own child birthed before his eyes. David Ben Gurion played a pivotal role at the beginning of the "Jewish Legend". Our gratitude and thanks belong to this man who persevered and was used of the Lord to bring forth the nation of the Jewish people—Israel.



### The Yom Kippur War

Israeli troops move toward the Suez, 1973  
(Picture also on opposite page.)



### They Will Come

Ship bringing Latin American immigrants to the harbor in Haifa, 1969



Moshe Dayan, Yom Kippur War, October 6, 1973. He was the IDF's fourth Chief of Staff and was appointed as Minister of Defense in 1967 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1977. Dayan died in 1981.



The Yom Kippur War erupted in 1973 when Israel was unexpectedly attacked by Egypt and Syria on the holiest day of the Biblical calendar.

“Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised your voice?... Against the Holy One of Israel.”  
(Isaiah 37:23)



## A Special Place

The Jewish people now have access to the Kotel, also commonly called the Western Wall after 20 years.



## Peace in the Land

1977 – Moshe Dayan, Egypt’s President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin at dinner in the King David Hotel. Sadat was the first Head of State to visit Israel since her statehood in 1948.



## Shloshim “30”

1978 – Israel’s 30 year poster depicting the cry for a peace yet to be achieved.

# Israel

## 1978–1987

Several demoralizing events shocked our nation during the eighties. Our soldiers fought in a low-scale war against Lebanon in 1982, only to have the standing cease-fire agreement violated by Syria. Although the situation was soon brought under control, Israel was portrayed as a demagogue and villain by the world media.

The rate of immigration continued at a steady pace from the first decade, bringing in many Ethiopian Jews during the eighties.

Some of the most stifling events in the history of Israel counteracted the joy of our growing nation. During the early 1980's, in three different situations, under the leadership of Shimon Peres, over 6,500 enemy prisoners of war and terrorists from Moslem countries were released in exchange for a total of 8 Israeli prisoners of war. To consider the potential danger that our country released in return for eight lives, might seem irrational. On the other hand, there is perhaps no other country in the world with a respect and value for human life equal to Israel.

The peace treaties that were signed during the eighties with Egypt and Lebanon left no lasting mark, since one of the greatest anti-Jewish uprisings since the inception of Israel now took place—the *Intifada* (uprising). Within only a few short months, Palestinians living inside the Israeli borders had strengthened themselves against Israeli authority and were carrying out hundreds of direct attacks against Jews weekly. Closure of the Gaza Strip and other Palestinian neighborhoods was the only means of control that the military had in combatting threats and acts of terrorism against our homeland.

The eighties brought about tremendous change in the Middle East. The news media continued their campaign of castigating Israel as we contended with riots, acts of terror and uprisings on our own soil. In addition, two prominent leaders died: Moshe Dayan (one of the great leaders who helped to shape Israel over the past 40 years, and also a popular and well-respected international figure) and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt.



### The Uprising

Young Arabs throwing stones and shouting obscenities at IDF during the *Intifada* (uprising). 1988 saw the start of this violent and ongoing uprising of Palestinians against Israel and her right to possess her ancient homeland.



“Operation Peace for the Galilee” 1982: Israel launched an offensive against Lebanon in an attempt to secure peace for the towns and settlements in the North of Israel, which for many years had been subjected to katyusha rockets and terrorist attacks from across the Lebanese border.



August 1982 – Syrian tanks captured by the IDF during “Operation Peace for the Galilee” in Lebanon. Although a 40 km security zone, which brought relative peace and quiet to the residents in the North, was established, Israel would continue to pay a high cost in terms of soldiers being killed in the security zone of Lebanon.



## Peace in the Land

1978 – Presidents Carter and Sadat and Prime Minister Begin signing the documents of the “framework for peace” after the Camp David Summit.

Damascus Gate remains the scene of violent demonstrations by those who have set their sights on Jerusalem as part of an independent Palestinian state. But the Word of the Almighty stands: “Violence will not be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders. But you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise.” (Isaiah 60:18)



## Arba'im “40”

1988, Israel's 40-year poster. A whole generation had witnessed the faithfulness of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who had preserved this nation against all odds and caused her land to flourish like a flower.



# Israel

## 1988–1997

The beginning of our fifth decade was met by war with Saddam Hussein as he invaded Kuwait. It was not long however, before rockets were plummeting into northern Israel and Tel Aviv. In accordance with all requests from the UN and America, Israel did not retaliate. Gas masks were distributed to all citizens to be carried at all times. Operation “Desert Storm” commenced against Iraq and scud missiles continued to fall within our borders, threatening the lives of innocent people.

Aliyah from Ethiopia was taking place on a large scale, and the influx of Russians began to increase dramatically. Our economic, educational and health systems had been set in place and were thriving. The first direct election for the office of Prime Minister occurred in 1992 when Yitzak Rabin was elected.

Rabin served little more than three years before his tragic assassination. During his time in office, the Oslo Agreements were drafted and signed with the aid of US President Bill Clinton. Shortly following this, peace agreements with Jordan were also signed in a similar manner.

The “security” that was supposed to be achieved by these agreements has yet to be experienced in our land. Terrorism rose dramatically as many of our people were killed in suicide bombings on buses and in crowded shopping areas.

A great swell of emotion encompassed our nation upon Rabin’s death. Fear and uncertainty in the face of such unstable conditions burdened our nation. Elections occurred shortly afterwards and the people elected Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu, who won by only a single percentage point.

Our people and our country can only put their trust in the God of our forefathers to give the same wisdom, perseverance and courage to our leaders now, as He did to those who founded our nation. To live in this land and be a part of our people—Israel—is breathtaking and yet at times disheartening. We who strive to keep the flames of the Jewish Legend lit, and who daily make the prayerful statement that our people will continue to have a homeland, know that it is by the hand of the Almighty God alone that we draw our breath for each new day.



### Scuds...

Soldiers inspecting a scud missile in Ramat Gan – Tel Aviv. The Gulf War again testified to God’s faithfulness as He protected His people by guiding 39 Iraqi missiles to targets that claimed no human lives. Posters, giving thanks unto Him, lined the streets of Tel Aviv.

“Ascribe strength to God; His majesty is over Israel, and His strength is in the skies.” (Psalm 68:34)



### From the South

Operation Solomon—Ethiopian immigrants, 1991.

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings.” (Zephaniah 3:10)



## ... And More Scuds!

A picture of a trapped homeowner beneath ruins, seconds after a scud exploded in his yard during the Gulf War. February 12, 1991.



## Our City

Jerusalem sits under a blanket of snow. 1992

## More Peace?

(Below) Prime Minister Rabin, President Clinton, and Arafat shake hands after signing the Oslo Accord in 1993. (Pictured right) Peace is agreed upon with Jordan. A solemn warning is issued in Isaiah 59:5, "They do not know the way of peace, and there is no justice in their tracks..." But a word of hope is given in Isaiah 66:10, "Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her, for thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river..'"



## We're Waiting, Oh Lord!

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in." (Psalm 24:7)