



ISRAEL

OUR HOMELAND



Setting the Stage

The Economic Explosion in Israel

Excerpt from "Start Up Nation" by Dan Senor and Saul Singer

While the holy land has for centuries attracted pilgrims, lately it has been flooded by seekers of a different sort. Google's CEO and chairman, Eric Schmidt, told us that the United States is the number one place in the world for entrepreneurs, but "after the U.S., Israel is the best."

Microsoft's Steve Ballmer has called Microsoft "an Israeli company as much as an American company" because of the size and centrality of its Israeli teams. Warren Buffett, the apostle of risk aversion, broke his decades-long record of not buying any foreign company with the purchase of an Israeli company – for \$4.5 billion- just as Israel began to fight the 2006 Lebanon war.

It is impossible for major technology companies to ignore Israel, and most haven't; almost half of the world's top technology companies have bought start-ups or opened

research and development centers in Israel. Cisco alone has acquired nine Israeli companies and is looking to buy more.

"In two days in Israel, I saw more opportunities than in a year in the rest of the world," said Paul Smith, senior vice president of Philips Medical. Gary Shainberg, British Telecom's VP for technology and innovation, told us, "There are more new innovative ideas, as opposed to recycled ideas- or old ideas repackaged in a new box- coming out of Israel than there are out in [Silicon] Valley now. And it doesn't slow during global economic downturns.

Though Israel's technology story is becoming more widely known, those exposed to it for the first time are invariably baffled. As an NBC Universal vice president sent to scout for Israeli digital media companies wondered, "Why is all this happening in Israel? I've never seen so much chaos and so much innovation all in one tiny place."

“Though Israel’s technology story is becoming more widely known, those exposed to it for the first time are invariably baffled.”

Questions to Consider

- ▶ What is the secret to Israel's success?
- ▶ So many nations were in Israel before the Jews - why were they not successful in building up the country?
- ▶ What is the significance of Israel's success?
- ▶ Why should we care about what is going on in Israel?

ENGAGING THE TEXT

Israel and the Jewish People

בראשית פרק יב פסוק א

ויאמר ה' אל אברם לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראך

רש"י שם

לך לך - להנאתך ולטובת

Beraishis (Genesis) 12:1

Ad-noy said to Avram, "Go from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, [and go] to the land that I will show you.

Rashi, ibid.

Go for yourself - For your own benefit and for your own advantage.

בראשית פרק טו פסוק יח

ביום ההוא כרת ה' את אברם ברית לאמר
לזרעך נתתי את הארץ הזאת מנהר מצרים עד הנהר הגדל נהר פרת

רמב"ן שם

ובפעם השלישית באר לו תחומי הארץ,
והזכיר לו כל העמים עשרה אומות, והוסיף לכוות לו ברית עליהן שלא יגרומם החטא,
וכאשר צוהו על המילה אמר לו
"לאחזת עולם" (להלן יז ח), לאמר שאם יגלו ממנה עוד ישובו וינחלוה.
והוסיף "והייתי להם לאלהים",
שהוא בכבודו ינהיג אותם ולא יהיו בממשלת כוכב ומזל או שר משרי מעלה

Beraishis (Genesis) 15:18

On that day Ad-noy made a covenant with Avram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the Euphrates.

Ramban, *ibid.*

At the third promise of G-d to Avraham, He elaborated the exact borders of the land and mentioned to him all the ten nations whose lands were included in the promise. He also went further and sealed a covenant with him over those lands, thus ensuring that no sin should ever lead to the revocation of the promise.

When G-d commanded Avraham concerning circumcision, He said to him “for an everlasting possession”. This meant that even if they would be exiled from their land, they would eventually return and re-inherit it. He added further “and I shall be a G-d to them,” meaning that He Himself, in his glory, would lead them, and they would not be subject to the rule of any constellation or any of the heavenly ministers.

רמב"ן ויקרא פרק כו פסוק ט

וכן מה שאמר בכאן (בפסוק לב) "ושממו עליה אויביכם",
היא בשורה טובה מבשרת בכל הגליות שאין ארצנו מקבלת את אויבינו,
וגם זו ראייה גדולה והבטחה לנו, כי לא תמצא בכל הישוב
ארץ אשר היא טובה ורחבה ואשר היתה נושבת מעולם והיא חרבה כמוה,
כי מאז יצאנו ממנה לא קבלה אומה ולשון, וכולם משתדלים להושיבה ואין לאל ידם:

Ramban, *Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:9*

When scripture states: “and your foes who dwell upon it , will be desolate,” this is proclaiming regarding all the exiles that our land will never receive our enemies as inhabitants in our place. This is a great proof and promise to us that we will be redeemed from the current exile and return to the land of Israel. For in all civilization there cannot be found a land that is good and spacious, and that had always been settled, that is left desolate, as Eretz Yisroel is now, which, from the time we left it, has never received any nation or nationality. And although all of them have attempted to settle it they have not been able to do so.



- ▶ What benefits does the land give us?
- ▶ Why is Abraham not told where he is going?
- ▶ Why is having a land so important?

ENGAGING THE TEXT

What is Unique About the Land of Israel?

דברים פרק יא

י כי הארץ אשר אתה בא שמה לרשתה לא כארץ מצרים הוא אשר יצאתם משם
אשר תזרע את זרעך והשקית ברגלך כגן הירק:
יא והארץ אשר אתם עברים שמה לרשתה ארץ הרים ובקעת למטר השמים תשתה מים:
יב ארץ אשר ה' אלהיך דרש אתה תמיד עיני ה' אלהיך בה
מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) Chapter 11

10 For the land where you are arriving to inherit is not like the land of Egypt from which you departed, where you planted your seed and watered [it] on foot like a vegetable garden.

11 Rather, the land where you are crossing to inherit is a land of mountains and plains--- by the rain of the skies will you drink water.

12 A land that Ad-noy, your G-d, looks after; the eyes of Ad-noy, your G-d, are always upon it, from the year's beginning until the year's end.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף פז עמוד א

ועלית - מלמד שבית המקדש גבוה מארץ ישראל, וארץ ישראל גבוה מכל הארצות

Talmud Sanhedrin 87a

“And you shall ascend” - this teaches that the Holy Temple is higher than any other points in the land of Israel. Furthermore, the land of Israel is higher than any other land.

אלשיך פרשת לך לך פרק יב פסוק א

יוצא מזה, שהישראלי השוכן בארץ ישראל דבק בשורשו, כי אויר דארץ ישראל קדוש, וימשיך בו בדרך ישרה איכות נפשו, נמצא שהוא שלם בלי פירוד

Alshich on Beraishis 12:1

We see from here that a Jew who dwells in the land of Israel attaches himself to his true self. The reason for this is the air in Israel is holy and leads a person in the proper path for his soul and leads to perfection.



- ▶ Why is it easier to connect to our true selves in Israel?
- ▶ Why does rain make the land so special?
- ▶ Is Israel really the highest place in the world?

ENGAGING THE TEXT

How Do We Become Connected to the Land?

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ל עמוד א

היה עומד בחוץ לארץ - יכוין את לבו כנגד ארץ ישראל

Talmud Brachos 30a

If one is standing outside the land of Israel, he should direct his heart towards the land of Israel.

דברים רבה (וילנא) פרשה ב ד"ה ח ה' אלהים

א"ר לוי אמר לפניו רבש"ע עצמותיו של יוסף נכנסו לארץ ואני איני נכנס לארץ אמר לו הקב"ה מי שהודה בארצו נקבר בארצו ומי שלא הודה בארצו אינו נקבר בארצו, יוסף הודה בארצו מנין גבירתו אומרת (בראשית לט) "ראו הביא לנו איש עברי וגו'" ולא כפר אלא שם (בראשית מ) גנב גנבתי מארץ העברים נקבר בארצו מנין שנא' (יהושע כד) "ואת עצמות יוסף אשר העלו מארץ מצרים" קברו בשכם את שלא הודית בארצך אין אתה נקבר בארצך כיצד בנות יתרו אומרות (שמות ב) איש מצרי הצילנו מיד הרועים והוא שומע ושותק לפיכך לא נקבר בארצו

Devarim Rabbah (Vilna) Parshah 2

Rabbi Levi said: Moshe asked G-d, why the bones of Yosef were able to enter the land of Israel but he would not be able to? G-d answered Moshe that only someone who attaches himself to the land, and considers the land his, can be buried in the land. Yosef called himself an Ivri (person from the land of Israel) when he confronted Pharaoh. It is in this merit that he would be buried in Israel. Moshe, however, called himself an Egyptian when meeting his father in law Jethro and would therefore not be buried in Israel.

שולחן ערוך יורה דעה סימן רנא סעיף ג

ויושבי ארץ ישראל קודמין ליושבי חוצה לארץ.

Shulchan Aruch - Yoreh Dei'ah 251:3

Supporting the poor from the land of Israel takes precedence to supporting the poor outside Israel.

מהרל אבות ה:ט

וכאשר ישראל דומים ומתדמים אל האבות אז יש להם הארץ

Maharal - Pirkei Avos 5:9

The more the Jewish people replicate and follow the path of their forefathers (Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov) the more they will take possession of the land of Israel.

 **Q**uestions
to Consider

- ▶ What were the ways of our forefathers?
- ▶ How do we follow in their ways?
- ▶ How can we make Israel more part of lives, and in what way can we be part of its success?
- ▶ Which charitable opportunities would interest you in Israel?