



## Text of the Megilah

The Land of 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.

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.

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES

HaShem said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you; I will make your name great, And you shall be a blessing" (**Bereshit 12:1-2**)

יהוה appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your offspring." (**Bereshit 12:7**)

For He has said: "It is too little that you should be My servant In that I raise up the tribes of Jacob And restore the survivors of Israel: I will also make you a light the agent of good fortune of nations, That My salvation may reach the ends of the earth." (**Isaiah 49:6**)

Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel this year we are slaves, next year we will be free people. (**Haggadah**)

But Judah shall be inhabited for ever, And Jerusalem from generation to generation (**Joel 4:20**)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What have the Jewish people given to the world?

What does it really mean to come back home after being in exile for centuries?

What has come with the price of returning home?

What does it mean to keep faith of the Jewish people?

If you had the opportunity to reinvent the state of Israel for the first time, would you start with language, community, economy, or where to live?

Do you feel at home in Israel?

What would need to change in order for you to feel more at home in Israel?

How can Israel have peace while defending itself at the same time?

How do these sources add to the text of the Megillah?





## STEP II:

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How can we bridge the gap between Jews in Israel and Jews around the world?  
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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.

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

We want to lay the foundation stone for the home, that is destined to be a safe haven for the Jewish people. This undertaking is so great, that we must speak of it only in the simplest words. Zionism is the return to Judaism even before the return to the land of the Jews. On this cordial occasion, when Jews from so many lands are assembled together, to hear the clarion call, the ancient call of the people, we must again cordially repeat this our belief... [Zionism] is a legal and civilized movement full of love of the masses, with the ancient and coveted goal of our people. **(selected passages from Herzl's speech at the First Zionist Congress)**

"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 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." I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation." **(Balfour Declaration)**



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What impact did Hertzl leave in the founding of the state of Israel?

What weight does the first Zionist congress carry today?

Do you think the Jewish people have a right to return to their land?

Do you think there is importance in having international recognition of the right for Jews to return to Israel?

What was the goal of Zionism back then and what is the aim and goal now?

How does being a Jew from outside of Israel look different than living in Israel?

What is your goal for spreading light to others as a Jew living outside of Israel?

How do the additional sources add to the text of the Megillah?



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## Text of the Megilah

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.

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

"Some have argued that many Jewish DPs (Displaced persons) naturally came to see the establishment of a Jewish state as the only solution to their displacement. It also became a central part of their postwar Jewish identities.<sup>1</sup> Others have suggested that Zionist activists were responsible for recruiting support for the idea of a Jewish state among the DP population. Whatever its origins, so-called "DP Zionism" helped shape the politics and the daily lives of Jewish DPs" (**US Holocaust Museum**)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Is the Holocaust the only reason for founding the state of Israel?

How much of an impact does the Holocaust continue to have in day to day life in Israel?

Does the Holocaust shape your personal Jewish identity and zionism?

Was there the same sense of urgency to reestablish the state of Israel before and after the Holocaust?

Was the return to Israel true freedom? What does it mean to be truly free in your own land?

How can Jewish people living outside of Israel spread light?





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### Text of the Megilat.

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 the virtue of our national 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

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Considers that the present situation in Palestine is one which is likely to impair the general welfare and friendly relations among nations;... Takes note of the declaration by the mandatory power that it plans to complete its evacuation of Palestine by August 1948;... Recommends to the United Kingdom, as the mandatory power for Palestine, and to all other members of the United Nations the adaptation and implementing, with regard to the future government of Palestine of the plan of partition with economic union set out below"

**(Passages from the partition plan of the UN General Assembly)**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does a Jewish State mean to you?

Do you see value in having a Jewish state?

Is there value to being a Jewish and democratic state?

If one should take precedence, would it be a Jewish state or a democratic state?

Do you feel that Israel has accomplished its goal of being a sovereign Jewish state?

What does independence mean to you?

If you were sitting at the table the day the declaration of independence was signed, what do you think this would have meant to you?

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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".

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### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

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. The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy. An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration to assist and take part in the development of the country. The Zionist organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

**(Articles 2-4 of the British mandate of Palestine)**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think the founders of the state chose the name Israel?
- Would you have chosen a different name for the new state?
- Has Israel upheld its promise of ingathering exiles?
- How have we seen Israel keep its declaration of justice, freedom, and peace for all inhabitants?
- What more can be done to ensure equality is fully realized in Israel?
- Is it important for Israel to be a safehaven for Jews around the world?
- How can we ensure that Israel is a pluralistic environment for all types of Jews?





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### Text of the Megilat.

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.

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Calls upon the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put this plan into effect;

Appeals to all governments and all peoples to refrain from taking any action which might hamper or delay the carrying out of these recommendations, and

Authorizes the Secretary General to reimburse travel and subsistence

appropriate in the circumstances, and to provide the Commission with the necessary staff to assist in carrying out the functions

assigned to the Commission by the General Assembly. (**passages from UNGA resolution 181 from 29 November**)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How has Israel grown since the founding of the state?

Is the Zionist dream of a Jewish state fully realized?

If not, what else can be done to fulfill this?

What does true "full and equal citizenship" look like?

How can we ensure all people living in the land of Israel are treated equally?





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WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, 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 the 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)

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Rock of Israel, arise to Israel's defense. Fulfill Your promise to deliver Judah and Israel. Our Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, HaShem Tz'va-ot. Praised are You, HaShem, Redeemer of the people Israel. (**Blessings of the Shema**)

Just as this lily continues to exist due to its fragrance. so Israel continues to exist due to mitzvot and good deeds. Just as this lily is only for its fragrance, so too, the righteous were created only for the redemption of Israel. (**Shir haShirim Rabbah 2:2**)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Has Israel aided in the advancement of the Middle East?

Does the concept of love thy neighbors apply to the nations surrounding you?

Did the diaspora rally enough for the state of Israel?

Is the connection between Israel and the diaspora stronger or weaker now than it was at the founding of the state of Israel?

Who is the "rock of Israel" and how does this rock look differently to different groups of people living in Israel?





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