

**Seven Decades of Torah Life in the State of Israel**

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# STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

The first independent Jewish State in 19 centuries was born in Tel Aviv as the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end at midnight on Friday, and it was immediately subjected to the test of fire. As "Medinat Yisrael" (State of Israel) was proclaimed, the battle for Jerusalem raged, with most of the city falling to the Jews. At the

same time, President Truman announced that the United States would accord recognition to the new State. A few hours later, Palestine was invaded by Moslem armies from the south, east and north, and Tel Aviv was raided from the air. On Friday the United Nations Special Assembly adjourned after adopting a resolution to appoint a mediator but without taking any action on the Partition Resolution of November 29.

Yesterday the battle for the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road was still under way, and two Arab villages were taken. In the north, Acre town was captured, and the Jewish Army consolidated its positions in Western Galilee.

### Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History

Between Thursday night and this morning Palestine went through what by all standards must be among the most crowded hours in its history.

For the Jewish population there was the anguish over the fate of the few hundred Hagdolah men and women in the Kfar Etzion bloc of settlements near Hebron. Their surrender to a fully equipped superior foreign force desperately in need of a victory was a foregone conclusion. What could not be known, with no communications since Thursday morning, was whether and to what extent the Red Cross and the Truce Comms would secure civilized conditions for prisoners and wounded, and proper respect for the dead. Doubts on some of these anxious questions have now been resolved.

On Friday afternoon, from Tel Aviv, came the expected announcement of the Jewish State, and its official naming at birth, "Medinat Yisrael"—State of Israel, with the seating in of the first Council of Government. The proclamation of the State was made at midnight, coinciding with the sitting from Haifa of Britain's last High Commissioner. Within the hour, President Truman announced in Washington that the Government of the United States had decided to give de facto recognition to the Jewish State, with

### Jews Take Over Security Zones

The battle for Jerusalem, which began when the British forces withdrew on Friday morning, continued all day Friday and yesterday. The crackle of small-arms fire and explosions of mortar shells were still being heard in the early hours of this morning as the battle entered its third day.

Repeated efforts on Friday evening and again on Saturday by the U.N. Truce Commission to bring about a "cease fire" were brought to naught when the Arab representatives failed to agree within the specified time limit.

On Friday morning, Jewish forces entered the Russian Compound and Zone C to reoccupy the buildings requisitioned from Jews last year. This operation was almost bloodless, but beyond the western edge of Zone C Arabs engaged the Jews in a fierce fight. The Arabs were forced back and the Barclays Bank area was taken.

In other parts of the city, fighting flared up. Some occurred one after another the areas evacuated by the British. By last night, the quarters and

### Egyptian Air Force Spitfires Bomb Tel Aviv; One Shot Down

Kfar Etzion, the Tel Aviv broadcasting station, reported at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon that Tel Aviv had been bombed three times in the previous evening and morning, and that one plane had been shot down and its Egyptian pilot taken prisoner.

In the first raid, four planes attacked from a height of 300 feet. Two dropped bombs, while the others strafed the city. Little damage was caused. In the second attack two hours later, the airport to the north of the city was bombed, and an Air France plane parked there was damaged. The third raid was launched shortly before midday, but the planes were driven off without causing any damage.

Two settlements in the Negev had also been attacked from the air, the radio reported.

### U.S. Recognizes Jewish State

WASHINGTON, Saturday.—Ten minutes after the termination of the British Mandate on Friday, the White House released a formal statement by President Truman that the U.S. Government intended to recognize the Provisional Jewish Government as the de facto authority representing the Jewish State.

The U.S. is also considering lifting the arms embargo but it is not known whether to Palestine only or the entire Middle East, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Jewish Provisional Government.

The White House press secretary, Mr. Charles Ross, told correspondents today that reaction so far to the recognition had been overwhelmingly favorable. He said this step had been discussed with Mr. Marshall and Mr. Lovett before action was taken, and it had their complete support.

Mr. Ross said that the President had decided several days ago to grant American recognition

### Proclamation by Head of Government

The creation of "Medinat Yisrael", the State of Israel, was proclaimed at midnight on Friday by Mr. David Ben Gurion, until then Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and now head of the State's Provisional Council of Government.



The first act of the Council of Government, as announced by its head, was to abolish all legislation of the 1949 White Paper of the less-than-mandatory Powers, particularly the Ordinance and Orders relating to immigration and land ownership.

In the declaration of independence, Mr. Ben Gurion called on the Arabs of Palestine to restore peace, assuring them full civic rights and full representation in all governmental organs of the State.

Mr. Ben Gurion prefaced the declaration with a review of the historic connection of the Jewish people with the Land of Israel and of their efforts to return, which never ceased throughout the generations of their dispersal, until the Nazi holocaust proved wrong the agency of the need for a Jewish State.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917, confirmed by the League of Nations, had given explicit international recognition to the state of the Jews.

## INTRODUCTION

By the standards of world history, seventy years is a blink of an eye. Yet for the Jewish people, seventy years of Israel's existence is an incredible feat. The State of Israel represents the culmination and realization of the hopes and dreams of thousands of

years, of the desires and yearnings of a people in exile. To Jews, such a relatively short time is infinite in significance. Israel's seventieth year represents much more than just the year after sixty-nine. Seventy years is worthy of respect. After all, the Mishna in Avot

(5:21) states that it is the seventy-year-old who is the "seiva," the "hoary head," the old, wise, mature person, and the Torah commands us to rise before the seiva in great respect (Leviticus 19:32). The seiva deserves respect for spending a life growing, striving, learning, and teaching.

Indeed, in seventy years, Israel has grown and fought, learned and taught. Though it spends so much of its time simply defending its right to exist, it has accomplished more in its seventy years than many other nations have in their long lifetimes. To these seventy years, we stand in deference and respect.

The RIETS students at the Gruss Kollel in Yerushalayim are proud to be able to express this respect with a unique project, spearheaded by fellow Gruss student Aron White, with the assistance Sam Dratch and Jacob Bernstein. In the following pages, seven semikha students of Gruss will discuss the seven decades of Israel's existence by focusing on a point, moment, or personality from each one of the decades. In doing so, they endeavor to paint but a small picture of the State of Israel, yet great in scope, in an effort to rise before the *seiva* that is Israel this year.

From Israel's beginnings in 1948, culminating in the modern State of Israel of 2018, these seven essays of seven decades read as one thematic whole, of an Israel that is rising, growing, expanding. Each essay expresses in some way the hope laid out in our prayer for the State of Israel that as it continues to rise, it will fulfill our messianic dreams, as "the beginning of the blossoming of our redemption."

In what way is that so? Not too long ago in *Daf Yomi*, an interesting passage appeared at the beginning of *Avoda Zara* 8b. There, the Talmud states:

מאה ושמונים שנה קודם שנחרב הבית פשטה מלכות הרשעה על ישראל פ' שנה עד לא חרב הבית גזרו טומאה על ארץ העמים ועל כלי זכויות מ' שנה עד לא חרב הבית גלתה סנהדרין וישבה לה בחנות.

*One hundred and eighty years before the [Second] Temple was destroyed, the evil [Roman] Empire ruled over Israel. Eighty years before the Temple was destroyed, [the Sages] decreed impurity on the land of the nations and on glass vessels. Forty years before the Temple was destroyed, the Sanhedrin was exiled and sat in stores [at the Temple mount].*

What is the meaning of these changes? Rav Kook writes beautifully in *Ein Ayah* (*Shabbat* 16) that each of these represented an important step to ready the Jewish people for exile.

One hundred and eighty years before the exile, when the Jewish people were still strong and united, God's wisdom introduced the concept of change of political power. Even while the Jewish people were still together, they would learn what it means to be ruled over by others. This would indeed inoculate them somewhat from the intense political vulnerability of the long exile, since they would have known of it even before leaving the land.

Eighty years before the exile, the Sages saw that the nation would need a protective ideology when they leave Israel. The declaration of impurity on foreign lands emphasized the specialness and worth of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, even in exile. And the application of impurity to glass vessels, of newly-popular items in Jewish life, symbolized the need to apply the Torah to all new developments in the exile. The first maintains Jewish self-worth even as we are despised in the exile, and the second maintains the Torah's worth and applicability in a world that continually changes.

Finally, forty years before the destruction, the Sanhedrin was exiled. The law, when a people are united, represents the enforcement and

inculcation of that unity, through its moral and spiritual values, a law of love. But as the people became more and more divided, as sectarianism grew, the law was no longer seen as one of accord, but of discord. Slowly but surely, the Sanhedrin ceased to express the law as spiritually edifying — "*dinei nefashot*," and began to be viewed as solely hurtful — "*dinei kenasot*." The exile of the Sanhedrin represented the move of the law from an external force to an internal one, that the law itself is in exile with us, calling on the dispersed multitude to unite within our hearts and minds, even without a land.

In the same way that Rav Kook once wrote that to combat the cause of the destruction, namely, baseless hatred, we need to magnify our baseless love, we can say that to combat exile and truly live in our land, we need to reverse the process the Sages laid out for the needs of the exile. In the following pages, we will learn through our talented writers of the unique politics of Israel and the reestablishment of government in our land; we will learn how Israel has not only helped us realize our self-worth, but has given us pride in our nation and the land; we will learn how the Torah of Israel and its great teachers have tackled the new issues of our age. However, we still wait for the unity of the Jewish people, in the Land of Israel, with a Temple and a Sanhedrin in its rightful place. As Israel endures, we pray for that day when the political, spiritual, and communal unite for us in the future redemption.