In theory, Herzl set no limits on the culture and style of the Jews...
might evolve in the Jewish state. He did not suggest that its language had to be Hebrew or that its culture had to have deep roots in the Jewish religion and in traditional learning. Herzl imagined a secular, high-minded republic in which great respect would be given to the rights of its citizens and religion would be totally separate from the state.

This vision was attacked with great vehemence as soon as Herzl’s view became known, even before he convoked the first World Zionist Congress. The major attack came from Asher Ginsberg, who wrote under the pen name of Ahad Ha-Am. Ginsberg did share with Herzl the religious agnosticism that was common among intellectuals in Europe of that generation, but in every other respect he was Herzl’s opposite. Ahad Ha-Am lived in tsarist Russia, where Jews were much more threatened by their enemies than anywhere else in the world, but anti-Semitism was not his central problem. He presumed that Jew-hatred was, and remained, an endemic disease of the majority society. It went through cycles of rise and decline, but it never quite disappeared. Ahad Ha-Am insisted that Jews could not end the problem of anti-Semitism even by attempting to create their own state. As in all the preceding generations, Jews could only, somehow, find ways of surviving their enemies. Herzl’s Jewish state was no cure because it could not succeed in “normalizing” the Jewish people. The large majority of the millions of Jews in the world would not move to Palestine. The Diaspora would continue to exist in large numbers, and the tension between the Jewish minority and the surrounding majorities would continue, or it would recur in new forms.

But Ahad Ha-Am was a Zionist, the leader of “cultural” Zionism. He preached and worked for the establishment of a Jewish national community in Palestine, and he hoped that this settlement would grow, in time, to a state of its own. The purpose of the Zionist endeavor, according to Ahad Ha-Am, was to create a place for Jews of their very own in which they could refashion their inherited traditions. Ahad Ha-Am had accepted as a given that modern men and women no longer believed in the doctrine of religious Orthodoxy, which held that Jewish existence was based on divine revelation as recorded verbatim in the Bible. He proposed instead that the Jews had created their own unique values along with a rich literature, both religious and secular, in the Hebrew language. In the modern age, this separate creativity was no longer guaranteed by the absolute imperative of religious faith. A Jewish settlement on its own land, auto-

nomous in the conduct of its own affairs and free to redefine its own culture in reborn Hebrew, was required as the contemporary laboratory for the Jewish spirit. Ahad Ha-Am’s Jewish state would radiate the influence of this revived and redefined tradition to all the Jews of the world.

The new Zionist community in Palestine and the independent Jewish state that Ahad Ha-Am hoped would follow were not, for him, ends in themselves. The Zionist entity was the instrument that would affect cultural revival for the entire Jewish people. This was a great and heroic task, to lead the Jews into the modern age by redefining their culture, but Ahad Ha-Am and his followers never imagined that this would be the last stage of Jewish history. There was none of the melodrama of Herzl’s vision of a grand, and final, return of a battered minority to the security and glory of majority existence. Cultural Zionists simply wanted to find a way of reinvigorating the Jewish people for the next stage of the Jewish existence, in the certainty that there would be new challenges in future ages. The state was therefore not imagined as an end in itself, as the culmination of Jewish history. It was an instrument that was being forged by the Jewish people worldwide to help it survive in the modern era.

Until nearly the end of his eight years as the head of the World Zionist Organization before his death in 1904 at the age of forty-four, Theodor Herzl fought hard, even implacably, against any attempt to add qualifications to his pure demand for a state to which all Jews who wished to remain Jewish should come. He knew that even the insistence that Hebrew be the language of the Zionist state was a limitation, since it provided those who preferred Yiddish or German to modern Hebrew with a reason to oppose Zionism. The cultural Zionists wanted a modernist, secular culture in the revived language. This appalled traditional believers, and most of their leaders became overt and vehement opponents of Zionism. Despite the problems created by the cultural Zionists, Herzl did not prevail. On the contrary, even in his own lifetime, several other movements arose that married the vision of the Zionist return to Palestine with contemporary values such as socialism, or even with a version of religious Orthodoxy that welcomed Zionist nationalism.

This tendency became even stronger after Herzl was gone. Ten years later, in the United States, Louis Brandeis found his way to Zionism by casting the nascent community as one that would be realizing the ideals of American progressiveness in its purest form. A
people were supposed to regard when the Messiah appeared. Many
disciples of Jesus, in the year of the Wall of Babel, the year of the
Great Conspiracy, the day Jerusalem was destroyed by the
Romans, is the day they remember. In that year, the Temple
was destroyed, and the people were forbidden to enter it.

In modern times, the Temple Mount is a symbol of the
continuing struggle for independence. The area is a place of
controversy, with Israel and Palestine both claiming it as
their holy land. The Temple Mount is a place of pilgrimage
for Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and it is the site of
many religious and political events.

The Temple Mount is also significant in the
context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The
struggle for control over the area has been a
central issue in the conflict for decades. The Temple
Mount is a place of deep cultural and historical
significance, and its future is a matter of great
concern for both Israelis and Palestinians.
people, not only religious believers, felt that the victory was a miracle and that it was a sign of the beginning of the era of messianic redemption. The religious Zionists were swept up by this enthusiasm because they had been taught a half century before by a man whom they revered, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, that the modern, seemingly secular, Zionist endeavor was really an instrument in God’s hands on the way to the miraculous redemption that He had promised. (Kook’s son, Zvi Yehudah, was the head of the yeshivah that his father had founded, where the faith in the imminent arrival of the Messiah had long been cultivated.) For these believers, none of the land west of the Jordan River could ever be given back to the Arabs because this was the soil that God Himself had promised to the Jewish people. A Jewish government had no legitimate right to trade “land for peace” because such action would obstruct the messianic process.

These believers were thus effecting a radical change in the definition of the Jewish state. For them, its primary purpose was not to rescue Jews from anti-Semitism, or to create a new culture for Jews who were no longer comfortable living within the rules of the inherited tradition. The Jewish state existed to serve God, to carry out His manifest purpose to create a Jewish society that obeyed the Torah and was acting to hasten the imminent Redemption. The State of Israel did not, therefore, have the right to decide on any matter by democratic consensus. Everything that the state might decree was under immediate divine judgment, as interpreted by these passionate messianic believers. Any decisions that they opposed could be defied in good conscience. This new thinking was widely opposed in Israel but it quickly acquired enough support and political influence to become a force in public life. Israel was soon divided almost equally between those who continued to think of Israel as a contemporary democratic state, which was run by its people (who could decide to divide the land with the Palestinians), and those who insisted, for religious or ultra-nationalist reasons, that all of the “promised land” was inalienable. Such thinking made it possible for Dr. Baruch Goldstein to feel justified in committing the mass murder of Moslem worshipers in Hebron on February 25, 1994. The same thinking influenced Yigal Amir, who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995. Both Goldstein and Amir had no doubt that they were committing these killings in good conscience, in obedience to a higher law than the legalities of the State of Israel.

In the United States and the rest of the Diaspora, the attempt was made for a number of years to paper over this quarrel by pretending that it did not exist. It was far more comfortable to imagine that the Israeli maximalists were really hard bargainers who would, eventually, reach a compromise much more favorable to Israel’s interests than could be achieved by those who were more moderate in advance. This opinion was supported by the feeling that the religious faction, the believers in the imminence of the Messiah, were a picturesque minority. They did defy the government with such outrageous acts as settling a handful of zealots in the very center of hostile Hebron, but the mainstream of the ultra-nationalists were much more secular people who would be open to compromise.

In the 1970s the theory that almost everyone in Israel was ultimately willing to compromise was never tested because the Palestinians and their supporters in the Arab world kept rejecting any suggestion of compromise. The mood in Israel in the 1970s, even among the moderates, was largely dominated by the bitterness engendered by Israel’s near defeat in the Yom Kippur war of October, 1973. The prime minister of those days, Golda Meir, who was the head of the moderate Labor Party, kept saying to those of her own supporters who urged negotiation toward compromise: “With whom shall we negotiate? With ourselves?” But the notion that the leaders of Israel would make a deal at an opportune moment was dramatically strengthened in 1979 when the first prime minister of Israel from the hardline camp, Menachem Begin, signed a peace agreement with Anwar Sadat, returning all of the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control. This agreement was read by American Jews and others as proof that Begin and his followers might go farther still in the cause of peace. Contrary voices in Israel, where there were many, and in the United States, where there were very few, read the peace agreement as an end and not a beginning: Menachem Begin could return the Sinai to Arab sovereignty because it was not part of the sacred and untouchable entity, biblical Israel. He and his followers would draw the line at any further surrender of territory.

It took the decade of the 1980s for the American Jewish community, or at least large parts of it, to recognize that this second view was correct. Jewish settlements in the West Bank (the biblical Judea and Samaria) kept increasing. Some were established in the name of security at border points such as the Jordan River, but other settlements were scattered, especially when Likud was in power, all over the West Bank with the avowed purpose of making it impossible to detach this
After the victory in 1967, Israel could no longer be portrayed as a weak and passive nation. The Israeli government was determined to assert its rights and interests in the region. The 1967 war marked a turning point in Middle East politics. Israel's military success gave it a new sense of security and changed its international status. The Arab countries were left without a unified plan of action, and the world began to recognize Israel as a sovereign state.

The victory also had significant implications for the status of Jerusalem. The city, which had been divided between Israel and Jordan since 1948, was now entirely under Israeli control. This led to international discussions about the future of Jerusalem.

The peace talks that followed the 1967 war were ultimately unsuccessful, leading to a series of military conflicts in the region, including the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The Arab-Israeli conflict continues to this day, with no clear resolution in sight.

In the context of this tense situation, the United States played a crucial role as a mediator between Israel and the Arab countries. The American government sought to balance its commitments to both sides, often facing tough decisions and diplomatic challenges.

The 1967 war also had far-reaching implications for international law and the status of occupied territories. The International Court of Justice declared the partition of Jerusalem illegal, and the United Nations Security Council called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories.

Despite these challenges, the United States continued to support Israel, viewing its security as vital to regional stability. This policy, known as the "Israel-first" approach, was a source of contention and debate within the American government and among its allies.

The 1967 war highlighted the complexity of the Middle East conflict and the difficulty of finding a lasting solution. It also underscored the importance of international diplomacy and the role of mediator in resolving such complex and protracted conflicts.

In summary, the 1967 war marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Middle East, with far-reaching implications for international relations and the future of the region. The United States played a significant role in shaping the post-war landscape, and the challenges it faced in this context continue to shape American policy to this day.
Jews of the world as a tender young plant in imminent mortal danger. On the contrary, it had proved that it was the dominant regional power and that it had become a functioning state and society. At that point, the question of the nature and quality of Israel's inner life inevitably came to the forefront. The battle for power in shaping Israeli society became ever sharper and more pointed. The central religious-cultural battle of a hundred years ago is being refought in this generation even more vehemently than before. Again, in this generation, those who want a modern, essentially secular, Jewish society and those who demand that the Orthodox tradition set the rules for any Jewish society are in a battle that neither side can afford to lose.

The Jews of the Diaspora are not sitting by and watching these struggles from afar. They are in the battle, as they were a century ago in the early days of Zionism. These questions do not belong to Israel alone. They are concerns with which every caring Jew anywhere in the world is deeply and very personally involved. At the beginning, Zionists chose to identify themselves as socialist Zionists, or religious Zionists, or ultra-nationalist Zionists, and they spent their energies on creating institutions both in Palestine and the Diaspora that reflected their own particular visions. More and more, that pattern is followed today. In the future, the relationship of Israel and the Diaspora will be not one relationship but many. Each school of thought and each of the strongly held values that are present in the Jewish world as a whole will draw closer to its counterparts in Israel and the Diaspora.

The greatest task of Jewish statesmanship is to find a way to make this complicated, very plural, and often very angry set of factions reach some lasting accommodation. At this moment of writing, in the summer of 1996, each group and opinion is fighting hard for its own program and slogans, but the time will come, in a decade or two, when the need for peace with each other may well up among all the warring groups. A reconsideration of the past of Zionism, and of the ways to work together, which conflicting ideologies did once find, may help create a more hopeful future.
All maps are from Mitchell Bard, "Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict."
Map 12: Cease-Fire Lines After the Six-Day War 1967
Map 21: Jewish Refugees from Arab States
1948-1972

Arab states showing number of Jews who sought refuge in Israel between 1948 and 1972

- Syria: 4,500
- Lebanon: 6,000
- Iraq: 129,290
- Yemen & Aden: 50,552
- Egypt: 89,525
- Tunisia: 56,000
- Algeria: 14,000
- Morocco: 260,000

Israel between 1948 and 1967
Your people, my people
Fulfillment as a acceptance and
Jew by choice
How to Find

With Lisa Hostein
Lena Romanoft

Israel: adopting a country

6
Throughout the millennia, since the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. when the Jews were exiled and dispersed, the Jewish people have yearned for the return to the land of their Biblical ancestors. The Jewish people's steadfast refusal to relinquish the concept of one nation rooted to a specific land has mystified historians for centuries. This connection to the land and the love of Zion is repeated throughout Jewish prayers. Every Passover seder ends with the words “Next year in Jerusalem!”

Thus the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel with the establishment of an independent state in 1948 was a historic triumph culminating centuries of Jewish longing. Though Jewish immigration to what was then called Palestine had begun decades earlier with Zionist pioneers, primarily from Eastern Europe, it was no coincidence that the state became fact as the world woke up to the atrocities of the Holocaust and the annihilation of six million Jews. Jewish perseverance, despite the destruction of one-third of world Jewry during World War II, converged with world sympathy and guilt to allow for the creation of a state where the Jewish people could begin the process of rebirth.

The security that the establishment of the Jewish state provided and the assurance that no future Adolf Hitler could attempt another extermination of the Jewish people as long as the Jews had their own sovereign state further explain the universal Jewish attachment to Israel. If Israel had existed prior to World War II, the Jews would have had a place to seek refuge. There they would not have been turned away as they were by so many countries of the world, including the United States. Likewise, if Jews should ever again need such a haven, Israel will be there to provide it. Thus Jews all over the world, most of whom would never consider living in Israel and have not even visited there, derive comfort knowing that a Jewish state now exists.

The return of the Jews to Israel is a chapter in Jewish history that continues to unfold before us. The building of the state, the draining of the swamps, the development of sophisticated technology and agriculture, and the absorption of Jewish immigrants from over a hundred countries into a vibrant democracy have been part of a miraculous process in which Jews everywhere take pride.

Along with the miracle of building has been the pain of war as Israel has had to cope with a sea of hostile Arab neighbors who resented the return of Jewish sovereignty to the Holy Land. As a result, Israel, in its short history, has been engaged in five wars, beginning with the War of Independence, which its surrounding Arab neighbors waged almost simultaneously with the declaration of Israeli statehood. The history of the Arab-Israeli conflict is complex, and it continues to this day, with the focus of the conflict having shifted to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These territories, outside the boundaries of the state that was created in 1948, have been administered by the Israelis since the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel defeated its Arab neighbors in their further attempt to destroy the Jewish state.

Because of their deep-seated attachment to the State of Israel, American Jews react to the political and military events that shape Israel with more than passing interest. Though an estimated 85 to 90 percent of American Jews have never once visited the state, fund-raising for Israel is such an extensive part of American Jewish life that it links diverse groups of American Jews. American Jews do more than give money, however. They register pride in massive Israeli Independence Day parades throughout the country; they grieve at the loss of Israeli life; and when Israel's interests are threatened, they unite behind Israel by lobbying in Washington, writing letters to the editor, and staging pro-Israel rallies. Also out of love and concern for the Jewish state, American Jews sometimes pass judgment on its policies, criticize its actions, and express disagreement directly to its political leaders. In short, Jews view Israel not only as a state but also as a center of Jewish life in which all Jews share a vested interest.

Although most converts may be superficially familiar with
Without Israel, I can't imagine what it would be like being Jewish. In fact, in the world, I could never turn back on Israel. It's not just a part of my life, it's part of my identity. Israel is where my soul belongs. It's where I've found my roots and my heritage. Israel has taught me to appreciate my heritage and to pass it on to future generations.

This led me to become involved in Jewish community organizations and to make aliyah to Israel. It was a decision that was not easy, but it was one that I knew I had to make. It was a decision that would shape my life and my future.

In my community, the cultural impact of Israel is felt in so many ways. From music to art, Israel has left its mark on our community. The influence of Israeli culture and music is evident in the way people dress, in the food they eat, and in the way they celebrate. It's a constant reminder of the importance of Israel and its place in our community.

By adopting Jewish traditions and values, I have become more connected to my heritage. It has helped me to understand my roots and to appreciate the richness of Jewish culture. It has also given me a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.

The process of adopting Israel, like the process of adopting Jewish traditions and values, is not easy. It requires a lot of commitment and effort. But it is a process that is worth it, for it has brought me closer to my heritage and to my community.

The process of adopting Israel and adopting Jewish traditions and values is a continuous journey. It is one that I am proud to be a part of, and one that I will continue to pursue with dedication and enthusiasm.

For the most part, the conversion of my people to Judaism has been a positive experience. It has allowed me to connect with my heritage and to strengthen my identity as a Jew. It has also given me a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.

The process of conversion is not easy, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that requires a lot of commitment and effort, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that has brought me closer to my heritage and to my community.

The process of conversion is not easy, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that requires a lot of commitment and effort, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that has brought me closer to my heritage and to my community.

The process of conversion is not easy, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that requires a lot of commitment and effort, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that has brought me closer to my heritage and to my community.

The process of conversion is not easy, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that requires a lot of commitment and effort, but it is one that is worth it. It is a process that has brought me closer to my heritage and to my community.
PLANNING A VISIT

Above all, the best way to discover what Israel is all about is to visit. A hundred books and dozens of lectures cannot provide a glimpse into Israeli society the way a visit can. Only by being there can a Jew bask in the glory of the miracle that is modern Israel, the Israel that intertwines the old and the new so that each step is a new discovery, a journey into the Jewish past and future. This marvelous experience is one that no Jew should miss—especially not the convert.

Nancy Conley, a 32-year-old advertising account executive from Saratoga Springs, New York, describes how her first visit to Israel helped establish the connection she had been seeking: “After conversion, Israel was suddenly thrust on me by my husband and his family, all ardent Zionists. I read the papers and was familiar with the perpetual Middle East crisis, but it all seemed so remote. I tried to talk myself into looking upon Israel as ‘my’ country, but deep down I was really neutral about it. I just couldn’t understand the role of Israel and its connection to the Jewish people. I began to feel guilty because my feelings were not deep and genuine. I couldn’t tell my husband because I was afraid he would think I was not a good Jew. One day in the midst of a heated family discussion about the current political situation in Israel, I couldn’t hold back my frustration any longer. ‘I don’t understand what’s going on!’ I cried. Everyone tried to explain at once, until my father-in-law said, ‘Hold everything! For your first anniversary, I’m sending you to Israel.’ We were thrilled. I learned so much on that trip, most of all that there is much more to Israel than politics and war. I truly feel a personal connection to the Jewish state now. I recommend a trip to every new Jew!”

Mark Calabrese, a 36-year-old language professor from Ohio, was surprised by the intensity of his feelings during his first visit to Jerusalem and one of Judaism’s holiest sites: “I felt an intense emotion praying at the Western Wall for the first time. I discovered a whole new world and felt a oneness with the Jewish people. I became a Zionist. I may never choose to live in Israel, but I finally understand its centrality to the Jewish people. I now understand that the Jewish past is inexorably linked to the Jewish present and the Jewish future. All of this is part of the inheritance I have chosen.”

When planning a trip to Israel, do some background reading and research. Consult with friends and family who have been there for suggestions on what to see and do and where to stay and shop. Taking an organized tour is a good idea for any first-time visitor because there is so much to experience. Many Jewish organizations and travel agencies sponsor package tours. While there, do not hesitate to call the friends and relatives whose names and numbers you most likely will have been given. Most Jews know someone in Israel. Israelis are known for their warm hospitality, and such contacts provide an excellent opportunity to get to know some of them.

Proficiency in Hebrew should not be a prime concern. Although a visit to Israel provides a good opportunity to use what one has already learned and to improve on that elementary knowledge, the fact is that most Israelis know at least some English, and many speak it fluently. One conversionary couple was anxious to use what little Hebrew they knew but felt disappointed when everyone spoke English to them. “Finally,” they recall, “we made a pact with our tour guide, a student who was eager to learn more English. He would speak only Hebrew to us, and we would speak English to him!”

Spouses who have been to Israel may find themselves surprised by the depth of their own feelings when returning to Israel and seeing it through the eyes of a new Jew. Such was the experience of Robert Gross, a 28-year-old nuclear physicist: “I was not too anxious to return to Israel with my wife, Jane. As a rabbi’s son, I had had ample exposure to Israel—at least ten trips. But after Jane converted, she insisted that we go. My stories were not enough for her. She wanted to see it on her own. Five years after we were married, we finally made it there together, and I was shocked at my own feelings. I began to see Israel from a different perspective, through Jane’s eyes, and it seemed more vibrant, more exciting than I remembered. It was as if I, too, were experiencing Israel for the first time!”
For those converts who do consider making aliyah, the issue of\noutright over their neutrally often to many American Jews\ncan Jewish community is a point, this does have much to do with\npractical impact of such things is minimal. But for the\nAc is that we very few converted individuals to Israel, so the\ntheir ability to live in Israel in recent years.

I had in my Jewish community. But I don't\nknown if we understand 89 because of it. I've never been, and\nwould be earthly practical because would mean the world was\nwould be earthly practical because I would mean the world was\nthe place. I would be or to a Jew in Israel, I am not of our\nthe place. I would be or to a Jew in Israel, I am not of our\nplace. I would be or to a Jew in Israel, I am not of our\nplace. I would be or to a Jew in Israel, I am not of our

The issue was the potential alienation from Israel over this issue.

able to all branches of Judaism and Israeli
can be listed or any other...
THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE?

The debate over whether Jews who live outside Israel have a right to criticize some of its policies has been exacerbated over the past decade as an outgrowth of both internal divisions in Israel and a new willingness among growing numbers of Jews in the Diaspora to express discomfort with some of the political and military policies being pursued. The question of Jewish dissent over Israel’s policies has a special twist when it applies to converts, who may fear they might not be considered “good Jews” if they openly criticize Israel. Gerald Tyler puts it this way: “Before I converted, I felt comfortable entering into lively debates about Israel. Now my wife becomes annoyed when I become critical of Israel. She would rather that I display unquestioning support and actively defend all of its policies. But I feel that as a Jew, I have developed a closer bond with Israel, and because of that bond I can and should be critical when necessary. I, too, feel threatened when Israel’s enemies want to deny its legitimacy and annul its existence. I think Ruth is afraid that some Jews may be suspicious of a convert who criticizes Israel.”

Whether critical or defensive of a particular Israeli policy, the point of departure that most American Jews share is their inherent love for the state and concern for its physical safety and moral well-being. For born Jews, this concern is often instinctive, even if not always articulated or acted upon. The new Jew, on the other hand, must take steps to ensure that an understanding about Israel develops. In time, the learned response of caring will eventually give way to a more instinctive approach. As Mary Berman puts it, “When I first converted, my approach to Israel was purely academic. It seemed like an interesting but complex place. After several years of learning and two visits, I can now honestly say I feel a deep sense of identification with Israel. Now I can talk about the Jewish state as mine.”