

OFF-RAMP TORAH

A JUDICIOUS DEPARTURE FROM THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

April 18, 2026

“Fostering diverse modes of attention to textual details cultivates correlative forms of attention to the world and divine reality”

Michael Fishbane (1943-), *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

TO START: *Parashat-haShavu'a Stats*

Weekly Portion: *Tazri'a-M'tzora* Leviticus 12:1-15:33
Sequence in Torah cycle: 27th and 28th of 54
Sequence in Leviticus: 4th and 5th of 10



WHERE WE'RE GOING INSTEAD, and why

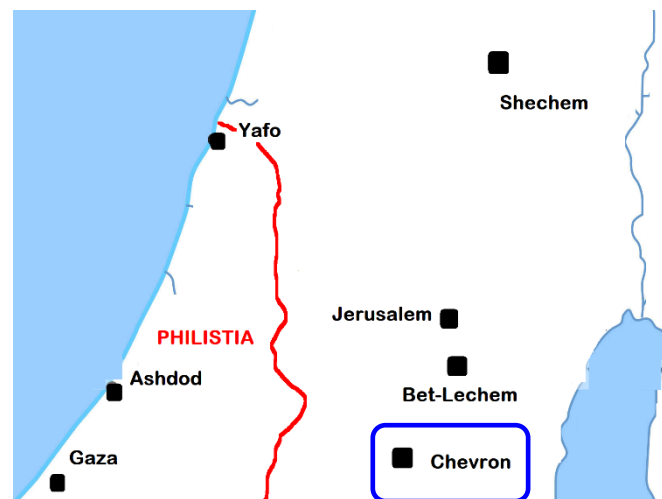
Context: *Today is Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon—and, with it, the new month—of Iyyar, the 5th day of which is observed as יום העצמאות Yom haAtzma'ut, Israel Independence Day.*

*In honor of the occasion, in lieu of the weekly Torah portion, today our study text will be the 1948 Proclamation of Independence of **The Third Jewish Commonwealth**.*

The First Jewish Commonwealth 1010 - 586 BCE

An Israelite Kingdom under dynastic descendants of King David (and, from 701 BCE onward, a province in turn of the Assyrian, and then neo-Babylonian, Empires).

A) II Samuel 5: 1-3 - *All the Tribes of Israel came to David at Chevron and said: “We are your own flesh and blood. Even when Saul was our ruler, it was you who led Israel in war. So now The Eternal One has said to you: ‘You shall shepherd My People Israel; you shall be ruler of Israel.’” Whereupon all the elders of Israel came to the king at Chevron. King David made a pact with them in Chevron before The Eternal One, whereby they anointed David king over Israel.*



- more over

The Second Jewish Commonwealth

516 BCE - 70 CE

A Jewish province within the successive Empires of the Persians, the Greeks, and the Seleucids; a Hasmonean Jewish kingdom 140-37 BCE; the Roman province of Judaea.

B) II Chronicles 36:23 - Thus says *the Emperor Cyrus of Persia*: “The Eternal God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and has charged me with building a house in Jerusalem. Of those of His people who so wish— may **The Eternal One be with you; go up!**”



A) I Maccabees 13:36-41 - [The Seleucid King] “*Demetrius* [II Nicator, ruled 145-138 BCE] sends greetings to Simon, high priest and friend of kings, and to the elders and the Jewish people. We are ready to make a lasting peace with you. We pardon any oversights and offenses committed up to now, as well as the back taxes that you owe. Let there be peace between us.”

Thus in the one hundred and seventieth year [of the Seleucid era = 141 BCE, 24 years after the Maccabean rebellion,] **the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from** [the People— and the Land— of] **Israel**.



The Third Jewish Commonwealth -

1948 -

Autonomous [State of Israel](#), historic homeland of the Jewish People.

D) The Balfour Declaration (November, 1917) - *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.

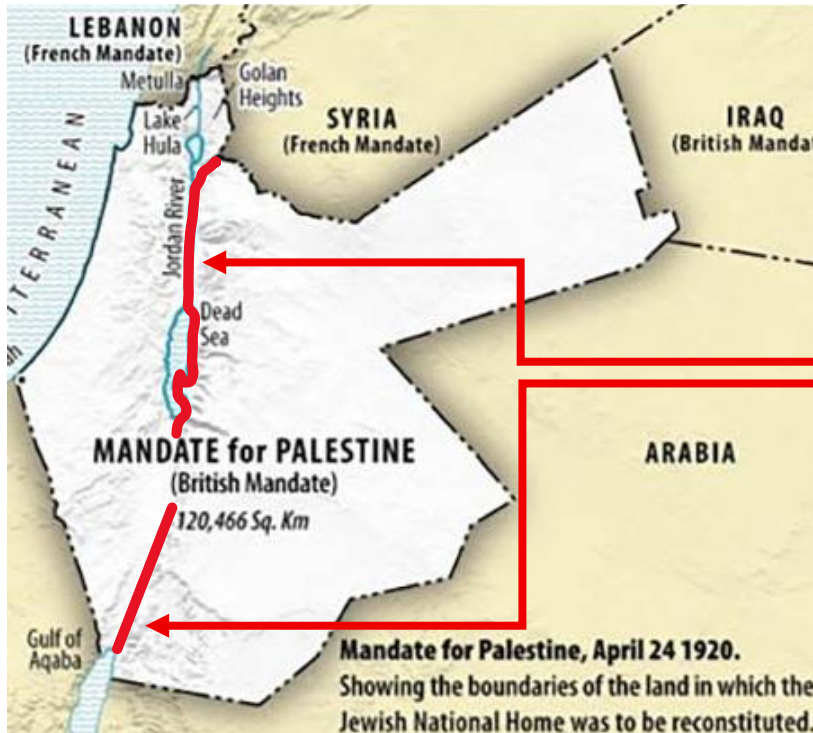
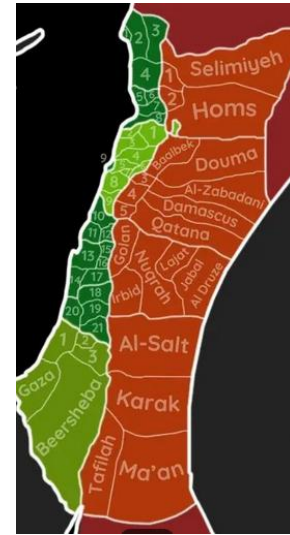
« Un État juif »
n'est pas
écrit

- continued

The Ottoman Empire
at the Outset of World War I



Ottoman Administrative Division of The Levant
Vilayets (provinces) *Sanjaks* (districts)



Separated out by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne to create the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan

E) United Nations Resolution 181-ii (November, 1947) -

- Future Government of Palestine -

A) Termination of Mandate, Partition, and Independence

3. *Independent Arab and Jewish States, and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, . . . shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the Mandatory Power has been completed—but in any case not later than 1 October 1948.*

- more over

ישראל - הממשלה הזמנית

Israel – The Provisional Government

עיתון רשמי : מס' 1

Official Archives: No. 1

תל-אביב

Tel-Aviv

ה' באייר תש"ח 14.5.1948

05th of Iyyar, 5708 14 May, 1948

עמ' 1

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**הכרזה על הקמת
מדינת ישראל**

**Declaration of the Establishment of
The State of Israel**

Eretz-Yisrael [ארץ ישראל 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 remained faithful to 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**.

14th prayer of the daily '*Amidah* -

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב וְתִשְׁכֹּן בְּתוֹכָהּ
כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ

And **return**, in Your mercy, **to Jerusalem**, Your city, residing therein even as You have promised.

וּבִנְה אֹתָהּ בְּקֶרֶב בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנִין עוֹלָם וְכִסֵּא דָוִד מְהֵרָה
לְתוֹכָהּ תִּכְוֵן :

Rebuild it soon, in our days, as an everlasting structure, and may You speedily establish **the throne of David** therein.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם :

Blessed are You, Eternal One, Builder of Jerusalem.

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—defying restrictive authorities and defending their land—have 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**.

1st '*Aliyah* – 1881-1903

2nd '*Aliyah* – 1904-14

3rd '*Aliyah* – 1919-23

4th '*Aliyah* – 1924-28

5th '*Aliyah* – 1929-39

'*Aliyah Bet*
1920 - 1948

The MacDonald White Paper – May, 1939

Jewish immigration during the next five years will be at a rate which, if economic absorptive capacity permits, will bring the Jewish population up to approximately **one third** of the total population of the country. . . . This would allow of the admission, as from the beginning of April this year, of some 75,000 immigrants over the next four years.

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**.

Zion **ציון** – one of the two hills on which the City of Jerusalem is built (mentioned in NaCh 157x, especially in poetry as reference *pars pro toto* to the Land of Israel).

The Basel Program – August, 1897 - **Zionism** seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in **Eretz-Yisrael** secured under public law.

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-Yisrael** and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

League of Nations Palestine Mandate – July 24, 1922 -

Whereas **the Principal Allied Powers** have agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration by the Government of His Britannic Majesty in favor of the establishment in Palestine of **a national home** for the Jewish people, and

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to **the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine** and to the grounds for **reconstituting their national home in that country**

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-Yisrael** 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 awful Nazi slaughter [הטבח הנאצי האיום] in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to **Eretz-Yisrael**, 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**.

Jewish mass murder in **Nazi-occupied Europe**:

1939-1945

Pogroms in **Russian** Civil War

1919-20

Anti-Jewish riots in **North Africa and Middle East**:

1929 Chevron

1941 Iraq

1945 Libya

Pogroms in post-War **Poland**:

1946

During 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**.

30,000 Jewish Palestinian volunteers in British Army

Palestine Brigade - 5,000 Brig. Gen. Ernest Benjamin

700 killed in action

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a Resolution cal-

ling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Yisrael. The General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Yisrael, therein, 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, representing the Jewish community of Eretz-Yisrael and of the Zionist Movement— are here assembled, on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Yisrael, and— by virtue of our natural 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-Yisrael, to be known as "The State of Israel."

planned 1948 termination of the British Mandate –

- ♦ per U.N. Resolution 181(ii) – November, 1947:
“not later than 1 October”
- ♦ as accelerated by British Military Command:
midnight on May 14

We declare that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate— being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th of 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 of 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".

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles;

10th prayer of the daily 'Amidah -

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵרוּתֵנוּ וְשָׂא נֵס לְקִבְּצֵי גְּלוּתֵינוּ

Sound the great *Shofar* for our liberation, and raise a banner to signal the ingathering of our exiles,

וְקַבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד מֵאַרְבַּע פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ

assembling us together from the four corners of the earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Praised are You, Eternal One, Who gathers together the dispersed of Your People, Israel.

it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants;

it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel;

Micah 4:4 –

וְיָשְׁבוּ אִישׁ תַּחַת גִּפְנוֹ וְתַחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ וְאֵין מַחְרִיד
They shall dwell— each under his vine and his fig-tree— with none to make them afraid.

it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants regardless of religion, race, or sex;

- continued

it will guarantee **freedom of religion, conscience**, language, education and culture;

it will **safeguard the Holy Places** of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of The Charter of the United Nations.

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-Yisrael*.

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.**

U.N. Resolution 273 (III) - Noting that, in the judgment of the Security Council, Israel is a peace-loving State and is able and willing to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter, . . . The General Assembly . . . decides **to admit Israel to membership in the United Nations** at its 207th plenary meeting - 11 May, 1949.

Armistice agreements with Egypt (Feb 24), Lebanon (March 23), and Jordan (April 3) – Syria on July 20

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 to participate in the up-building of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship** and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

Syrian Prime Minister Jamil Mardam **Bey**
November, 1947 –

Because I doubt in the unity of the Arab armies, and their ability to fight together, I have decided on the necessity of strengthening Palestine with arms and men. The popular movement in Palestine is responsible for effecting a solution.

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.**

Arab states attacking Israel in 1948 -

neighboring states:	other Arab League states (1945):
Egypt	Saudi Arabia
Jordan	Iraq
Syria	Yemen
Lebanon	

We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of *Eretz-Yisrael* in the tasks of immigration and up-building, and to stand

Supporting a Jewish State – World Zionist Organization, Women's International Zionist Organization, Jewish National Fund

Opposing a Jewish State – American Council for Judaism, General Jewish Labour Bund, Jewish Anti-Zionist League, Union of Zealots, *N'turei Qarta* ["Guardians of the City (of Jerusalem)"]

by them in the great struggle for the realization of **the age-old dream— for the redemption of Israel.**

ולעמוד לימינו במערכה הגדולה
על הגשמת שאיפת הדורות
לגאולת ישראל

Placing our trust in “The Rock of Israel” [Isaiah 30:29], we **attach the signature of our hands** to this Proclamation

at this session of the Provisional Council of **State** on the soil of **the birthplace**, in the city of Tel-Aviv

this day: the eve of Shabbat; 05 Iyyar, 5708; 14 May, 1948.

מתוך בטחון בצור ישראל הננו חותמים בחתימת ידינו לעדות על הכרזה זו

במושב מועצת **המדינה** הזמנית על אדמת **המולדת** בעיר תל-אביב

היום הזה ערב שבת ה' אייר תש"ח 14 במאי 1948.

David Ben-Gurion [1 st Prime Minister]	Rachel Cohen [Chair of WIZO]	Moshe Kolodny [Minister of Tourism]
Daniel Auster	Rabbi Kalman Kahana	Eliezer Kaplan [Minister of Finance]
Mordekhai Bentov M.K.	Saadia Kobashi	Abraham Katznelson [Minister of Health; U.N. Ambassador]
Yitzchak Ben Zvi [2 nd President]	Rabbi Yitzchak Levin [Minister of Welfare]	Felix Rosenblueth [Minister of Justice]
Eliyahu Berligne	David Loewenstein M.K.	David Remez [Minister of Education]
Fritz Bernstein [Minister of Commerce]	Zvi Luria [Minister of Diaspora Relations]	Berl Repetur M.K.
Rabbi Wolf Gold	Golda Myerson [Meir] [4 th Prime Minister]	Mordekhai Shattner [Founder, <i>Yad vaShem</i>]
Meir Grabovsky M.K.	Nachum Nir [1 st Speaker of the Knesset]	Ben Zion Sternberg [Minister of Trade]
Yitzchak Gruenbaum [Minister of Interior]	Zvi Segal	Bekhor Shitreet [Minister of Police]
Abraham Granovsky M.K.	Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hacohen Fishman	Haim-Moshe Shapira [Minister of Internal Affairs]
Eliyahu Dobkin [Head of B'tzalEl School]	David Zvi Pinkas [Minister of Transport]	Moshe Shertok [Sharett] [2 nd Prime Minister]
Meir Wilner-Kovner M.K.	Aharon Zisling [Minister of Agriculture]	
Zerach Wahrhaftig M.K.		
Herzl Vardi (Rosenblum) [Publisher, <i>Y'diyot</i>]		

Reading the Declaration in “Independence Hall”



The Tel-Aviv Art Museum, formerly home of City Mayor Meir Dizengoff

