



ISRAEL - A HOPE FULFILLED

Part 2: Joy of Life in the Shadow of Wars

by Brigitte B. Nussbächer

Israel has survived the Holocaust and the War of Independence. A miracle and a fulfilled promise from the Bible: "The Lord has scattered his people to the winds. But now he is gathering them again."

(Jeremiah 31:10). More about the birth of the Israeli state in part 1:

Israel Between Longing and Reality

But is Israel's peace now assured? Will the world give this people, after all the suffering, the chance to develop? And how is the young state using its opportunities?

About triumphs, joy of life and achievements despite attacks and threats. Until the event that once again calls everything into question. Until today...



A Short Time of Rest!

For almost 20 years, the young state of Israel enjoys a fragile peace. Years of hard work, years of growth. And again years of hope.

By 1958, Israel's population rises to 2 million, mainly due to the immigration of around 850,000 Jews. The new citizens are accommodated in the abandoned Arab villages, in former British barracks or tent camps. Practical buildings are hastily erected. Consumer goods such as food, fuel, furniture and clothing have to be rationed.



Build-up work in Israel after the founding of the state. Photo Shutterstock

The boycott of Israel by the Arab League, in which third countries are involved as well, also has a negative impact on the economic situation.

But these are also years in which, step by step, more and more settlements are built and more and more land is cultivated. Years, in which the internal wounds slowly begin to heal and the joy of life increases.

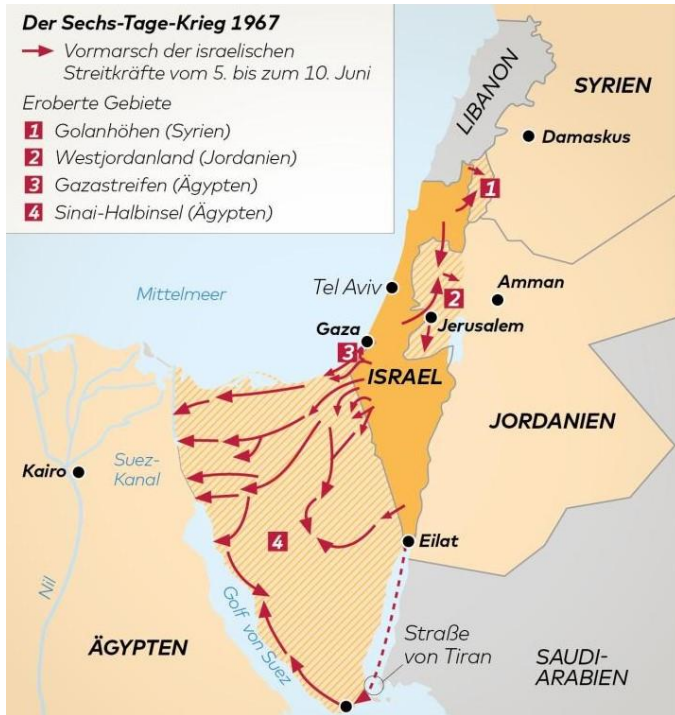
The Six Day War



Military stroke of genius or divine miracle: the Six-Day War. Photo Shutterstock

But then the next war looms. In the spring of 1967, Egypt closes the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping, forces the withdrawal of UNEF troops from the Sinai and marches up to Israel's border with 1,000 tanks and almost 100,000 soldiers. Northern Israeli settlements are attacked from the Syrian Golan Heights. Syrian President Nureddin al-Atassi declares as early as 1966: "We want a total war without restrictions, a war that will destroy the Zionist base." Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser agrees: "Our fundamental goal is the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight."

Without seeking the approval of the USA, Israel decides to launch a surprise attack by its air force. The Israeli pilots fly below Egyptian radar coverage on June 5, 1967. Without warning and within a few hours, most of the 385 modern Egyptian aircrafts are destroyed. Israeli ground troops then advance against Egyptian positions with 700 tanks and 70,000 soldiers. In the east, Israel liberates the Old City of [Jerusalem](#) from the Jordanians (see [Ammunition Hill](#)). For the first time in two thousand years, Israelis have unhindered access to their sacred [Western Wall](#).



Overview of the advance of the Israeli armed forces. Map: Infographic Die Welt, dpa infografik

At the end of the war, Israel controls the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the historic Old City of Jerusalem and the Golan Heightsⁱⁱ. The conquered territories provide the country with strategically important buffer zones, that offer greater security.

The Arabs are stunned. They believed the propaganda lies of Egyptian radio, which spoke of their own victories during these days. And they are seeking revenge. In August 1967, two months after the ceasefire was signed, a summit conference of all Arab states is held. In the Khartoum Resolution, they define: "No peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israelⁱⁱⁱ."

For the Israelis, the unexpectedly quick victory is like a miracle, a gift from God (see movie [Against All Odds](#)). And a milestone, a turning point in Israel's history. [Jerusalem](#) becomes the eternal and undivided capital of Israel. Jews, who were expelled from [Judea](#) and [Samaria](#) during the War of Independence return and begin to rebuild the settlements, that were destroyed at the time, such as [Gush Etzion](#). The Israeli economy flourishes.



New dimension in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Photo Shutterstock



The bitter consequence of this overwhelming success is, that since then, Israel has been accused of illegally occupying the territory intended for the Palestinian state. This is despite the fact, that Israel won this territory from Egypt and Jordan, neither of which had any legal claim to it. And even though in 1967 - as before - there was no Palestinian Arab representation, willing to share the land peacefully with Israel. All attempts at partition since then have failed because of this attitude^{iv}. To this day, the demand is: "from the river to the sea", which clearly means replacing the Israeli state with a Palestinian one - and not a two-state solution!

The Yom Kippur War



Captured tanks from the Yom Kippur War. Photo Shutterstock

The next blow follows soon after. On October 6, 1973, on Yom Kippur, Israel is completely surprised. Egypt crosses the Suez Canal and attacks from the air, while Syria moves in with 1,400 tanks in the north (see [Golan Heights](#) - Valley of Tears). The situation is desperate. Israel has difficulties mobilizing its armed forces, because everything is at a standstill on the highest Jewish holiday. Radio and television are off the air and people spend the day in prayer.

In this war, too, humanly inexplicable events occur. Despite injuries, Zvika Goldberg is able to hold off the Syrian army, who think they are surrounded by an Israeli division, with his tank for 24 hours almost single-handedly^v. Incredible heroic deeds - incredible miracles (see movie: [Against All Odds](#))

Ultimately, the Israelis succeed in repelling the enemy again. A ceasefire is reached on October 24, but the losses are high. Two thousand six hundred Israeli soldiers are killed and seven thousand five hundred are wounded.

The Arab world is able to draw psychological benefits from the initial successes of the war. Its restored honor is a prerequisite for the peace negotiations that follow later^{vi}. In March 1979, Israel makes peace with Egypt, which regains the Sinai Peninsula. This is the first official recognition of Israel by an Arab state^{vii}. The peace treaty with Jordan follows in October 1994^{viii}. These are steps towards a better future - moments of hope. And indeed, no state has attacked Israel militarily since 1973.



Terror - the Other Kind of Fight



Threats from terrorist organizations. Photo Shutterstock

However, terrorist attacks have claimed hundreds of lives since the 1990's. In response, Israel begins to erect barriers. Nine-meter-high walls separate the Arab towns, from which most attacks originate, from Jewish towns. As a result, the number of terrorist attacks actually decreases.

But the threat also comes from beyond the borders.

In 1982, terrorist groups attack Israel from southern Lebanon, and in 2006 two soldiers are kidnapped by the Shiite militia Hezbollah. This leads to the two Lebanon wars.

Since October 2001, members of Hamas and other radical Palestinian organizations repeatedly fire rockets from the Gaza Strip towards Israel. In 2005, Israel decides to withdraw from the area completely and without compensation. But even this does not bring peace. Hamas wins the elections in 2006 and takes over the Gaza Strip in 2007. Its main goal: the destruction of Israel. Trillions are invested to achieve this. Attacks on Israel increase: Infiltration via tunnels, kidnappings, suicide attacks, the two intifadas, arson attacks, thousands of rockets. The Israeli military operations in Gaza in 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2021 do nothing to change this.

Both Hamas^x and Hezbollah^x are strengthened and equipped by Iran, which has long-range missiles, an arms cooperation agreement with Russia and is working on its nuclear program. The Iranian president has repeatedly called for the destruction of Israel. The threat is becoming more acute every day.



Triumph of Life



The zest for life of the Israelis is impressive. Photo Shutterstock

But despite all the shadows, many biblical promises have been fulfilled in the years since the state was founded (see article: [How We Experienced the Miracle Israel](#)). *"They say, that our bones are withered and our hope is lost. But thus says God: I will open your graves and bring you back to life, my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel."* (Ezekiel 37:3,11-12)

From destruction, total hopelessness and despair, Israel was resurrected from the dead after almost two thousand years. In about seventy years, Israel has grown from a country with a single paved road to a state with Ben Gurion International Airport and some of the best hospitals in the world. It is building roads and infrastructure per capita faster than any other country on the planet, transforming a fallow, arid, unproductive land into one of the strongest economies in the world.

In 1897 (30 years before the first Zionist Congress), Marc Twain described Israel as a *"desolate land, a silent, sad expanse without man, tree or shrub"*. In 1909, the land still consisted mainly of sand dunes, which the settlers were beginning to divide up among themselves. But today it is inhabited and full of life. Gardens have sprung up in the desert and the land, which had been barren for so long, is now bearing rich fruit.

"They will rebuild and inhabit the desolate cities, plant vineyards and drink their wine, plant gardens and enjoy their fruit." (Amos 9:14).



Tel Aviv today, a lively cosmopolitan metropolis, Photo private

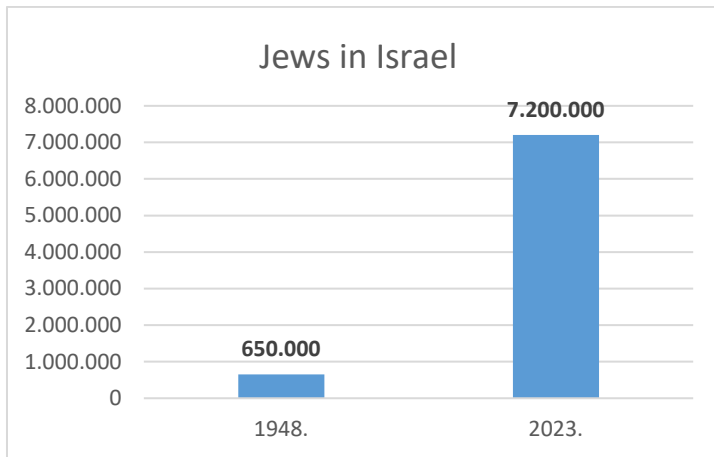


Gardens in the Judean Desert, Photo private



Israel's population has also grown disproportionately. With 2.6 births per woman, they have the highest fertility rate of the industrialized nations and their average life expectancy is very high at over 81 years. *"There shall sit again in the squares of Jerusalem old men and old women, each with his staff in his hand from old age, and the squares of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing there."* (Zechariah 8:4-5)

While the world's population has "only" doubled in the last 50 years, Jewish citizens have increased more than tenfold since the founding of the state 76 years ago^{xi}. *"I will make men numerous among you and multiply all the people of Israel."* (Ezekiel 36:10)



The Israelis have achieved a great deal:

- They hold the third highest number of patents in the world^{xii}.
- At 56%, they have the second-highest rate of university graduates in the OECD countries (the most developed economies)^{xiii}.
- After the USA, Israel has the largest number of start-up companies^{xiv}.
- They also have: the second highest rate of new books per capita,
- and the highest number of museums and orchestras in the world^{xv}



The Nobel Prize: honoring the most worthy. Photo: Shutterstock



And that's not all: 23% of all Nobel Prize winners worldwide are of Jewish descent. This is despite the fact, that only 0.2% of the world's population is Jewish^{xvi}. Today, the Nobel Prize is regarded as the highest award in the respective discipline.

With their innovative strength, they create solutions for the impossible. For example, Israel is the only country where the desert is shrinking. They use water desalination plants to turn water from the Mediterranean into drinking water. In addition, 86% of wastewater is recycled and reused in agriculture.



Israel recycles the most wastewater in the world. Statistics Ministry of Foreign Affairs Israel



Drip irrigation in the desert. Photo private

Every drop is managed. Irrigation is computer-controlled through hoses. Leak detectors ensure that losses are quickly detected and rectified.

"Whoever travels among you will say: This land was a desert, now it has become like the Garden of Eden!" (Ezekiel 36:35)

And another promise has been fulfilled: *"The riches of the sea will be turned to you..." (Isaiah 60:5)*. In 2009, the large Leviathan and Tamar gas fields were discovered, since 2013 Israel has been independent of imports and since 2016 it has even been exporting gas itself.

All this means that Israel is one of the 10 most influential nations in the world in 2023...^{xvii}



10 Most Powerful Countries in the World

Overall Ranking	Military Strength Ranking	Economic Strength Ranking	Digital Strength Ranking
United States	1	1	2
China	3	2	17
Russia	2	9	45
Germany	25	4	19
United Kingdom	5	6	16
South Korea	6	13	8
France	9	7	22
Japan	8	3	29
India	4	5	44
Israel	18	26	15

Sources: Military strength: 2023 Military Strength Ranking, Global Fire Index.
Economic Strength: IMF 2023 Data. Digital Strength: IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2022

Israel in 10th place among the most influential countries in 2023. *Statistic Foreign Affairs Insight & Review*

and even reaches 4th place in the ranking of the happiest nations ^{xviii}.



Israel in 4th place among the happiest nations in 2023. *Statistics: World Happiness Report 2023*



Discord - gloomy harbingers

But in 2023, Israel will also experience the greatest internal division since its founding.



Demonstrations in Tel Aviv 2023. Photo: Shutterstock

Here the secular liberals, there the ultra-orthodox Jews. Those, who want to divide Israel with the Arabs and those, who are trying to establish new Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria. Those with an international orientation and those with a national orientation. The left and the right, the progressive and the conservative. Since April 2019, there have been four parliamentary elections in four years. The coalitions are falling apart due to disagreement. Protests, ostensibly against a planned judicial reform but ultimately against the government itself, shake Israel and in 2023 partially paralyze half the country.

Israel's enemies observe this weakness and exploit it.

Al Aksa Flood - Black Shabbat - October 7, 2023



Be'eri, an Israeli kibbutz on the border with Gaza after the attack on October 7. Photo: Shutterstock

On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists from the Gaza Strip break through the border to Israel at dawn. They destroy over 20 Israeli towns and villages and cause a terrible bloodbath. They kidnap over 230 hostages and abuse, torture and murder over one thousand four hundred Jewish civilians. Only then are they stopped by the Israeli armed forces^{xix}.



Israeli victims of the attack on October 7, 2023. Photo: Israel Today

The "Al Aksa Flood", as Hamas called the operation, was actually planned as a "deluge" that would flood the entire country, kill all Jews and liberate the Al Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. The atrocities committed by the terrorists are indescribable. Even three weeks later, not all of the partially dismembered and burnt Israeli bodies have been identified. (More information on these websites: <https://govextra.gov.il/mda/october-7/october-7/what-happened-on-the-7th-of-october/>; <https://saturday-october-seven.com/#/>)

Weeks of bitter warfare and countless deaths in the Gaza Strip follow. Nevertheless, four months later, over 130 Israeli hostages are still being held by Hamas, rockets are still being fired at Israel and the Hamas leadership has neither surrendered nor been destroyed.

The support, that Israel receives from the world, decreases with each passing day. The country is suffering from the trauma of the invasion and the losses in the war. It is being downgraded by rating agencies, the economy is staggering, crops cannot be harvested because over 300,000 reservists are fighting on the front line for months and thousands of guest workers have left the country.



UN resolution October 2023. Photo Shutterstock



*International Court of Justice, Peace Palace, The Hague
Photo Shutterstock*

UN resolutions demand a ceasefire and humanitarian aid from Israel for the Gaza Strip, without condemning the Hamas massacre. In addition, in January Israel is being indicted by South Africa before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Israel's fight against the terrorist Hamas is not seen as self-defense, but as genocide by them. The USA and other states consider unilaterally recognizing a Palestinian state without Israel's consent. International pressure is mounting. (See also articles: [The Second Chance](#) and [Never Again – a Solid Promise?](#))

Has God withdrawn his blessing?



And Where Do We Stand?



Every individual can make a difference. Photo Shutterstock

Both in history and in the Bible, we repeatedly encounter situations where Israel, where Jerusalem has to stand alone against the rest of the world. *"For all the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem."* (Zechariah 12:3)

In this article we have followed the last 150 years of Israel's history and have seen, what God has done for his people during this time. Do we really think, that it was all in vain and is now over? Do we really believe, that God will no longer stand by his covenant with Israel, even though his promise is: *"I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not cease to do them good"* (Jeremiah 32:40)?

For two thousand years, Christians wrongly assumed, that God had abandoned Israel and would punish his people. Over the centuries, many have - happily - made themselves instruments of this punishment. Persecutions, pogroms and expulsions were the result. They were all wrong! For God's ultimate goal for Jerusalem is clear: *"He (God) will raise up Jerusalem again and make it a praise in the earth"* (Isaiah 62:7).

But at all times there have also been extraordinary women and men, who saw it as their task, to be a blessing for Jews and Israel. They were prepared to risk their lives, to contribute to the miracle of Israel (see article: [Blessed be Everyone, who Blesses You, Israel!](#)). The [Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem](#) tells many of their impressive stories and at the [Yad Vashem](#) Holocaust Memorial they are honored as Righteous of the Nations.



The Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem, Photo private



The righteous are honored at Yad Vashem. Photo: Shutterstock



However, the mission to bless Israel did not and does not only apply to historical figures. It is timeless and applies to all of us, especially in times like today, when Jews and Israel are being harassed, attacked and persecuted. And it has a promise: "*Blessed is he, who blesses you*" (*Genesis 27:29*).

Do we accept it?

Do we allow ourselves to be influenced by politics and propaganda, or do we believe the words of the Bible? Isaiah prophesies in chapter 60:3: "*Darkness covers the earth and darkness the nations, but the LORD will arise over you (Zion) and his glory will appear over you. And the nations will go to your light, and the kings to the brightness that rises upon you.*"

Do we see this future image of Zion before our inner eye? Are we ready to stand by Israel, regardless of what the world says and does?

Are we ready to be a blessing for Israel?



Are we ready to be a blessing for Israel? Photo Shutterstock

ⁱ <https://www.welt.de/geschichte/article165202517/So-fuehrte-Israel-seinen-Blitzkrieg-in-der-Wueste.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sechstagekrieg>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sechstagekrieg#Kriegsfolgen_und_Nachwirkungen

^{iv} https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelische_Friedensdiplomatie

^v https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zvika_Greengold

^{vi} <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jom-Kippur-Krieg>

^{vii} https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedensvertrag_zwischen_Israel_und_%C3%84gypten

^{viii} https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedensvertrag_zwischen_Israel_und_Jordanien

^{ix} <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas>

^x <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hisbollah>

^{xi} <https://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/israel/israels-bevoelkerung-waechst-weiter/>

^{xii} https://www.welt.de/print/welt_kompakt/vermischtes/article13856299/Warum-in-Israel-die-meisten-Patente-angemeldet-werden.html

^{xiii} <http://www.botschaftisrael.de/2012/09/12/israel-auf-platz-zwei-bei-akademikern-in-der-oecd/>

^{xiv} https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Start-up-Nation_Israel

^{xv} <https://www.10-facts-about.com/de/israel/id/5>

^{xvi} https://www.livenet.ch/themen/wissen/wissenschaft_und_forschung/

^{xvii} <https://fairbd.net/most-powerful-countries/>

^{xviii} world happiness report 2023

^{xix} Israel Today, Stan Goodenough, 29.10.2023



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