

## The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel: *Fostering Beneficial Development*

Development:

1. To convert a tract of land to a specific purpose: *development* of lands in the Negev; making a housing *development*
2. To aid in the growth of, strengthen, cause to unfold, expand or grow: *develop* muscles
3. to bring into being, make active, make more effective (an idea, talent, geographic area, etc.);
4. to process a photosensitive material in order to render a recorded image visible [*American Heritage Dictionary*]

### Israeli Declaration of Independence, par. 3

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 to their land en masse. Pioneers, *ma'apilim* (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.

מדינת ישראל תהא פתוחה לעליה יהודית... ולקיבוץ גלויות; תשקוד על פיתוח הארץ לטובת כל תושביה; תהא מושתתת על יסודות החירות, הצדק והשלום לאור חזונו של נביאי ישראל; תקיים שיוון זכויות חברתי ומדיני גמור לכל אזרחיה בלי הבדל דת, גזע ומין; תבטיח חופש דת, מצפון, לשון, חינוך ותרבות; תשמור על המקומות הקדושים של כל הדתות; ותהיה נאמנה לעקרונותיה של מגילת האומות המאוחדות.

*The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; 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; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience,*

### Genesis 1:26-28

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth." And God created man in His image, in the Image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth."

*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. (Official Translation of Israel's Declaration of Independence, 5 Iyar, 5708 – 14 May, 1948)*

### Genesis 2:15 –

The Lord G-d took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it.

- ✚ What is the role of people in the world according to the verses in Genesis 1?
- ✚ What is your opinion regarding Nachmanides' interpretation of the verses?
- ✚ How do you understand the commandment in Genesis 2?

### Jeremiah 22:13-16 –

Ha! He who builds his house with unfairness, And his upper chambers with injustice; Who makes his fellow man work without pay, And does not give him his wages: Who thinks, "I will build me a vast palace, with spacious upper chambers, provided with windows, paneled in cedar, painted with vermilion!": Do you think you are more a king because you compete in cedar? Your father ate and drank and dispensed justice and equity— Then all went well with him: He upheld the rights of the poor and needy—then all was well. That is truly heeding Me – declares the Lord.

- ✚ What is Jeremiah's "concept of development" in this verse?

### Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

"Consider the work of God; for who can make that straight, which He hath made crooked?" (Ecclesiastes 7:13)  
"When the Holy One created the first man, He took him around all the trees in the Garden of Eden and said to him: See how beautiful and wonderful my works are. Everything I have created, I have created for you. Be mindful that you do not ruin and devastate my world; for if you ruin it, there is no one to repair it after you." [Kohélet Rabbah 7:13]

### Ramban On Genesis 1: 26,28

The meaning of LET THEM HAVE DOMINION is that they shall rule vigorously over the fish, the fowl, the cattle, and all the creeping things – "the cattle" here includes the beast.

And He said, *And over all the earth*, to indicate that they are to rule over the earth itself, to uproot and to pull down, to dig and to hew out copper and iron. The term *r'diyah* – [*v'yirdu' over the fish . . . and over all the earth*] – applies to the rule of the master over his servant.

AND SUBDUE IT. He gave them power and dominion over the earth to do as they wish with the cattle, the reptiles, and all that crawl in the dust, and to build, *and to pluck up that which is planted*, and from its hills to dig copper, and other similar things. This is included in what He said *and over all the earth*.

[Ramban: Commentary on the Torah – Genesis. Rabbi Dr. Charles B. Chavel. New York, NY: Shilo Publishing House, Inc., 1971]

**Deuteronomy 6:10-15 –**

<sup>10</sup>When the Lord your God brings you into the land that He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to assign to you – great and flourishing cities that you did not build, <sup>11</sup>houses full of all good things that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant – and you eat your fill; <sup>12</sup>take heed that you do not forget the Lord freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. <sup>13</sup>Revere only the Lord your God and worship Him alone, and swear only by His name. <sup>14</sup>Do not follow other gods, any gods of the people about you – <sup>15</sup>for the Lord your God in your midst is an impassioned God – lest the anger of the Lord your God blaze forth against you and He wipe you off the face of the earth.

**Deuteronomy 8:7-18 –**

<sup>7</sup>For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; <sup>8</sup>a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; <sup>9</sup>a land where you may eat food without stint, where

you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. <sup>10</sup>When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. <sup>11</sup>Take care lest you forget the Lord your God and fail to keep His commandments, His rules, and His laws, which I enjoin upon you today. <sup>12</sup>When you have eaten your fill, and have built fine houses to live in, <sup>13</sup>and your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold have increased, and everything you own has prospered, <sup>14</sup>beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget the Lord your God – who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage; <sup>15</sup>who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its *seraph* serpents and scorpions, a parched land with no water in it, who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock; <sup>16</sup>who led you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers had never known, in order to test you in hardships only to benefit you in the end – <sup>17</sup>and you say to yourselves, “My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me.” <sup>18</sup>Remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to get wealth, in fulfillment of the covenant that He made on oath with your fathers, as is still the case.

be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden; <sup>11</sup>but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. <sup>12</sup>It is a land which the Lord your G-d looks after, on which the Lord your G-d always keeps His eye, from year’s beginning to year’s end.

<sup>13</sup>If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoy upon you this day, loving the Lord your G-d and serving Him with all your heart and soul, <sup>14</sup>I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall father in your new grain and wine and oil – <sup>15</sup>I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle – and thus you shall eat your fill. <sup>16</sup>Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. <sup>17</sup>For the Lord’s anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the Lord is assigning to you.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart; bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead, <sup>19</sup>and teach them to your children – reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up, <sup>20</sup>and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates – <sup>21</sup>to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

...מדינת ישראל תהא פתוחה  
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✚ What is unique about the Promised Land?

✚ How are the Israelites who are entering the land required to relate to what they find there

✚ What conditions will ensure the continued existence of the people in the land?

**Deuteronomy 11:1-21 –**

<sup>1</sup>Love, therefore, the Lord your G-d, and always keep His charge, His laws, His rules, and His commandments.

<sup>2a</sup>Take thought this day that it was not your children, who neither experienced nor witnessed the lesson of the Lord your G-d– His majesty, His mighty hand, His outstretched arm;

<sup>3</sup>the signs and the deeds that He performed in Egypt against Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his land; <sup>4</sup>what He did to Egypt’s army; its horses and chariots; how the Lord rolled back upon them the waters of the Sea of Reeds when they were pursuing you, thus destroying them once and for all;

<sup>5</sup>what He did for you in the wilderness before you arrived in this place; <sup>6</sup>and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab son of Reuben, when the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them, along with their households, their tents, and every living thing in their train, from amidst all Israel–

<sup>7</sup>but that it was you who saw with your own eyes all the marvelous deeds that the Lord performed.

<sup>8</sup>Keep, therefore, all the Instruction that I enjoy upon you today, so that you may have the strength to enter and take possession of the land that you are about to cross into and possess, <sup>9</sup>and that you may long endure upon the soil that the Lord swore to your fathers to assign to them and to their heirs, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to

### Rabbi Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik

We all know that the Bible offers two accounts of the creation of man...However, the [reason] lies not in an alleged dual tradition but in dual man, not in an imaginary contradiction between two versions but in a real contradiction in the nature of man. The two accounts deal with two Adams, two men, two fathers of mankind, two types, two representatives of humanity, and it is no wonder that they are not identical...

There is no doubt that the term "Image of God" in the first account refers to man's inner charismatic endowment as a creative being. Man's likeness to God expresses itself in man's striving and ability to become a creator. Adam the First, who was fashioned in the image of God, was blessed with great drive for creative activity and immeasurable resources for the realization of this goal, the most outstanding of which is the intelligence, the human mind, capable of confronting the outside world and inquiring into its complex workings...

Hence, Adam the First is aggressive, bold, and victory-minded. His motto is success, triumph over the cosmic forces. He engages in creative work, trying to imitate his Maker (imitatio Dei). The most characteristic representative of Adam the First is the mathematical scientist ....

He (Adam the Second) does not create a world of his own. Instead, he wants to understand the living, "given" world into which he has been cast. Therefore, he does not mathematize phenomena or conceptualize things. He encounters the universe in all its colorfulness, splendor, and grandeur, and studies it with the naivete, awe and admiration of the child who seeks the unusual and wonderful in every ordinary thing and event. While Adam the first is dynamic and creative, transforming sense data into thought constructs, Adam the second is receptive and beholds the world in its original dimensions. He looks for the Image of God not in the mathematical formula or the natural relational law but in every beam of light, in every bud and blossom, in the morning breeze and the stillness of a starlit evening.

**Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought Summer 1965 pp. 10-17 (Later published in book form by Random House and republished by Jason Aaronson February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1997, paperback by Doubleday in May 2006)**

...מדינת ישראל... תשקוד על פיתוח הארץ לטובת כל  
...תושביה...

*The State of Israel... will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants...*

### Amos Oz, *Against Conservation*

And now it is time for a terrible confession. I am against conservation. The very idea of "conserving" is not acceptable to me in almost any aspect of life. We didn't come in to this world to protect or to preserve anything: Not commandments, the deeds of our ancestors, nature or cultural inheritance. There is a something distorted in any tradition, or in individual preferences that focus on "preserving". We did not inherit a museum, and we do not exist in order to patiently dust off exhibits or to polish the glass and direct the crowds of visitor tiptoeing from precious exhibit to precious exhibit. We do not exist only in order to preserve: Neither the tradition of our ancestors nor the wonders of nature, not childhood memories or sacred objects. This would make our lives a ritual. The world is not a museum. Neither is nature a museum. Culture is not a museum. We are allowed to touch! We are allowed to move, to draw nearer, to move away, to change and to make our imprint. Touch the stone, touch life, touch one another.

#### How to touch:

The nature of contact could be the subject of long books. I will concentrate on the question of contact with nature. If I could sum it up on one foot and in a word, I would say: lovingly.

Men and woman touch each other lovingly and change each other through their love. The same is true of parents and children. Siblings. Friends. People and their culture and what they have inherited from their ancestors. A person and his dwelling place. The condition is that the changes are mutual, in "both directions." As you change those who are close to you or around you or your own horizons, be prepared to be touched and changed by them. As you shape the world, the world shapes you.

The Land of Israel is not God's museum. No location is God's museum. No partner or object, living or not, is a ritual object. It is permitted to touch and it is permitted to change, as long as you yourself are prepared to be touched and changed. The requirement is love.

### A.D. Gordon, "The Human Being and Nature,"

How did the human being act vis-à-vis Nature from the moment that he began to treat Nature as his own? Is there, in reality, a spiritual relationship to the plant, to the field, to the garden, and to the forest as they are? Isn't there a movement for deforestation of entire forests, even eternal forests that are not only the magnificence of Nature, but also sketches of nobility and Divine inspiration on Nature's? These forests are also essential for the health of both humans and plants. Don't we destroy them for the sake of money, as a result of our limited and narrow calculations? Even the most decent governments do not regulate such actions. This is all an outcome of short mindedness and not an account of Nature . . . . Where is the Biblical forest of Lebanon? Or: a waterfall that becomes a power engine, what does it say? And so on. (Do not respond to these questions by blaming it all on capitalism. This destruction of Nature has existed since the dawn of civilization. A social revolution adds nothing in this regard. In a different social order we may find a more just distribution of material and natural resources, yet the path to a different relationship with Nature is still very long.)

### A.D. Gordon, *The Writings of A.D. Gordon, vol.4 "The Human Being and Nature"*

What is the responsibility of the human being in the world according to each of these thinkers? What do you think is the proper balance between "Conservation" and "Development?"

### Abraham Joshua Heschel

How proud we often are of our victories in the war with nature, proud of the multitude of instruments we have succeeded in inventing, of the abundance of commodities we have been able to produce. Yet, our victories have come to resemble defeats. In spite of our triumphs, we have fallen victims to the work of our hands; it is as if the forces we had conquered have conquered us.

Is our civilization a way to disaster, as many of us are prone to believe? Is civilization essentially evil, to be rejected and condemned? The faith of the Jew is not a way out of this world, but a way of being within and above this world; not to reject but to surpass civilization. The Sabbath is the day on which we learn the art of *surpassing* civilization.

Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15)/ Labor is not only the destiny of man; it is endowed with divine dignity. However, after he ate of the tree of knowledge he was condemned to toil, not only to labor "In toil shall thou eat...al the days of they life" (Genesis 3:17). Labor is a blessing, toil is the misery of man.

The Sabbath as a day of abstaining from work is not a depreciation but an affirmation of labor, a divine exaltation of its dignity. Thou shalt abstain from labor on the seventh aday is a sequel to the command: *Six days shalt though labor, and do all thy work...*(Exodus 20:9; 23:12; 31:15; 34:21; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:13)

**The solution of mankind's most vexing problem will not be found in renouncing technical civilization, but in attaining some degree of independence of it.**

The Sabbath, pp 27-28 Noonday Press 1951.

...And on this point, the rule for one's partner is the rule for a tree. If there is an ancient fig tree in your yard and if you enjoy that tree's shade, you are allowed to prune its branches. Just don't do it fanatically. Not even the fanaticism of conservationists.

## David Ben Gurion

[speech on the occasion of the commencement of the second Knesset session]

We must plant one hundred thousand trees on an area of 5,000,000 dunam – one quarter of the country's area. We must cover all of the mountains of Israel and their slopes in trees, all of the hills and the rocky soil that cannot be used for agriculture – the sands of the seaside valley, the plains of the Negev east and south of Beersheba. In other words – all of Edom and the Arava to Eilat. We must also plant for security reasons along all borders, along the roads and paths surrounding civilian and military buildings and installations... We will not be faithful to one of the two central objectives of the State – making the desert bloom – if we limit ourselves only to urgent matters and work whose reward is short-term, and if we, in our generation, do not take on projects that will be of benefit to all future generations. We are the land of Genesis that is redressing what went wrong in past generations as well wrongdoings committed against the people and those committed against the land...

## Leviticus 19:23 –

<sup>23</sup>When you enter the land and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you, not to be eaten.

## Midrash Vayikra Rabba, 25

"The Holy One, blessed be He, occupied Himself with planting immediately after Creation of the world. For it is specifically written: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden". So shall you also, when you enter the land of Israel, first of all occupy yourself in planting, as it is written "And when you enter this land, you shall plant fruit-bearing trees..." (Vayikra 19.23)

## Yalkut Shim'oni, Ecclesiastes 968

Therefore He hid his [Moses'] day of death from him – when a person builds and plants he may not enjoy it but others may, and so God says: ""When you enter the land and plant any tree for food, [you shall regard its fruit as forbidden.]" (Lev. 19:23) The Holy One said to Israel: even though you will find it full of all goodness, take care to plant so that your children after you will find [the same]... therefore, a person should not desist from planting, but rather, he shall add on to what he has found – it is what God has provided.

## ☒ Were we "careful in planting" as the midrash stipulates?

### Genesis Rabbah Chapter 97

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him" (Gen. 49:28): The text states, "And He blessed *them*" in the plural, and yet it then says He blessed

"*each*" (in the singular) with an appropriate blessing – why? Because he had bestowed on Judah the blessing of the lion's might, on Joseph the might of the bull, on Naphtali the hind's swiftness, and on Dan the serpent's bite. When you say that each is greater than the next, the singular aspect of the blessings apply: "blessing each with the blessing suitable to him". Seeing as how Jacob divided the Land amongst them and gave to Judah its might for the production of barley and to Naftali its strength for wheat, nevertheless the blessings are for the benefit of all that they may eat of each other's in mutual support and benefit.

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**Karmit Lubanov / Environmental Justice – Environmental Justice and Civil Rights**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the United States defined environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." (EPA, 1993) "Fair treatment" means proportional distribution of the negative environmental ramifications caused by industrial activity, municipal authorities, or carrying out plans and policies at the local, regional and national levels. "Meaningful involvement" means granting a true opportunity to residents of the affected community to take part in decisions regarding activities that affect their environment or their health, out of a concern for the environmental wellbeing of all parties involved, and compensation for damages.

According to this same definition, "the EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation." Environmental justice will be achieved when every person, regardless of origin, culture or income, enjoys the same level of protection from environmental risks and equal access to the decision-making process, and enjoys a healthy environment where they live, study and work. All relevant parties must be able to participate as equal participants at every level of decision-making, including assessment of needs, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation, and the right to a safe and healthy work environment...

The environmental justice movement demonstrates that there is a very high correlation between race and low socio-economic status, factors that are interconnected, and the placement of poisonous installations across the United States. The decision-making processes, which are not always egalitarian, affect the distribution of the various resources, such as employment, housing, infrastructure, and land use.

**Chevrah, no. 18, March 2005, pp. 19-21 (Heb.)**

**David Ben Gurion (excerpt from Keren HaYesod conference, 29 October 1947)**

In the Jewish State, we will be the ones responsible, and not only for Jews... but for all residents of the State. And for all residents of the State in equal measure. Our concern will not be directed only to Jewish communities and to the educational and health services of the Jews only – but to every community. To the Jew and to the Arab to an equal extent, without any prejudice or discrimination, and to services for all of the residents – and again on the foundation of complete and absolute equality. We will have to attend to the health and education, to development and to all other services for the Arab village, to a no lesser extent than to those of the Jewish village. If we set up irrigation\* – we will set up irrigation for the Arab peasant and for the Jewish settler; if we improve the sanitary conditions, we will do so to an equal extent for all residents of the land. (From Ben Gurion, *Paamei Medina* (Memoirs from his Estate.), 1994, p. 438)

**Sustainable Development** is development that can exist in the same fashion over time, since it does not damage the resource base on which it relies. Resource use takes place at a pace that enables natural processes to replenish that which has been used. Such development limits the growth potential based to the quantity of resources and their renewal on the earth, and takes care to cultivate the natural systems that directly or indirectly provide us with most of these resources. This kind of development is planned and does not create irreversible environmental damages. In other contexts as well, the word "sustainable" (sustainable environment, sustainable agriculture) refers to an essence, behavior or lifestyle that can exist as they are over time without collapsing.

**Sustainability** – translated into Hebrew as *kayyamut* from the cognate "to exist," is the ability to exist, to survive for a protracted period. It constitutes an approach to development and environment, which strives to change normative ways of thinking and current forms of action in all that relates to economic development, planning, and environmental protection.

The aim of sustainability is development that takes into consideration the standard of living the realm of possibilities of future generations, with the intention of preserving the environmental and natural resources that are today at our disposal, for them. Sustainability maintains that **development** must be considered broadly in terms of the long term, space, and population affected.

Central points:

- **Preservation of resources:** Maximum preservation of resources (land, water, air, biological diversity), with an emphasis on non-renewable and dwindling resources
- **Reducing damages at the source:** Environmental damage must be limited at the source, by switching to production processes that do not generate waste, in contrast to the "end-of-the-pipeline" solutions (generating waste and then dealing with it).
- **Enhanced equality:** looking closely at the **population affected** – who earns and who loses from the planned development? Who is affected by the environmental development and from resource use?

## Rabbis for Human Rights

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Founded in 2002, **Rabbis for Human Rights – North America (RHR-NA)** is an organization of rabbis from all streams of Judaism dedicated to expanding support for the mission and work of RHR in Israel, and to education and advocacy on human rights issues in North America. In North America, RHR-NA has launched *Honor the Image of God: Stop Torture Now*, a Jewish campaign to end U.S.-sponsored torture. The campaign includes developing educational resources and programming for rabbis and Jewish communities nationwide and organizing Jews in local communities to participate in Jewish and interfaith efforts to end torture. In 2007, RHR-NA launched *K'vod Habriot: A Jewish Human Rights Network*, the first Jewish Human Rights network of rabbis, communities and individuals dedicated to the human rights of all. In 2008, RHR-NA will host The Second North American Conference on Judaism and Human Rights for rabbis, cantors, rabbinic and cantorial students, and all Jews committed to the protection of human rights for all.