

An Indigenous People Return Home

Every Passover for two millennia, Jews in diasporic communities proclaimed, "Next year in Jerusalem." Though Jews began migrating from Europe and the Middle East to the Palestinian area in the mid-1800s, Zionism as a national liberation movement did not officially materialize until the very end of the 19th century, alongside a variety of Jewish and European national movements. Zionists were the first to recognize that full emancipation was only guaranteed through a secured nation - where they would constitute a majority of the population and could govern themselves. Zionism's purpose was the rebirth of a homeland. Inspired by the reunification of Italy and the reestablishment of Bulgaria and Greece, Jews realized the national dream of their people - the reestablishment of a state would likewise allow Jews to flourish without the barriers of second-class status.

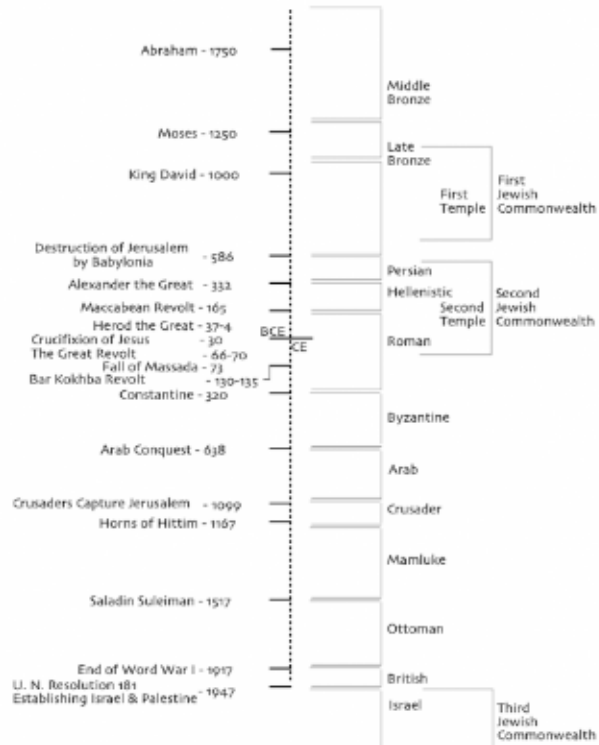
Why Zionism?

As the Zionist movement gained momentum, Jews consciously acknowledged that the Diaspora was not their home. In 1896, Theodore Herzl published *Der Judenstaat* (the State of the Jews), giving birth to political Zionism. The Zionist ideology, however, emanated through every political movement of the time. Some, like Ber Borochov, theorized a Marxist-Zionist amalgam; others, like Rav Abraham Isaac

Kook, understood it through religiosity. Ahad Ha'am saw a Jewish state as an opportunity to enhance and further Jewish cultural identity, writing, "What is national freedom if not a people's inner freedom to cultivate its abilities along the beaten path of its history?" There was no single reason to be an early Zionist, but a common theme reigned: the establishment of a Jewish state would guarantee Jews their emancipation.

A Time Line of the Land of Israel

Jews have been present in the land for over three thousand years.



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[Zionism] is essentially a movement to give to the Jew more, not less freedom; it aims to enable the Jews to exercise the same right now exercised by practically every other people in the world: To live at their option either in the land of their fathers or in some other country; a right which members of small nations as well as of large, which Irish, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, or Belgian, may now exercise as fully as Germans or English.

- Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, 1915