

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL

IRE215

SPRING 2020

Session 2



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On The Agenda or Today

2

- **Introduction to Israel**
 - Facts & Figures, Major Cities
 - Israeli Political System
 - Executive, Legislative & Judicial Branches
 - Israeli Economy
 - Citizenship
- **(Summarized) Israeli Political History**
- **Jerusalem: a Contested Capital**

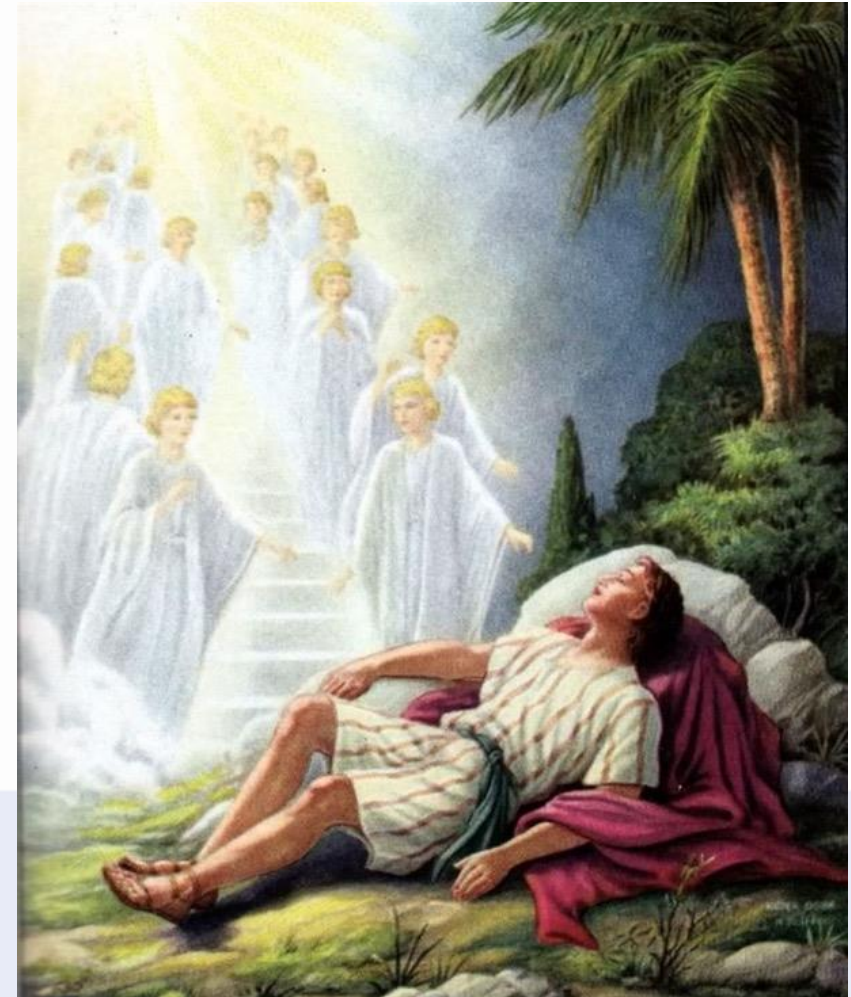


Facts & Figures

- **Conventional long form:** 'State of Israel'
- **Local long form:** Medinat Yisra'el

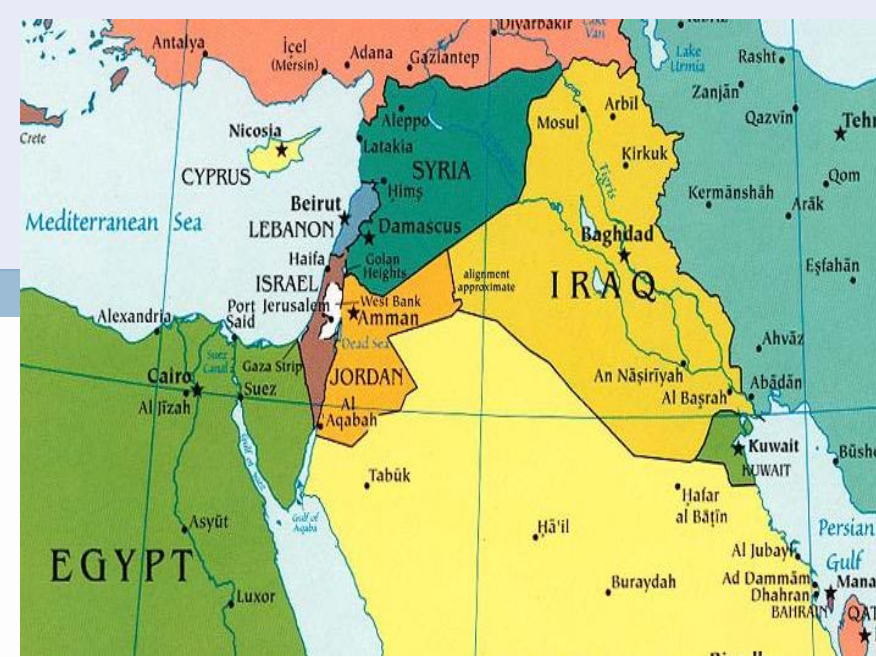
מדינת ישראל

- **Etymology** => named after the ancient Kingdom of Israel
 - According to Biblical tradition, the Jewish patriarch **Jacob** received the name "Israel"
 - Jacob's 12 sons became the ancestors of the **Israelites**, aka the **Twelve Tribes of Israel**, who formed the Kingdom of Israel



Facts & Figures

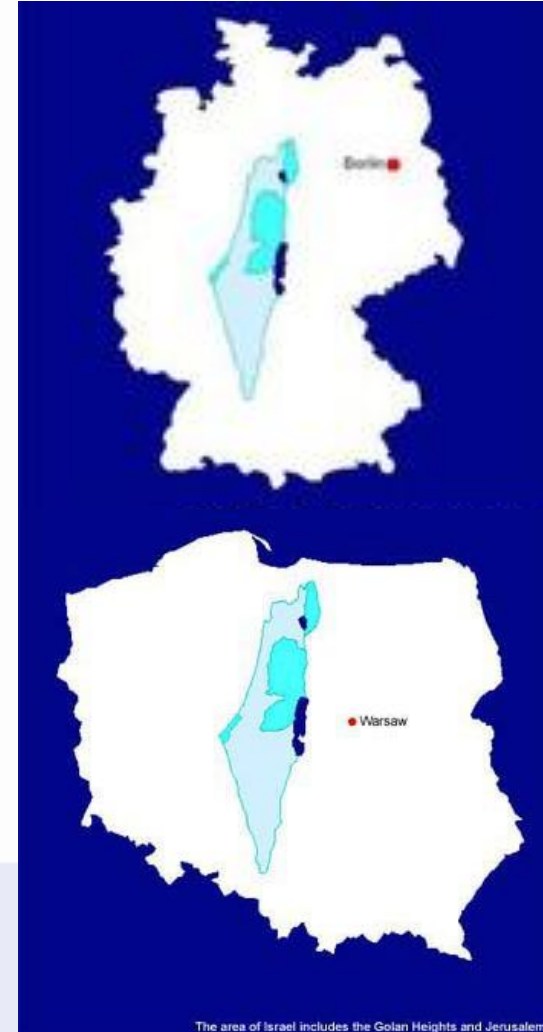
- **Location** => Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea
- **Capital** => Jerusalem (controversial issue)
- **Border countries** => Egypt 208 km, Gaza Strip 59 km, Jordan 307 km, Lebanon 81 km, Syria 83 km, West Bank 330 km
- **Climate** => Temperate, hot and dry in southern & eastern desert areas
- **Terrain** => Negev desert (south); low coastal plain; central mountains; Jordan Rift Valley



Facts & Figures

- **Size** => 20,770 km² (land 20,330, water 440 km²)
- **Natural Resources** => Timber, salts, copper ore, natural gas, phosphate rock, magnesium bromide, clay, sand
- **Natural Hazards** => Sandstorms, droughts, periodic earthquakes
- **Environmental Issues** => limited arable land, restricted natural freshwater resources; **air pollution** from industrial & vehicle emissions; **groundwater pollution** from industrial and domestic waste, **chemical** fertilizers and pesticides

Germany



Poland

Facts & Figures

- **Population** => 9,13 M (Dec 2019)
 - 10 million by 2024 or sooner
- **Population Distribution** => Population concentrated in & around **Tel-Aviv-Yafo** (>4M) + the shoreline + around the **Sea of Galilee**
 - **Urbanism** => 15 cities with between 100k and 1 million people, 72 cities with between 10k and 100k people
 - The **south** remains rather **sparsely populated**



Major Cities

- Jerusalem (>927k), Tel Aviv (>450k), Haifa (>285k)



Facts & Figures

- **Lake Tiberias/Kinneret (Sea of Galilee)** is an important **freshwater source**
- **The Dead Sea** is the second saltiest body of water in the world
- **Ashdod** => largest port in Israel, accounting for 60% of the country's imported goods
- Israel is the **95th most populous country** in the world



Facts & Figures

- **Languages** => Hebrew, Arabic, English
- Out of est. 14.5 million Jews in the world, only **46%** reside in Israel

Hebrew alphabet, and Arabic equivalents

<i>Hebrew name</i>	alef	bet	gimel	dalet	he	vav	zayin	chet	tet	yod	kaf
<i>Hebrew letter</i>	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ
<i>Arabic name</i>	'alif	baa'	jim	daal	haa'	waw	zay	khaa'	taa'	yaa'	kaaf
<i>Arabic letter</i>	ا	ب	ج	د	ه	و	ز	خ	ت	ي	ك

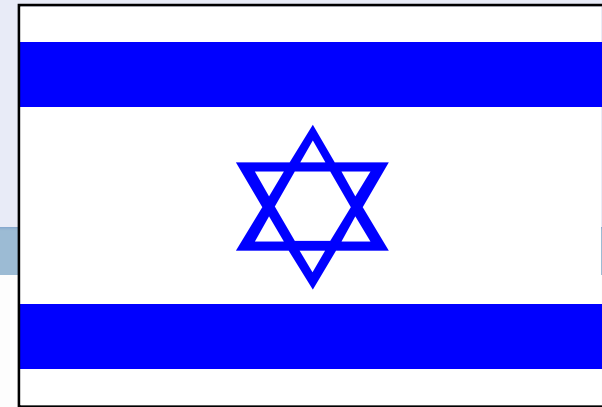
<i>Hebrew name</i>	lamed	mem	nun	samech	ayin	pay	tsade	qof	resh	shin	tav
<i>Hebrew letter</i>	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת
<i>Arabic name</i>	laam	miim	nuun	(none)	3ayn	faa'	Saad	qaaf	raa'	sin/shin	Taa'
<i>Arabic letter</i>	ل	م	ن		ع	ف	ص	ق	ر	س	ش

Remaining Arabic letters (no direct Hebrew equivalent):

<i>Arabic name</i>	thaa'	Haa'	dhaal	Daad	DHaa'	ghayn	hamza
<i>Arabic letter</i>	ث	ح	ذ	ض	ظ	غ	ء

Facts & Figures

- **Flag** => **White** with a **blue** hexagram known as **Magen David** (Star of David/Shield of David), centered between two equal horizontal blue bands near the top and bottom edges of the flag
 - Basic design resembles a traditional **Jewish prayer shawl** (tallit), which is white with blue stripes
 - Hexagram as a Jewish symbol dates back to medieval times
- **National Symbols** => **Star of David, Menorah**
- **National Colors** => Blue and white



Facts & Figures

- **National Anthem =>** 'Hatikvah' ('The Hope')
 - Officially adopted in 2004, unofficially since 1948
 - Used as the **anthem of the Zionist movement** since 1897
 - Thought to be based on a Romanian folk song

Hatikvah: Israeli National Anthem

As long as the Jewish spirit is yearning deep in the heart,

With eyes turned toward the East, looking toward Zion,

Then our hope—the two-thousand-year-old hope—will not be lost:

To be a free people in our land,

The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Kol od balevav p'nimah

Nefesh Yehudi homiyah

Ulfa'atey mizrach kadimah

Ayin l'tzion tzofiyah

Od lo avdah tikvatenu

Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim

L'hiyot am chofshi b'artzenu

Eretz Tzion v'Yerushalayim

כל עוד בלבב פנימה

נפש יהודי חומיה

ולפאתי מזרח קדימה

עין לציון צופיה

עוד לא אבדה תקותנו

התקוה בת שנות אלפים

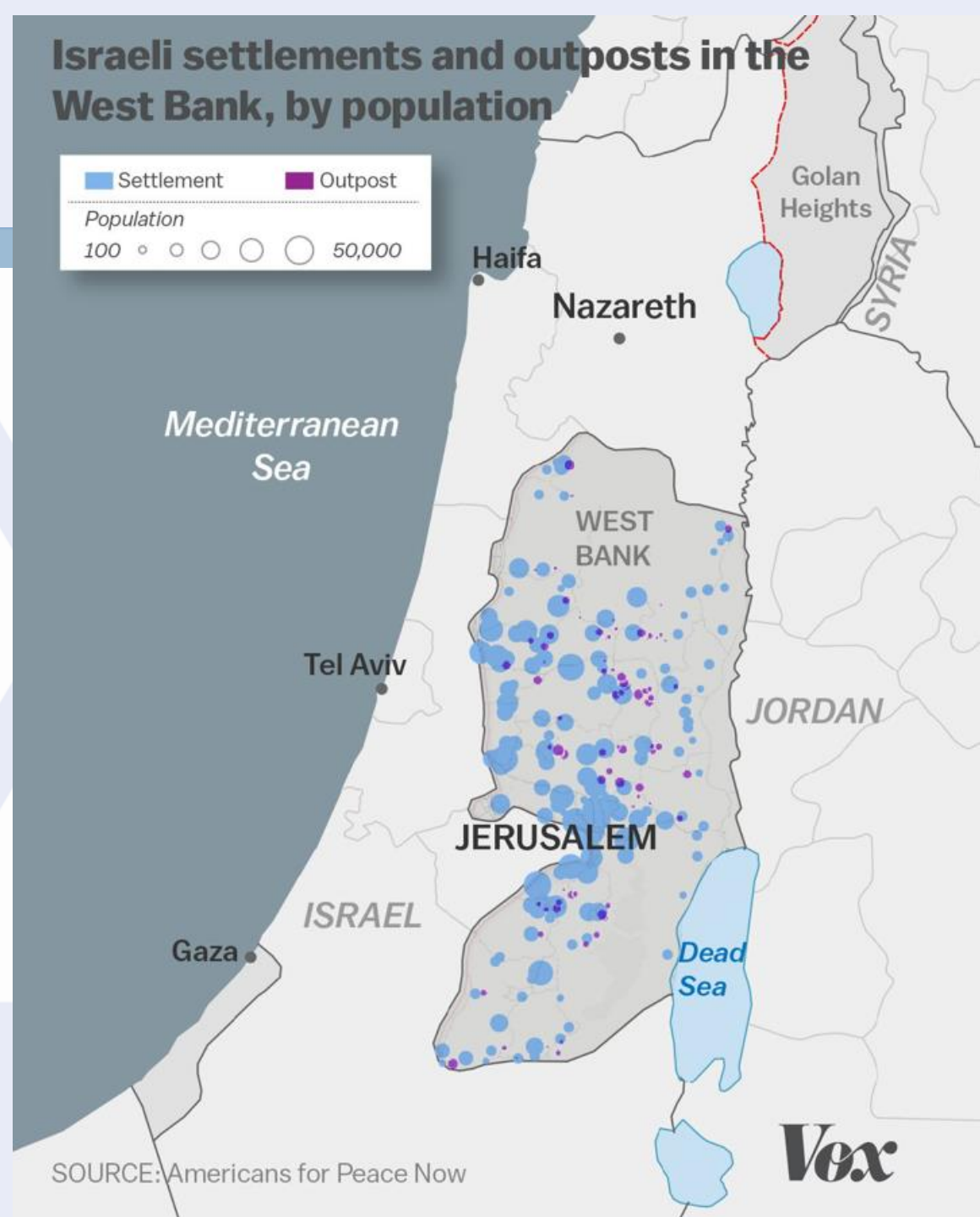
להיות עם חופשי בארצנו

ארץ ציון וירושלים

Facts & Figures

Israeli settlements:

- 42 settlements in the **Golan Heights**
- 35 settlements in **East Jerusalem**
- 213 settlements + 132 outposts in the **West Bank**
- No Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip: all were evacuated in 2005



Facts & Figures

- **Government Type** => *Parliamentary Democracy
 - A **contested liberal democracy? Ethnocracy? Ethnic democracy?**
 - Israeli Arabs can vote, Palestinians in the West Bank cannot

*** In **Parliamentary Democracy**, the **party** with the greatest representation in the parliament/ **coalition** forms the government and its leader becomes prime minister.

Facts & Figures

- **Constitution** => No formal constitution exists
 - The **Declaration of Establishment** (1948), **Basic Laws**, the Law of Return, regular laws, bureaucratic decisions and court rulings: developing incrementally
- **Amendments to the Constitution** => proposed by the government/ Knesset
 - Requires a majority vote of Knesset members + subject to judicial review of the supreme court
 - 11 of the 13 Basic Laws have been amended at least once, latest in 2018
- **Legal System** => mixed: English common law, British Mandate regulations + Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious laws

Facts & Figures

- **International law organization participation =>**
 - Israel has **not** submitted an International Court of Justice (ICJ) **jurisdiction** declaration
 - Withdrew acceptance of International Criminal Court jurisdiction in 2002
- **International organization participation =>** OSCE, OECD, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNWTO, WTO, observer country at EU parliament

Israeli Politics

- Independence => 14 May 1948, upon termination of the British Mandate over Palestine
 - The Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum, and declared the establishment of the State of Israel
- Cabinets often dominated by Ashkenazi Jews (80%)

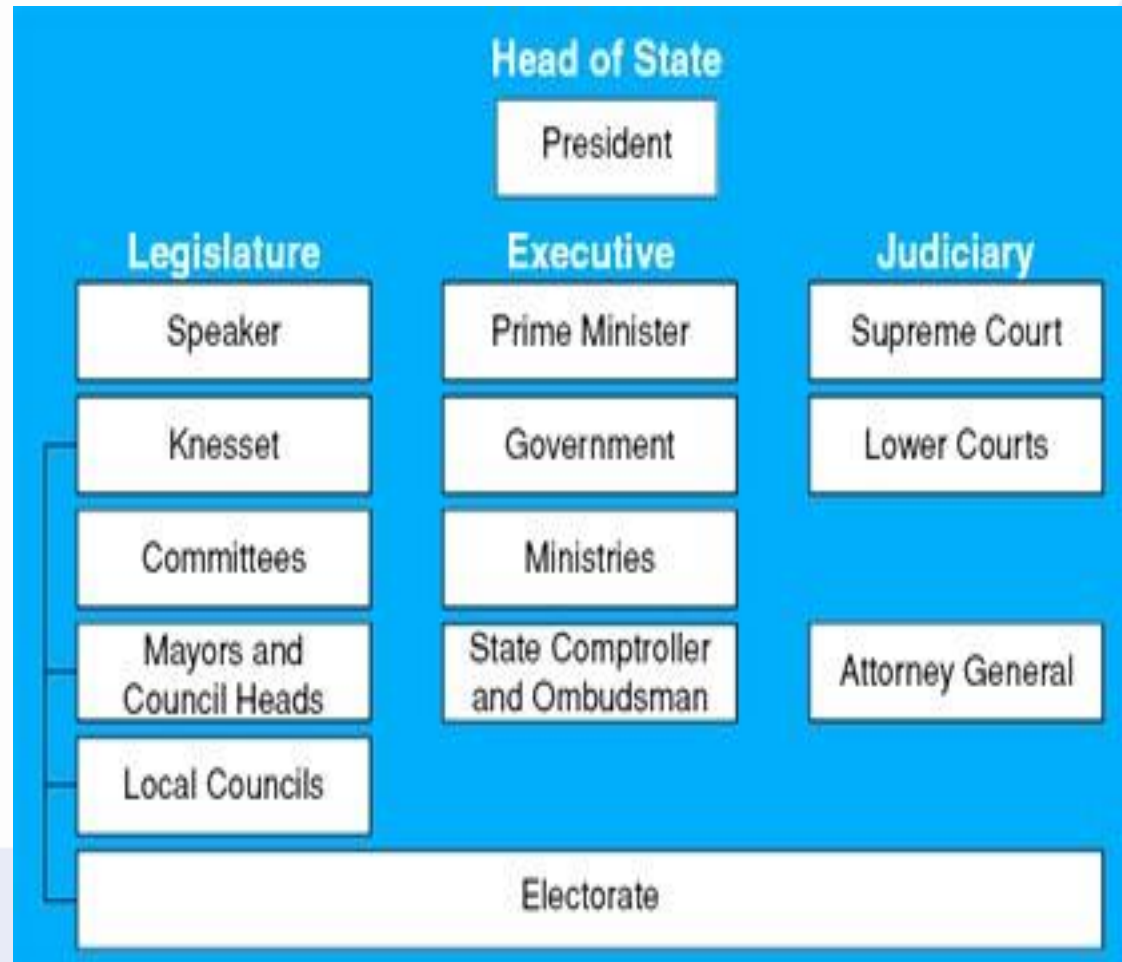


Israeli Politics

- **Chief of State** => President Reuven Rivlin (since 2014)
- **Head of Government** => Prime Minister Binyamin **Netanyahu** (since 2009)
 - Netanyahu formed the last center-right coalition following the 2015 elections
 - 2 rounds of elections in 2019 => no coalition formed
 - Next elections => March 2nd, 2020



The Executive Branch



- **Cabinet** => appointed by the prime minister, approved by the Knesset
- **The President** => elected by the Knesset for a 7-year term (max 1); election last held on 10 June 2014
- Following **general elections**, the president (in consultation with party leaders) tasks a Knesset member (usually head of the largest party) with forming a government

The Legislative Branch

- **Unicameral Knesset** => 120 seats, members directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by **proportional representation vote**
- Members serve 4-year terms
- **History** =>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdpA-Emn0FY>
- **Action** =>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0mLUgfvZl8>



The Judicial Branch

- **Highest Courts** => Supreme Court (Chief justice + 14 judges)
- **Selection of Justices & Term of Office** => judges appointed by the **Judicial Selection Committee** consisting of:
 - 3 Supreme Court judges + 2 Cabinet members
 - **Mandatory retirement** at age 70



President Rivlin and PM Netanyahu with the justices of the Supreme Court

Citizenship

- **Citizenship by birth?** No => by **descent** only (at least one parent must be a citizen of Israel)
- **Israeli law (Law of Return, 5 July 1950)** provides for the granting of citizenship to any **Jew**:
 - A person being **born to a Jewish mother/converted** to Judaism while renouncing any other religion
 - Who **immigrates** to & expresses a **desire to settle in Israel** on the basis of the Right of **Aliyah**
- In 1970, the law was amended to **include non-Jewish family members** (spouse, child/grandchild, spouses of children/grandchildren)



Citizenship

- The **gap** between a **civic** and **Halachic** definitions of '**Jewishness**' is a source of **discrimination of non-Jews**
- To qualify for **citizenship** under the 'Law of Return', an individual must have at least one Jewish grandparent, a Jewish spouse/have undergone a conversion in a recognized Jewish community
- To qualify as a **Jew** under **Halachic (religious) law**
 - An individual must have been **born to a Jewish mother** or have undergone an **Orthodox conversion** by rabbis recognized by Israel's Chief Rabbinate
- Lack of **separation** between religion & state + **religious monopoly** in personal status laws => **Problematic**

Israeli Economy

- Technologically advanced, free market economy (+ agriculture & other industries)
- **Leading exports** => High-technology products, pharmaceuticals
- 2018 =>
 - Israel shipped US\$61.9 billion worth of products around the globe; 0.4% of overall global exports
 - 32.3% of Israeli exports by value were delivered to **European** countries, 29% sold to **North American** importers, 28.1% to **Asia**, 2.9% to Latin America, 1.3% to Africa and 1% to Oceania (1%)

Currency: New Israeli Shekel



Israeli Economy

- Israel's **top trading partners** + percentage consumption of total Israeli exports

1. United States: US\$16.8 billion (27.1%)
2. China: \$4.8 billion (7.7%)
3. United Kingdom: \$4.4 billion (7.1%)
4. Hong Kong: \$4.2 billion (6.8%)
5. Netherlands: \$2.3 billion (3.7%)
7. India: \$2.1 billion (3.5%)
14. South Korea: \$972.4 million (1.6%)



- **Expanding Markets** => China (up 44.8%), Japan (up 38.5%), Turkey (up 34.2%) then Brazil (up 27.6%)

Israeli Economy

Cost of Living

Restaurants	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant	150.00 Kč (22.12 ₪)	406.84 Kč (60.00 ₪)	+171.23 %
Meal for 2 People, Mid-range Restaurant, Three-course	600.00 Kč (88.49 ₪)	1,491.75 Kč (220.00 ₪)	+148.63 %
McMeal at McDonalds (or Equivalent Combo Meal)	130.00 Kč (19.17 ₪)	339.03 Kč (50.00 ₪)	+160.80 %
Domestic Beer (0.5 liter draught)	35.00 Kč (5.16 ₪)	203.42 Kč (30.00 ₪)	+481.20 %
Imported Beer (0.33 liter bottle)	40.00 Kč (5.90 ₪)	169.52 Kč (25.00 ₪)	+323.79 %
Cappuccino (regular)	46.63 Kč (6.88 ₪)	81.03 Kč (11.95 ₪)	+73.76 %
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 liter bottle)	29.65 Kč (4.37 ₪)	56.31 Kč (8.30 ₪)	+89.95 %
Water (0.33 liter bottle)	22.22 Kč (3.28 ₪)	41.45 Kč (6.11 ₪)	+86.58 %

Markets	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
Milk (regular), (1 liter)	17.80 Kč (2.62 ₪)	39.60 Kč (5.84 ₪)	+122.52 %
Loaf of Fresh White Bread (500g)	22.92 Kč (3.38 ₪)	39.56 Kč (5.83 ₪)	+72.58 %
Rice (white), (1kg)	34.08 Kč (5.03 ₪)	61.70 Kč (9.10 ₪)	+81.04 %
Eggs (regular) (12)	42.02 Kč (6.20 ₪)	96.40 Kč (14.22 ₪)	+129.41 %
Local Cheese (1kg)	183.21 Kč (27.02 ₪)	268.44 Kč (39.59 ₪)	+46.52 %
Chicken Fillets (1kg)	148.15 Kč (21.85 ₪)	206.64 Kč (30.48 ₪)	+39.48 %
Beef Round (1kg) (or Equivalent Back Leg Red Meat)	254.12 Kč (37.48 ₪)	388.11 Kč (57.24 ₪)	+52.73 %
Apples (1kg)	29.85 Kč (4.40 ₪)	65.02 Kč (9.59 ₪)	+117.82 %
Banana (1kg)	30.29 Kč (4.47 ₪)	53.23 Kč (7.85 ₪)	+75.72 %
Oranges (1kg)	33.78 Kč (4.98 ₪)	45.81 Kč (6.76 ₪)	+35.61 %
Tomato (1kg)	47.57 Kč (7.02 ₪)	32.93 Kč (4.86 ₪)	-30.77 %

Sports And Leisure

	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
Fitness Club, Monthly Fee for 1 Adult	768.75 Kč (113.37 ₪)	1,666.51 Kč (245.77 ₪)	+116.78 %
Tennis Court Rent (1 Hour on Weekend)	228.50 Kč (33.70 ₪)	898.44 Kč (132.50 ₪)	+293.19 %
Cinema, International Release, 1 Seat	195.00 Kč (28.76 ₪)	271.23 Kč (40.00 ₪)	+39.09 %

Childcare

	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
Preschool (or Kindergarten), Full Day, Private, Monthly for 1 Child	8,233.33 Kč (1,214.23 ₪)	18,208.16 Kč (2,685.29 ₪)	+121.15 %
International Primary School, Yearly for 1 Child	139,888.89 Kč (20,630.46 ₪)	187,599.27 Kč (27,666.67 ₪)	+34.11 %

Clothing And Shoes

	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
1 Pair of Jeans (Levis 501 Or Similar)	1,509.22 Kč (222.58 ₪)	2,264.75 Kč (334.00 ₪)	+50.06 %
1 Summer Dress in a Chain Store (Zara, H&M, ...)	781.48 Kč (115.25 ₪)	1,355.81 Kč (199.95 ₪)	+73.49 %
1 Pair of Nike Running Shoes (Mid-Range)	1,807.69 Kč (266.59 ₪)	2,695.33 Kč (397.50 ₪)	+49.10 %
1 Pair of Men Leather Business Shoes	2,004.35 Kč (295.60 ₪)	2,835.56 Kč (418.18 ₪)	+41.47 %

Rent Per Month

	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre	13,997.56 Kč (2,064.32 ₪)	15,644.04 Kč (2,307.14 ₪)	+11.76 %
Apartment (1 bedroom) Outside of Centre	11,052.78 Kč (1,630.04 ₪)	13,125.49 Kč (1,935.71 ₪)	+18.75 %
Apartment (3 bedrooms) in City Centre	23,716.67 Kč (3,497.67 ₪)	26,580.33 Kč (3,920.00 ₪)	+12.07 %
Apartment (3 bedrooms) Outside of Centre	17,600.00 Kč (2,595.60 ₪)	21,011.11 Kč (3,098.67 ₪)	+19.38 %

Buy Apartment Price

	Brno [Edit]	Haifa [Edit]	Difference
Price per Square Meter to Buy Apartment in City Centre	69,825.33 Kč (10,297.66 ₪)	106,119.70 Kč (15,650.27 ₪)	+51.98 %
Price per Square Meter to Buy Apartment Outside of Centre	52,021.17 Kč (7,671.95 ₪)	81,835.32 Kč (12,068.87 ₪)	+57.31 %

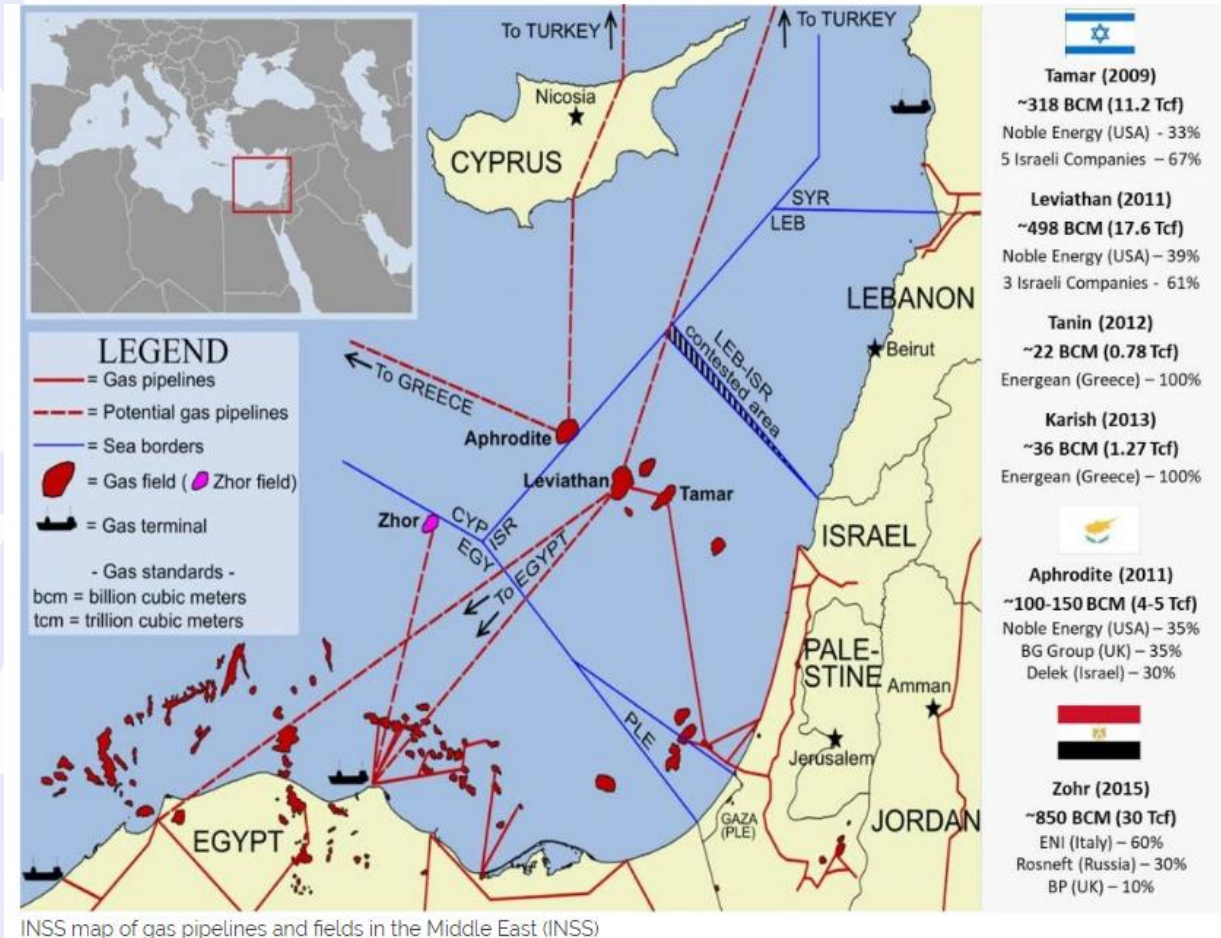
Israeli Economy

- **Tourism, service exports + significant foreign investment inflows**
- The **global financial crisis (2008-09)** spurred a **brief recession** in Israel, but the
 - Israel entered the crisis with **solid fundamentals** (years of prudent fiscal policy + resilient banking sector)
- Withstood the 2011 **Arab Spring**, no spillover effects

	2008			2009		
	OECD	Eurozone	Israel	OECD	Eurozone	Israel
Growth Rate	0.6%	0.5%	4%	-3.5%	-4%	0.7%
Unemployment Rate	5.9%	7.5%	6.1%	8.2%	9.4%	7.6%
Rate of Inflation	3.6%	3.3%	3.8%	0.5%	0.2%	3.9%
The Current Account as a percentage of GDP	-1.6%	0.8%	0.7%	-0.9%	-0.6%	3.7%
Public expenditure value in the growth rate	41.4%	46.9%	42.7%	44.8%	50.7%	42.7%
Public debt as a percentage of the growth rate	78.4%	73.2%	76.8%	90%	81.8%	79.4%

Israeli Economy

- **Natural gas fields** discovered off Israel's coast (2009) have brightened Israel's energy security outlook
 - **'Tamar'** and **'Leviathan'**, two of the world's **largest** offshore natural gas finds in the last decade
 - **Political + regulatory issues** delayed the development of Leviathan, but production from Tamar provided boosted Israel's GDP (0.8%: 2013, 0.3%:2014)



Israeli Economy

- Israel's **income inequality** and **poverty** rates are among the **highest** among **OECD** countries => broad public perception that a small number of "**tycoons**" have a cartel-like grip over the major parts of the economy
- Main Contemporary Issues:
 - Limited housing supply
 - Rising cost of living (including food prices)
- Government officials have called for reforms to **boost housing supply** + increase competition in the banking sector => political instability makes it difficult...

Fun Facts

- **Golda Meir** was one of the first women in history to serve as a country's prime minister
- The **Dead Sea** in Israel is the **lowest point** on earth (1,315 feet below sea level)
- The **glue** on Israeli stamps is **kosher**, there are also **kosher McDonald's**
- Generally suck at sports
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCYTqkpkEIQ>



Next Session...

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- (SUMMERISED) **Israeli Political History**
 - **Jerusalem** => a Contested Capital
 - From Mandate to Statehood
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Thank You For Your Attention!

Questions???

