

Israel

תנו רבנן: לעולם ידור אדם בארץ ישראל, אפילו בעיר שרובה נכרים ואל ידור בחוצה לארץ ואפילו בעיר שרובה ישראל. שכל הדר בארץ ישראל דומה כמי שיש לו אלוה, וכל הדר בחוצה לארץ דומה כמי שאין לו אלוה, שנאמר «לתת לכם את ארץ כנען להיות לכם לאלהים».

Our Rabbis taught: One should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are idolaters, but let no one live outside the Land, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are Israelites; for whoever lives in the Land of Israel may be considered to have a God, but whoever lives outside the Land may be regarded as one who has no God. For it is said in Scripture. "To give you the Land of Canaan, to be your God."

--Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 110b

בשם שהטבור הזה נתון באמצע האיש, כך ארץ ישראל נתונה באמצע העולם... ארץ ישראל יושבת באמצעיתו של עולם, וירושלים באמצעיתה של ארץ ישראל, ובית המקדש באמצע ירושלים, וההיכל באמצע בית המקדש, והארון באמצע ההיכל, ואבן שתיה לפני הארון, שממנה נשתת העולם.

As the navel is set in the centre of the human body,
so is the Land of Israel the navel of the world...
The Land of Israel is situated in the centre of the world,
and Jerusalem in the centre of the land of Israel,
and the sanctuary in the centre of Jerusalem,
and the holy place in the centre of the sanctuary,
and the ark in the centre of the holy place,
and the foundation stone before the holy place,
because from it the world was founded.

--Midrash Tanchuma, Kedoshim

I believe that a wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabees will rise again.

Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews wish to have a state, and they shall have one.

We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own home.

The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.

And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare will react with beneficent force for the good of humanity.

--Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*

Herzl, an assimilated European Jew, became convinced of the wisdom of Zionism after witnessing the rampant anti-Semitism in Europe. He is known as the Father of Modern Zionism, and though he died before the State of Israel was established, he was instrumental in its founding.