

R' Lord J. Sacks, "What was and is unique about Israel is that it is the sole place on earth where Jews have had the chance to create an entire society on Jewish lines. It is possible to live a Jewish life in Manchester or Monsey, Madrid or Minsk. But it is always a truncated experience. Only in Israel do Jews conduct their lives in the language of the Bible, within time defined by the Jewish calendar and space saturated in Jewish history. Only there do they form a majority. Only there are they able to construct a political system, an economy, and an environment on the template of Jewish values. There alone can Judaism be what it is meant to be - not just a code of conduct for individuals, but also and essentially the architectonics¹ of society...

"Israel's existence could never be taken for granted. Time and again its people, surviving challenges, would experience this as a miracle. Small geographically and demographically, it would depend on outstanding achievement - political, military and economic - on the part of its people. This would depend, in turn, on their morale and sense of mission. Thus the prophets knew, naturally as well as supernaturally, that without social justice and a sense of divine vocation, the nation would eventually fall and suffer exile again...

"There is a directness, a naturalness, of Jewish experience in Israel that can be found nowhere else. History tells us that that project of constructing a society under Divine sovereignty in a vulnerable land is the highest of high-risk strategies. Yet, across forty centuries, Jews knew that the risk taking was worth it. For only in Israel is G-d so close that you can feel Him in the sun and wind, sense Him just beyond the hills, hear Him in the inflections of everyday speech, breathe His presence in the early morning air and live, dangerously and confidently, under the shadow of His wings" (C&C, Num., p.421-423)

Jer.31:10-17

שְׁמְעוּ דְבַר־ה' גוֹיִם וְהִגִּידוּ בְּאֵיִם מִמְּרֹחֶק וְאָמְרוּ מִזֶּרֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְבְּצֵנוּ וְשִׁמְרוּ כְרַעַה עֲדָרוֹ:

כִּי־פָדָה ה' אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ:

וְבָאוּ וְרִנְנוּ בְּמְרוֹם־צִיּוֹן וְנִהְיוּ אֶל־טוֹב ה' עַל־דָּגְלָן וְעַל־תִּירָשׁ וְעַל־יִצְהָר וְעַל־בְּנֵי־צֹאן וּבָקָר וְהִיטָה נַפְשָׁם כְּגֹן רָזָה וְלֹא־יֻסְפוּ לְדַאֲבָה עוֹד:

אֲזַ תִּשְׁמַח בְּתוֹלָה בְּמַחֹל וּבַחֲרִים וְזִקְנִים יַחֲדוּ וְהַפְכֹתִי אֲבָלָם לִשְׁשׁוֹן וְנַחֲמֹתִים וְשִׂמְחֹתִים מִיְּגוֹנָם:

וְרוֹיְתִי נֶפֶשׁ הַכֹּהֲנִים דָּשׁוּ וְעַמִּי אֶת־טוֹבִי יִשְׁבְּעוּ נְאֻם־ה'

כֹּה אָמַר ה' קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמַע נְהִי בְּכִי תִמְרוּזִים רָחַל מִבְּכָה עַל־בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהַנָּחֵם עַל־בְּנֵיהָ כִּי אֵינָנוּ

כֹּה אָמַר ה', מִנְעִי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי, וְעֵינֶיךָ, מִדְּמָעָה: כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתְךָ נְאֻם־ה', וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב

וְיִשְׁתַּקּוּהָ לְאַחֲרִיתָךְ, נְאֻם־ה'; וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים, לְגִבּוֹלָם

¹ the scientific study of architecture