

HaShem's Purposes, Promises, and Positive References
For People and Cities in the Negev of Israel

B'reshet/Genesis

12:9;

9 Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

13:1-4;

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

20:1;

20 Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, 2 and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.

21:12-20,

12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring[b] will be reckoned. 13 I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

14 Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.

15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she[c] began to sob.

17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. 20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

31-33;

31 So that place was called Beersheba,[d] because the two men swore an oath there.

32 After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Eternal God. 34 And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

22:19;

19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

24:62;

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63 He went out to the field one evening to meditate,[f] and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64 Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65 and asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?”

26:23-33;

23 From there he went up to Beersheba. 24 That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

25 Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

26 Meanwhile, Abimelek had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. 27 Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?”

28 They answered, “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, ‘There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm you but always treated you well and sent you away peacefully. And now you are blessed by the Lord.”

30 Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 31 Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they went away peacefully.

32 That day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, “We’ve found water!” 33 He called it Shibah,[f] and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.[g]

28:10;

10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway

resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it[c] stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.[d] 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

46:1-5

So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!"

"Here I am," he replied.

3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6 So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7 Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

B'midvar/Numbers

13:22,

22 They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

29-30;

29 The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.'

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.'

21:1-3

21 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured some of them. 2 Then Israel made this vow to the Lord: 'If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy[a] their cities.' 3 The Lord listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.[b]

Devarim/Deuteronomy

1:6-8

6 The Lord our God said to us at Horeb, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

7 Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighbouring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. 8 See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore he would give to your fathers – to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and to their descendants after them.'

Yehoshua/Joshua

10:40-42

40 So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded. 41 Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

11:16,

16 So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills,

22-23;

22 No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

23 So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.

13:1-7;

When Joshua had grown old, the Lord said to him, 'You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. 2 'This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, 3 from the River Shihor on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites 4 on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Apeh and the border of the Amorites; 5 the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

6 'As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, 7 and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh.'

15:21-32;

19 She replied, 'Do me a special favour. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.' So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs. 20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, according to its clans: 21 The southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev towards the boundary of Edom were:

Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22 Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23 Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24 Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25 Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (that is, Hazor), 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27 Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28 Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, 29 Baalah, Iyim, Ezem, 30 Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, 31 Ziklag, Madmannah,

Sansannah, 32 Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon – a total of twenty-nine towns and their villages.

19:1-9

The second lot came out for the tribe of Simeon according to its clans. Their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah. 2 It included:

Beersheba (or Sheba),[a] Moladah, 3 Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, 4 Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, 5 Ziklag, Beth Markaboth, Hazar Susah, 6 Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhem – thirteen towns and their villages;

7 Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan – four towns and their villages – 8 and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath Beer (Ramah in the Negev).

This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Simeonites, according to its clans. 9 The inheritance of the Simeonites was taken from the share of Judah, because Judah's portion was more than they needed. So the Simeonites received their inheritance within the territory of Judah.

Shoftim/Judges

1:16;

16 The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenite, went up from the City of Palms[b] with the people of Judah to live among the inhabitants of the Desert of Judah in the Negev near Arad.

20:1

Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the Lord in Mizpah.

Shmuel Aleph/1 Samuel

3:20;

20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord. 21 The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

8:2;

2 The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.

14:47-48;

47 After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings[f] of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them.[g] 48 He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.

15:2-9;

2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy[a] all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys."

4 So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim – two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand from Judah. 5 Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. 6 Then he said to the Kenites, 'Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.' So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

7 Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. 8 He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. 9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves[b] and lambs – everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

27:10-12

10 When Achish asked, 'Where did you go raiding today?' David would say, 'Against the Negev of Judah' or 'Against the Negev of Jerahmeel' or 'Against the Negev of the Kenites.' 11 He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, 'They might inform on us and say, "This is what David did."' And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. 12 Achish trusted David and said to himself, 'He has become so obnoxious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life.'

Shmuel Bet/2 Samuel

3:10;

9 May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the Lord promised him on oath 10 and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba.'

17:11;

11 'So I advise you: let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba – as numerous as the sand on the seashore – be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle.

24:2;

2 So the king said to Joab and the army commanders[a] with him, 'Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enrol the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are.'

24:15

15 So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

Malachim Aleph/1 Kings

4:25;

25 During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

19:3-8

3 Elijah was afraid[a] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

Yesha'yah/Isaiah

19:23-25;

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together.
24 In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing[b] on the earth.
25 The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."

35:1-6;

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the Lord,
the splendor of our God.
3 Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
4 say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you."
5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
7 The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

51:3

The Lord will surely comfort Zion
and will look with compassion on all her ruins;
he will make her deserts like Eden,
her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

Yirmi'yah/Jeremiah

17:24-26;

24 But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, 25 then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. 26 People will come from the towns of Judah and the villages around Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin and the western foothills, from the hill country and the Negev, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, and bringing thank offerings to the house of the Lord.

32:37-44;

37 I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. 38 They will be my people, and I will be their God. 39 I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. 40 I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. 41 I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.

42 "This is what the Lord says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. 43 Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is a desolate waste, without people or animals, for it has been given into the hands of the Babylonians.' 44 Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, because I will restore their fortunes,[c] declares the Lord."

33:12-16

12 "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In this place, desolate and without people or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. 13 In the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah, flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them,' says the Lord.

14 "The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

15 "In those days and at that time

I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;
he will do what is just and right in the land.

16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it[c] will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.'

Oveh'yah/Obadiah

1:17-21

But on Mount Zion will be deliverance;
it will be holy,
and Jacob will possess his inheritance.

18 Jacob will be a fire
and Joseph a flame;
Esau will be stubble,
and they will set him on fire and destroy him.

There will be no survivors
from Esau.”

The Lord has spoken.

19 People from the Negev will occupy
the mountains of Esau,
and people from the foothills will possess
the land of the Philistines.

They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.

20 This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan
will possess the land as far as Zarephath;
the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
will possess the towns of the Negev.

21 Deliverers will go up on[c] Mount Zion
to govern the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will be the Lord's.

Nacham'yah/Nehemiah

11:25-30

25 As for the villages with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba and its surrounding settlements, in Dibon and its settlements, in Jekabzeel and its villages, 26 in Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet, 27 in Hazar Shual, in Beersheba and its settlements, 28 in Ziklag, in Mekonah and its settlements, 29 in En Rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, 30 Zanoah, Adullam and their villages, in Lachish and its fields, and in Azekah and its settlements. So they were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

Davari Hayamim Aleph

4:24-33

24 The descendants of Simeon:

Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah and Shaul;

25 Shallum was Shaul's son, Mibsam his son and Mishma his son.

26 The descendants of Mishma:

Hammuel his son, Zakkur his son and Shimei his son.

27 Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his brothers did not have many children; so their entire clan did not become as numerous as the people of Judah. 28 They lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, 29 Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30 Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31 Beth Markaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri and Shaaraim. These were their towns until the reign of David.

Davari Hayamim Bet

19:4;

4 Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and turned them back to the Lord, the God of their ancestors.

30:5

5 They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the Lord, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written.

1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blueprint_Negev

Blueprint Negev is a Jewish National Fund (JNF) project to construct new Jewish communities in the Negev region of Israel and boost Jewish settlement in the region.

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History

The last large-scale development project to accommodate and promote new Jewish immigration was during the 1980s, when "Operation Promised Land" was launched to accommodate massive upsurge of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

In May 2006, Shimon Peres said that his first task as Minister of Development of the Negev and Galilee would be to promote the construction of a new Jewish community in the Negev, Karmit, the first to be built under the Blueprint Negev plan after Be'er Milka. [1] Ynet reported that the community was "designated for wealthy, young American immigrants who want to make aliyah and live in style." [2] Former JNF President Ronald Lauder said that Blueprint Negev answers the need for Jews looking to make aliyah the pioneering way. [3]

Population redistribution

The plan aims to bring 250,000 new residents to the Negev over ten years. Toward that goal, the project has sought to direct Anglo (English-speaking) immigration to the Negev and has compiled a database (currently containing some 10,000 names) of current Israeli citizens interested in relocating to the Negev. After the Disengagement together with the Or Negev settlement movement, [4] the JNF was instrumental in helping Gaza evacuees find new homes in the Negev as cohesive units. [5] [6]

Beersheba redevelopment

The plan aims to increase the population of Beersheba, the Negev's largest city. One of the main projects undertaken there is the Be'er Sheva River Walk, creating a 900-acre (3.6 km²) park inspired by San Antonio's River Walk. [7] The plan includes green spaces, an amphitheater for events, a lake for boating and promenades for strolling. The JNF supported cleanup of the riverbed.

New suburban communities

The plan envisions the creation of 25 new suburban communities.[3] Seven communities that have already been established are Sansana (1999) 54 families, Tzukim (2001) 72 families, Merchav Am (2002) 34 families, Giv'ot Bar/Shomria (2004) 30 families, Haruv (2005) 30 families, Be'er Milka/Kmehin (2006) 12 families, Karmit, and Kasif.[8] Sansana is part of the Har Hebron Regional Council governing Hebron-area settlements.

Environmental and social criticism

Israeli and Jewish American environmental groups have expressed concern that creation of isolated suburban communities in the Negev will lead to water and energy intensive suburban sprawl[9] and strain Bedouin-Jewish relations.[4] They argue that the planned developments will require a large public investment per capita that benefits a small number of comparatively well-off immigrants in a region with high poverty rates. [10] Daniel Orenstein claims the project is not the answer to overdevelopment in the north.[11] Blueprint Negev has been accused of discriminating against Bedouins and endangering their way of life.[12]

Clean-Tech clustering project

In 2012, the OECD presented a paper for promoting development in the Negev, "Clean-Tech Clustering as an Engine for Local Development: The Negev Region." It cited the Negev's "niche in research, demonstration and testing in renewable energies and water efficiency," and described the region's 50 clean-tech businesses, 4 technological incubators and clean-tech research capacity as a "serious comparative advantage." [13]

2)<http://www.jpost.com/Blogs/From-Green-Finland-to-Yellow-Arava/The-Blueprint-Negev-and-the-Future-of-Israel-365252>

The Blueprint Negev and the Future of Israel

By SHMUEL WILLNER 10/18/2012

The Negev covers 60% of the State of Israel, yet only 8% of Israel's population lives in the Negev, thus giving the area phenomenal development opportunities.

Taking to heart the statement of David Ben Gurion – "By the Negev, the Jewish people will be tested", KKL-JNF has invested a great amount of resources to settle and develop the Negev, enabling life to flourish on its dry desert lands. With the help of its Friends worldwide, KKL-JNF has been carrying out numerous projects in the Negev, including building water reservoirs, preparing land for agriculture and communities, establishing research and development stations, working to combat desertification, and developing forests and parks for the benefit of man and environment. KKL-JNF's work has been instrumental in attracting a new generation of young people to the Negev.

Within this framework, JNF USA has introduced a plan called Blueprint Negev to develop the Negev region of Israel. The Blueprint Negev project aims to increase the Negev's population by 500,000 new residents, improving transportation infrastructure, adding and developing businesses and employment opportunities, preserving water resources and protecting the environment.

I met the CEO of JNF USA, Mr. Russell F. Robinson in Tel Aviv in mid-August to discuss about the Blueprint Negev plan and how it relates to the development and future of Israel. Russell works tirelessly to ensure that JNF's vision is more relevant and meaningful today than ever before. Under his leadership, JNF has been instrumental in developing successful programs for Israel's water management, community development, environmental work, and the sustainable development of the Negev, all of which play a substantial role in the quality of life for all Israelis.

"The framework of the Blueprint Negev was a simple objective of 500,000 people to the Negev. Now that seems like an astronomical number, but it is not if you break it down to its components", says Russell. For instance, Beer Sheva's urban plan is for 450,000-500,000 people. Today Beer Sheva has over 200,000 residents, and is one of the fastest growing cities in Israel. Similar development plans have been prepared similarly for Yeruham, Dimona, Arad, Mitzpe Ramon, Ofaqim and other development towns in the Negev, which all sum up to the 500,000 new residents.

"You cannot move people to Tel Aviv. With these projects you can provide affordable housing and job opportunities. If you don't do this, you don't have a place for people to move into. If you don't plan this well you will have overcrowded Tel Aviv," concludes Russell. "Open spaces and public land get saved when people utilize them. When people don't utilize them, often people tend not to care. And it is a terrible policy to

protect things because you think it is just to leave them alone. First the hikers go there, then the guys with the four wheel drive, and in the end no one cares what happens to the environment. But if you live there you care about it.”

“Israel is in a different situation than ever before since the destruction of the Second Temple. There are no Jews in exile. This means that for the first time in 2000 years you have a Jewish nation, and by choice a Jew can come here. It is something unbelievable. You should also remember that a Jew can leave here by choice. If we fought 64 years to believe that Israel is real, then we have to work as partners harder than ever before.”

“Do we believe in democracy? Do we believe in values? Do we believe in a Jewish nation? I do. And if you do, first of all, keeping the millions of Jews here is very important. For instance, the immigrants came from the Soviet Union because they were free and it was better in Israel.” The meeting is almost over. Russell is relaxed and energetic despite the fact that he arrived to Israel the same morning with a group of young Americans who are making aliyah to become new immigrants. At the end he concludes, “These youngsters are not here to save Israel, but they come here because Israel is a winner. It is a whole different reason. They want to join the team. I think Israel is a very good place with all its faults. It is always trying to be better.”

3)<https://www.jnf.org/menu-2/our-work/community-building/community-building---our-blueprint-negev-strategy>

COMMUNITY BUILDING - OUR BLUEPRINT NEGEV STRATEGY

Revitalizing Southern Israel

The Negev Desert represents 60% of Israel's landmass but is home to just 8% of the country's population. And in those lopsided numbers, we see an unprecedented opportunity for growth.

Jewish National Fund's major initiative to revitalize Southern Israel is Blueprint Negev. An interdisciplinary, internationally recognized campaign, Blueprint Negev aims to improve quality of life for all residents of the region and encourage a population shift away from crowded, expensive central Israel. Today, Be'er Sheva and the surrounding communities are blooming in a once barren desert.

JNF's Blueprint Negev calls for the population of the south to double in size. These cities are setting the pace to make that dream a reality.

Our goal is to bring 500,000 new residents to the Negev. But before that happens, anyone looking to settle amid that arid landscape must stare down its challenges: A scarce water supply and the task of building sewage, irrigation and energy systems; a lack of infrastructure for housing; a lack of amenities to support a good quality of life; and a need for more job opportunities. Many areas in which JNF has invested are proving that our master plan is on the fast track to success. Here's how it's happening.

HALUTZA - A DECADE OF MIRACULOUS PROGRESS

In 2005, families were evacuated from the Gush Katif communities of Atzmona and Netzarim during Israel's disengagement from Gaza. And while a group of these families could have relocated to Be'er Sheva or another established city, they chose another option: They would build a community where literally nothing had stood before. Located in the Northwest Negev, a kilometer from the Gaza border, Halutza was a barren desert—sand dunes were its most prominent feature. But in cooperation with JNF, Halutza's pioneers laid roads, created an infrastructure, brought in prefabricated temporary housing, erected hundreds of greenhouses, planted crops, and built fields of solar energy panels. Today, Halutza has grown from its 30 founding families to 2,500 families in the region, in three communities: Naveh, Bnei Netzarim, and Shlomit. Projects have included the Halutza Medical Center, the Halutza Student Program, the Naveh Synagogue Project, and the Young Farmer's Incubator Project.

Despite the challenges of living in a volatile border zone, residents remain committed to building a future in Halutza. "To build from the beginning is very special. We started from zero, and the people here are connected to the land and love for Israel," said Shlomit resident Michal Gutsman in a recent Jerusalem Post interview.

THE ARAVA

David Ben Gurion once said, “The State of Israel, to exist, must go south,” and so, Jewish National Fund heeded his advice and headed south more than two decades ago.

Somewhat isolated, unique, and breathtakingly beautiful, the Central Arava is considered the most remote and peripheral part of Israel. Yet, this arid desert straddling the Israeli-Jordanian border is home to 8,000 residents living in seven communities, and although it receives less than an inch of rain per year, the Arava exports more than 50% of its produce and 10% of its fresh flowers annually to markets across the globe.

As part of its Blueprint Negev campaign, Jewish National Fund is focused on efforts to attract and retain new residents to the Central Arava and has built new and innovative communities, like Zuqim, on what was once nothing but sand dunes. To increase quality of life for the region’s residents, JNF built the Danielle A. & Irvine J. Grossman JNF-Arava Medical Center, a state-of-the-art and well-equipped medical facility with an emergency call center in the town of Sapir. The new Nancy Simches JNF-Arava Emergency Response Center, which is currently under construction and located next door to the Medical Center, will provide a facility to ensure the safety and security of the Arava’s residents and the thousands of annual visitors that come to enjoy the many desert adventures the region has to offer.

The Arava may seem like an unlikely setting for groundbreaking medical and agricultural research, but major advances are being made at the Central Arava R&D Center. With JNF’s support, leading scientists are conducting critical research in the hopes of discovering cures to some of humanity’s most debilitating illnesses. Agricultural R&D stations throughout the Arava work closely with local farmers to increase agricultural sustainability and profitability, all while providing cutting-edge and innovative ways to grow produce in arid conditions and climates.

Jewish National Fund is steadily working to improve the quality of life in the Central Arava to attract and retain residents, with many projects focusing on infrastructure, water, agriculture, research & development, tourism, and more.

YERUCHAM - BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME.

Established 65 years ago in the Northern Negev, Yerucham should, it seems, be a thriving city by now—especially given its natural beauty and proximity to Be’er Sheva, less than 30 minutes away. It’s located in a ridge between two natural resources: the Yerucham Lake Park and the Machtesh Yerusham (Yerucham Crater). However, like many towns of the north and south, Yerucham has been unable to get its younger generation to stay and raise families. To address this, a series of housing lotteries will sell a total of 3,400 new housing lots by 2020. A portion of the properties offered in each lottery is being reserved for members of present Yerucham households and special needs applicants.

Of course, there need to be compelling reasons for people to stay and settle in Yerucham. The town government's City in the Heart of Park project calls for a large-scale recreational area modeled after the Be'er Sheva River Park. This massive public space will surround the current cityscape with a green perimeter, bike paths, picnic and nature areas, sporting facilities and new bodies of water. Additionally, a new hotel, several agricultural projects, and the opening of new IDF bases nearby will also fuel future growth.

"We're working closely with Yerucham's Mayor, Michael Biton, to make the city an exciting, vibrant alternative for young professionals and families who might otherwise leave for Tel Aviv or other cities," says Geri Shatz, JNF Yerucham Task Force Chair. "We also encourage financial support of the Beit Zvi Youth Center, which is doing great work to create a compelling younger community there."

EXPLORING BE'ER SHEVA'S WATERFRONT REVIVAL

A once barren graveyard for junkyard cars is being transformed into a vibrant, 1,300-acre water-front jewel in the Negev. And Jewish National Fund is leading the way. Our vision for the once-troubled city of Be'er Sheva is dynamic and exciting. Today, the city is in the midst of a renaissance as it becomes Israel's "water city" in the desert. Our projects—some complete and others in progress—are changing Be'er Sheva's image among both residents and tourists. As a result, today Be'er Sheva claims the fastest-rising home prices in the country and tourists are flocking to the area. In fact, of all the Negev's developing communities, Be'er Sheva is easily the most likely one to become known on an international scale, thanks to its public works and bustling city streets.

The centerpiece of JNF's efforts in the city is the development of the 1,300 acres Be'er Sheva River Park, a world-class \$300 million urban revitalization initiative that has turned what was once a massive junkyard into a lush greenway for pedestrians and bicyclist and, as importantly, a space for family celebrations and community festivals.

Perhaps one of the most stunning aspects of the River Walk project is Abraham's Well, equally important to Jews, Christians and Muslims. Here, Abraham is said to have dug a well and made a pact with the Philistines. Today, visitors enter a multimedia-filled courtyard, reconstructed with ancient drawings, that evoke the Be'er Sheva of more than 3,000 years ago.

A more modern, though no less striking, architectural aspect of the River Park is the Danielle A. and Irving J. Grossman JNF Amphitheater. With its 12,000-seat central amphitheater and two grass amphitheaters hosting a total of 18,000 additional people, it is Israel's largest and arguably most impressive entertainment venue. From music to theater and dance, this amphitheater is at the heart of all things cultural in Be'er Sheva.

Though these marvels of urban renewal have already transformed Be'er Sheva, to most in the know, it's just a wonderful prelude to something even greater. "We're not finished," says Yair Nagid, CEO of Be'er Sheva's Center for the Performing Arts. "Though we've

doubled our population, we have still a lot of work to do. But together with JNF, we have a vision, we have a roadmap, and we'll succeed."

SUPPORTING THE BEDOUIN COMMUNITY

The needs of the Bedouin community and the changes that must come about are one of the original pillars of Blueprint Negev. Jewish National Fund is serious about addressing these challenges and is working with several Bedouin communities to effect change. Our leadership meets with regional councils regularly to assess community needs and to develop solutions.

Jewish National Fund is a proud partner in Project Wadi Attir, a joint initiative of the Bedouin municipality of Hura and the Sustainability Laboratory, a U.S.-based nonprofit. Project Wadi Attir aims to establish a model for a radically innovative, sustainable desert farming operation that will contribute to the well-being of the Bedouin community of the Negev by creating stable income sources, fostering employment opportunities for women, increasing education, and assisting with capacity-building.

We respect Bedouin culture and our investment is designed to leverage Bedouin values, aspirations, and experience in desert agriculture with sustainability principles and cutting-edge approaches to animal husbandry, renewable energy production, resource recycling, soil enhancement, and arid land stewardship. Developed and driven by the Bedouin community, the project demonstrates a self-reliant approach to social and economic advancement faithful to key aspects of Bedouin tradition.

Jewish National Fund has also embarked on a \$7 million program to clean the river and create shoreline promenades in Rahat. In coordination with the Abu Basma Regional Council, which represents 80,000 Bedouin, JNF and our partners are funding projects in infrastructure development and education advancement much needed by this Negev population. The cornerstone is the Abu Basma Regional Council Complex/Medical Center. The land has already been donated by JNF, which will also provide infrastructure development and landscaping. This center would become a focal point for centralized services, and a medical clinic would help alleviate the overcrowding at area hospitals as well as create a training ground for new doctors and nurses from the Bedouin community. Proposed additional services include a fire-fighting station and employment–training center. JNF is proposing a joint plan with the Abu Basma region to tackle the issues of water supply and treatment, as well as the creation of parks and play areas.

Nearby, Segev Shalom is a Bedouin village of 10,000 in the Negev. Jewish National Fund funded a central park complete with an amphitheater around the community's town hall. Additionally, one of
[read more](#)

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In order for cities in the Negev to prosper and grow, young adults and families must see cities in the Negev as viable and desirable places to live, with ample opportunity for employment, high quality of life, and upward mobility. Jewish National Fund works with local residents to propel education and economic change from the bottom up, motivating new populations to settle in cities that now offer opportunities that match the crowded Tel Aviv-Haifa-Jerusalem corridor.

Jewish National Fund dedicated the Lauder Employment Center in 2015 to offer comprehensive career services, guidance, and resources to students and alumni of area universities, as well as to assist businesses throughout the Negev to find qualified employees. By creating partnerships between Negev employers, employment agencies, and potential employees, JNF is increasing the number of people finding jobs, while improving employer and employee satisfaction. The Lauder Employment Center also created the Negev Human Resources Forum, the Employment Agencies Forum, and job matchmaking networks that have served over 300 employers and 350 job seekers.

Equally as important are the NetGev Hubs, which provide affordable work spaces for local entrepreneurs, as well as practical, technical and educational training that enable local residents to work in hi-tech sectors – something that previously was only possible in the center of the country. Since its launch in 2017, NetGev has provided courses and lectures for over 325 people, and rented out Hub space for 21 remote workers. The project is developing innovative employment opportunities, with the goal of becoming both a national and global resource for online services and remote workers.

4) <http://atlantajewishtimes.timesofisrael.com/blueprint-negev-not-yet-full-bloom/>

By Dave Schechter Ramon Crater in the Negev (by Marcy Levinson)

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FREE SIGN UP!

If David Ben-Gurion were to hike through the Negev Desert today, he would be disappointed but also find reason to be encouraged.

It was the dream of Israel's first prime minister, himself a Polish emigre, that Jews settle in the Negev.

"By the Negev, the Jewish people will be tested," said Ben-Gurion, whose home away from government life was Kibbutz Sde Boker.

More than 66 years after independence, rather than a failing mark on that test, Ben-Gurion generously might deliver a grade of incomplete. The lack of settlement in the Negev would disappoint him.

Timna Valley, legendary site of King Solomon's copper mines (by Marcy Levinson)
The Negev covers roughly 60 percent of Israel's land mass, stretching from Be'er Sheva south to Eilat and bordered by Jordan on the east and Egypt on the west, but is home to just 8 percent of Israel's population. Three-quarters of Negev dwellers are Jewish, the remainder primarily Bedouin.

Ben-Gurion "would be turning inside his grave," said Ezra Ravins, a former mayor of the Central Arava Regional Council who is working in Atlanta as the shaliach (emissary) for the Jewish National Fund.

JNF has a plan to help Ben-Gurion rest in peace: the \$600 million Blueprint Negev project, which began in 2004 and was the focus of JNF fundraising in Atlanta and the Southeast by the fall of 2005. As recently as a December 2014 visit to Atlanta, JNF CEO Russell Robinson presented Blueprint Negev as part of the pitch for JNF donations the next decade.

One difficulty for any Negev settlement plan is the fate of the Bedouin. (by Marcy Levinson)

But Blueprint Negev was envisioned as a 10-year plan to move a half-million people to the southern desert. Ten years in, the number is closer to 100,000.

Blueprint Negev centers on doubling the population of Be'er Sheva and creating more than 20 new towns throughout the desert.

JNF President Ronald Lauder has compared Israel's drive to settle the Negev to the "manifest destiny" that spurred America's movement westward in the 19th century.

An article a couple of years ago in *The Tower*, published by The Israel Project, referred to Blueprint Negev as "a recognition of the failure of the past, that the reality of Jewish settlement in the Negev has up until now been far from rosy."

An estimated 70 percent of Israelis live in a triangle formed by Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem. Infrastructure improvements and lifestyle amenities are the lures JNF hopes will make the Negev attractive, particularly to younger Israelis, who find housing prices in the major urban areas beyond their means.

Another target audience is North American olim (immigrants), who might be interested in life as 21st-century pioneers in a desert blooming with comfortable homes and recreational facilities. Think Scottsdale, Ariz., but in Hebrew. JNF partner Nefesh B'Nefesh's Go South program offers North American and British olim such support as counseling and money to move to the Negev.

Nefesh B'Nefesh's sample comparison of monthly living expenses for a family of five estimates a cost of 12,890 shekels (\$3,223) for Be'er Sheva vs. 17,020 shekels (\$4,255) in Jerusalem and 17,550 (\$4,388) in Modi'in. Most of the savings come from housing.

One of the highlights of Be'er Sheva River Park is the new 12,000-seat amphitheater. (JNF photo)

Much of Blueprint Negev concentrates on Be'er Sheva, Israel's seventh most populous city and second only to Jerusalem in land area. Its urban plan foresees a population twice the current 197,000 residents.

Be'er Sheva has suffered economically (and by lifestyle comparison with Tel Aviv and Jerusalem), but today boasts of high-tech companies setting up shop, with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev as a draw. If the Negev is to prosper, its largest city must be the engine.

If Be'er Sheva is the crown of Blueprint Negev, its crown jewel is Be'er Sheva River Park in the southern section of the city. When completed, the 1,700-acre site will be twice the size of Central Park in New York. It will include 6 miles of walking and biking trails along the Be'er Sheva River, inspired by the popular Riverwalk in San Antonio.

JNF donations from Atlanta and the Southeast have supported construction of a section of the promenade.

The River Park project includes improving the water quality of the river (a lake filled from recycled waste water is planned) and landscaping to create an attractive and usable urban space, even disguising water pipes to make them appear part of the park infrastructure.

Think of how the Beltline is transforming life in previously less-desirable sections of Atlanta and you get the idea of the hopes for the River Park.

David Ben-Gurion's grave (by Marcy Levinson)

"The park was created in an area once described as the 'armpit' of the city — a dry riverbed near the southern entrance of Beersheba that was piled with wrecked cars and odiferous trash accumulated over the decades. Eventually, the new park will have Israel's largest artificial lake," the Jerusalem Report magazine says in its Jan. 26 issue in a profile of Be'er Sheva Mayor Ruvik Danilovich.

JNF touts new municipal infrastructure, renovated housing, cobblestone streets and even streetlamps as part of an effort to gussy up the old Turkish city.

One of the new public facilities is an outdoor amphitheater that seats 12,000 people. "Eat your heart out, Caesarea," read a comment after a newspaper story.

At the dedication ceremony for the amphitheater, according to the Jerusalem Report, Danilovich said: "It sounds almost surreal that an organization based thousands of miles away managed to persuade the Israeli government to get involved in a project. The JNF saw the opportunity and the vision, and only then did the government come in."

"I get very emotional about them. The JNF came here in a period when the city wasn't very attractive, with a negative image. No one looked in our direction. They came here, not only with a vision but with money and power," Danilovich said.

Seven of the new communities elsewhere in the Negev have been built, a mix of towns designed to appeal to secular Jews, observant Jews, North Americans, residents of kibbutzim and moshavim, and one with strategic value south of Gaza near the Egyptian border. Each has unique recreational and cultural facilities. One town has become home to some of the Jewish families evacuated from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

Aside from questions about how desirable desert life will ever be for the residents of high-tech, startup nation Israel, the Gaza Strip evacuation points to a major obstacle to Blueprint Negev: the distractions and challenges from outside the region.

Blueprint Negev is "optimistic and realistic," Ravins said, "but it depends on what the country goes through."

Since JNF launched Blueprint Negev, Israel has fought one war along the northern border with Lebanon and had two major military operations in Gaza. Not only do such crises redirect resources and attention from long-term dreams like Negev settlement, but they also compel JNF to shift its focus.

For example, JNF helped replant 10,000 acres of forests and agricultural land burned by Hezbollah rockets during the 2006 war, and one of the nonprofit organization's

signature successes the past decade was the construction, with significant Atlanta support, of an indoor recreation area that doubles as a bomb shelter in Sderot, the town most vulnerable to rockets from Gaza.

Blueprint Negev work continues, though. It is investing in the existing “development” towns of Ofakim, Dimona, Yerucham and Arad, some of which have been economically distressed and used by the government to settle waves of immigrants.

JNF hopes to double the population of the Central Arava region, which covers more than 370,000 acres, approximately 6 percent of Israel’s land, but is home to just 3,300 people.

JNF shaliach Ravins, who is 58, grew up in Jerusalem. After completing his army service at age 21, he moved to the Arava and began farming 35 years ago.

When 95 percent of Knesset members live in the metropolitan areas of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, it’s not hard to understand why the Negev has been overlooked, Ravins said. Harkening back to Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir, who lived her final years at Kibbutz Revivim, Ravins said: “Once we had leaders. Today we have politicians.”

Ravins would like to see the government subsidize and promote housing in the Negev as it does in the West Bank settlements. He is certain people then would move to a revitalized Negev.

Echoing Danilovich, Ravins said JNF “a lot of the time is the trigger” to push the Israeli government and “has the vision and has the understanding” to make it a strong partner.

His own Central Arava is challenged by extremes in topography, water scarcity, distances between towns and an aging population. Ravins says the Arava needs better basic services, particularly in the areas of health care (a new clinic is being built), education and the needs of the elderly.

JNF notes that some 500 farming families (out of 830 families in the Central Arava) produce 60 percent of Israel’s vegetable exports, including 90 percent of the bell peppers, and 10 percent of its cut flower exports despite average yearly rainfall of 1 inch. Those conditions have helped make the Arava a hub for Israel’s solar power industry.

Blueprint Negev also supports the construction of dormitories and classrooms at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies at Kibbutz Ketura. Its graduate-level student body is a mix of Jews, Muslims and Christians among Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, North Americans and others. They live, study, eat and work together under the slogan “Nature Knows No Borders.”

Regional work funded by Blueprint Negev includes security roads near the Gaza Strip, water management systems and the continued purchase of needed firefighting equipment.

In addition, an Israel Defense Forces plan to move several military bases from the center of the country to the Negev is expected to bring not only more than 30,000 military personnel, but also families and jobs. Meanwhile, Israel is eyeing housing development for the central Israel sites those bases will vacate.

Not everyone, however, welcomes Blueprint Negev. Critics accuse JNF of “greenwashing” and label its plans as the “Judaization” of land declared state property through false claims that lacked an owner.

(JNF’s Southeast office in Sandy Springs referred queries to the national JNF office in New York, which did not reply over a three-day period to written questions about Blueprint Negev, including the impact on the Negev Bedouin.)

“It’s essentially a long-term and escalated plan for forced resettlement of indigenous (or native) peoples who have lived and farmed and shepherded in these regions for centuries or more,” said Jesse Benjamin, an associate professor of sociology and coordinator of African and African diaspora studies at Kennesaw State University. Benjamin was born in Israel and raised in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States before returning to Israel as a teenager and college student. He traces his activism to his introduction to the Negev Bedouin when he was 16.

“Worse, it’s also on the basis of race (mixed with religion, ethnicity, nationality, etc.), as Bedouin are removed from areas that are then resettled with subsidized Jewish immigrants, arriving from anywhere in the world. Bedouin are being forced off their land, and away from their ways of live and culture, even though few Jewish Israelis wish to live in these areas, even with subsidies, preferring instead the greater Tel Aviv and Jerusalem areas,” Benjamin said.

Estimates vary, but the Bedouin population of the Negev is in the 200,000 range. More than half have relocated to seven government-recognized towns, the largest being Rahat with 54,000 inhabitants. Their advocates say that these officially recognized towns have only 2 percent as much land as the area where the Bedouin previously dwelled.

Meanwhile, an estimated 90,000 Negev Bedouin live in “unrecognized” villages — most in a triangle formed by Be’er Sheva, Arad and Dimona — that do not receive basic services from the government, such as water, sewage and electricity. A government plan to relocate these Bedouin was scrapped, and debate over their fate continues.

JNF has planted 240 million trees, covering some 250,000 acres, throughout the country in the past century, but critics say that thousands of trees have been uprooted to make room for Blueprint Negev development and that some JNF forests were located

to displace Bedouin. In particular, they cite the Ambassador Forest, which would replace the Bedouin village of Al-Araqib. The government razed the village, only to see the Bedouin return dozens of times to rebuild after each demolition.

In the absence of a JNF response to questions submitted for this article, www.jnf.org offers this statement: “The needs of the Bedouin community and the changes that must come about are one of the original pillars of Blueprint Negev. ... JNF is serious about addressing these challenges and is working with several Bedouin communities to effect change. Its leadership meets with regional councils to assess community needs and to develop solutions.”

Among several projects with the Bedouin, JNF notes its role in Project Wadi Attir, developing a cooperative and sustainable agriculture program with Bedouin in the town of Hura, in which sheep and goats are raised to provide organic meat and traditional plants that are used for medicine will be planted along indigenous vegetables. JNF also cites a project to clean the river and shoreline promenades in Rahat.

Ben-Gurion envisioned 5 million people living and working in the Negev. That figure may never be achieved, but JNF remains confident that through its investment and partnering with other private groups and the government, the Negev eventually will be regarded as much more than a desert.