

# HOME OF HOPE

An educational resource to accompany  
the animated video "Israel: Home of Hope",  
narrated by Rabbi Sacks

## INTRODUCTION

This educational resource is designed for students of middle and high school age, as a companion resource to the animated video "**Israel: Home of Hope**", narrated by Rabbi Sacks, which explores the connection between the prophet Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones and the creation of the modern State of Israel.

The video reflects the role of hope in Jewish history, and especially in the modern period that led to the creation and flourishing of the modern State of Israel.

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

It was the most haunting of all prophetic visions. The prophet Ezekiel saw a valley of dry bones, a heap of skeletons. God asked him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel replied, "God, You alone know." Then the bones came together, and grew flesh and skin, and began to breathe, and live again. Then God said: "Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, *avdah tikvateinu*, our hope is lost.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the God says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the Land of Israel.'"

It was this passage that Naftali Herz Imber was alluding to in 1877 when he wrote, in the song that became Israel's national anthem, Hatikvah, the phrase *od lo avdah tikvatenu*, 'our hope is not yet lost.' Little could he have known that seventy years later one third of the Jewish people would have become, in Auschwitz and Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen, a valley of dry bones. Who could have been blamed for saying 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost'?

And yet, a mere three years after standing eyeball-to-eyeball with the Angel of Death, the Jewish people, by proclaiming the State of Israel, made a momentous affirmation of life, as if it had heard across the centuries the echo of God's words to Ezekiel: *veheveti etchem el admat Yisrael*, 'I will bring you back to the Land of Israel.'

And a day will one day come when the story of Israel in modern times will speak not just to Jews, but to all who believe in the power of the human spirit as it reaches out to God as an everlasting symbol of the victory of life over death, hope over despair.

Israel has taken a barren land and made it bloom again. It's taken an ancient language, the Hebrew of the Bible, and made it speak again. It's taken the West's oldest faith and made it young again. It's taken a tattered, shattered nation and made it live again.

Israel is the country whose national anthem, Hatikvah, means 'hope'. Israel is the home of hope.



**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What is your initial reaction to this video? How did you feel after watching it?
  2. What do you think the main message of the video is?
  3. What does Rabbi Sacks mean when he says that Israel is the home of hope?
  4. How do you think Israel has managed to stay hopeful despite so many challenges in its short history?
  5. How does the video communicate the themes of hope, resilience, and rebirth?
  6. What emotions did the video evoke and why?
  7. How does the video connect to your own personal experiences of hope?
  8. What lessons can we learn from the video and apply to our own lives?
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**PART TWO: THE VISION OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES**



TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: SEE EZEKIEL 37:1–14 (PAGE 5)

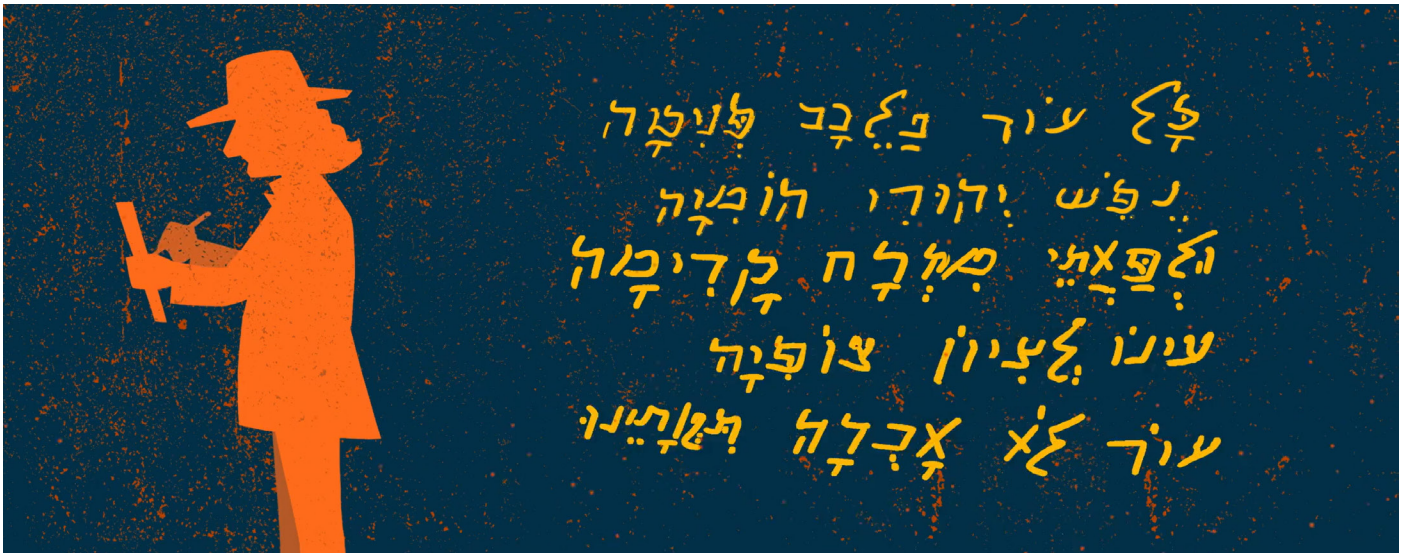
**In the first part of the video, Rabbi Sacks retells the Vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones found in the Book of Ezekiel. Study the original text where this vision is found, and compare it to the retelling in the video.**



**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How is Rabbi Sacks' retelling similar, and how does it differ, from the original in the Book of Ezekiel?
2. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks told the story in the way he did?
3. What do you think is the message of the vision God gave Ezekiel?
4. What do you think Ezekiel was supposed to do with this prophecy?
5. In verse 11, the people of Israel say they have lost all hope. Why had they lost hope?
6. How does this vision cure this hopelessness?
7. What is the Hebrew word for 'hope'?
8. Does the phrase in Hebrew for 'our hope is lost' sound familiar? From where?
9. How did you feel when you read these verses?
10. Do you think this prophecy has been fulfilled today?





Read about Israel's national anthem, Hatikvah. Here are a few Hatikvah facts:

- Hatikvah is Israel's national anthem, reflecting the Jewish people's 2,000-year desire for a free and sovereign nation-state in the Land of Israel.
- The lyrics are adapted from a poem by Jewish poet Naftali Herz Imber in 1878.
- In 1887, Shmuel Cohen's musical adaptation helped the poem spread rapidly throughout the Zionist communities of Palestine.

- Some believe Imber's first refrain, "Our hope is not lost," may be a Biblical allusion to Ezekiel's Vision of the Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37:11).

- Imber's poem, "Tikvatenu", was adopted as an anthem by the Chovevei Tzion – the forerunners and foundation-builders of modern Zionism – and later by the Zionist movement. The image above, from the video, is Imber's original handwritten poem, which would become Hatikvah.

כל עוד בלבב פנימה  
נפש יהודי הומיה  
ולפאתי מזרח קדימה  
עין לציון צופיה

As long as deep within the heart,  
The Jewish spirit yearns,  
And forward to the east  
To Zion, the eye turns,

עוד לא אבדה תקותנו  
התקוה בת שנות אלפים  
להיות עם חפשי בארצנו  
ארץ ציון וירושלים

Our hope is not yet lost,  
The hope of two thousand years,  
To be a free people in our land,  
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

- Hatikvah was unofficially proclaimed Israel's national anthem in 1948 and officially in November 2004.
- The official text of the Israeli national anthem corresponds to the first stanza and amended refrain of Imber's original nine-stanza poem.



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the poem by Naftali Herz Imber was established as Israel's national anthem?
2. Do you think it captures the essence of the State of Israel? How?
3. What does the word 'Hatikvah' mean? Why is this a fitting name for Israel's national anthem?
4. What is the possible source for the opening refrain 'Our hope is not lost'?
5. How are these words different from Ezekiel 37:11? (Find the full text on page 5.)
6. Why do you think Naftali Herz Imber used this source but changed the words?
7. How do you feel when you sing Hatikvah?

## PART FOUR: MODERN JEWISH HISTORY

In the conclusion of the video, Rabbi Sacks describes two events from modern Jewish history, and connects them to the Vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones.



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Which are the two events from modern Jewish history mentioned in the video?
2. How does Rabbi Sacks connect them to the Vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones?
3. Do you think the existence of the State of Israel is a miracle?
4. Do you think the Vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones was prophesying about this period?
5. Do you think Rabbi Sacks thought it was?

## PART FIVE: CONCLUSION – ISRAEL, THE HOME OF HOPE

The video concludes with the words:

“Israel is the country whose national anthem, Hatikvah, means ‘hope’. Israel is the home of hope.”

Read this quote from Rabbi Sacks’ book ‘To Heal a Fractured World’ (p. 166):

“Optimism and hope are not the same. Optimism is the belief that the world is changing for the better; hope is the belief that, together, we can make the world better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope an active one. It needs no courage to be an optimist, but it takes a great deal of courage to hope. The Hebrew Bible is not an optimistic book. It is, however, one of the great literatures of hope.”

### FINAL THOUGHT TO CONSIDER

How does the State of Israel embody hope rather than optimism?



## EZEKIEL 37:1–14

הִיָּתָה עָלַי יָד ה' וַיּוֹצֵאֵנִי בְרוּחַ ה' וַיְנִיחֵנִי בְּתוֹךְ הַבְּקָעָה וְהִיא מְלֵאָה עֲצָמוֹת: וְהֶעֱבִירַנִי עֲלֵיהֶם סָבִיב סָבִיב וְהִנֵּה רַבּוֹת מְאֹד עַל פְּנֵי הַבְּקָעָה וְהִנֵּה יְבֵשׁוֹת מְאֹד: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בֶּן אָדָם הֲתַחְיֶינָה הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וַאֲמַר אֲדֹנָי ה' אַתָּה יָדָעְתָּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הִנָּבֵא עַל הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם הָעֲצָמוֹת הַיְבֵשׁוֹת שְ�מַעוּ דְּבַר ה' כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי ה' לָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הִנֵּה אֲנִי מְבִיא בָכֶם רוּחַ וְחַיִּיתֶם: וְנָתַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם גְּדִים וְהֶעֱלֵתִי עֲלֵיכֶם בָּשָׂר וְקִרַמְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם עוֹר וְנָתַתִּי בָכֶם רוּחַ וְחַיִּיתֶם וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' וְנִבֵּאתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי וַיְהִי קוֹל כְּהִנָּבְאִי וְהִנֵּה רֶעֶשׂ וַתִּקְרְבוּ עֲצָמוֹת עֵצֶם אֶל עֵצָמוֹ: וְרָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה עֲלֵיהֶם גְּדִים וּבָשָׂר עָלָה וַיִּקְרָם עֲלֵיהֶם עוֹר מִלְמַעְלָה וְרוּחַ אֵין בָּהֶם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הִנָּבֵא אֶל הָרוּחַ הִנָּבֵא בֶּן אָדָם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל הָרוּחַ כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי ה' מֵאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת בָּאִי הָרוּחַ וּפָחִי בִּהְרוּגִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיַּחֲיוּ: וְהִנָּבֵאתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי וַתָּבוֹא בָהֶם הָרוּחַ וַיַּחֲיוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ עַל רַגְלֵיהֶם חִיל גָּדוֹל מְאֹד: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בֶּן אָדָם הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה הִנֵּה אֲמָרִים יָבֹשׁוּ עֲצָמוֹתֵינוּ וְאִבְדָּה תִקְוַתֵנוּ נִגְזְרֵנוּ לָנוּ: לָכֵן הִנָּבֵא וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי ה' הִנֵּה אֲנִי פֹתֵחַ אֶת קְבֻרֹתֵיכֶם וְהֶעֱלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מִקְבֻרֹתֵיכֶם עִמִּי וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל אֶדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל: וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' בִּפְתֹּחַ אֶת קְבֻרֹתֵיכֶם וּבִהְעֹלֹתִי אֶתְכֶם מִקְבֻרֹתֵיכֶם עִמִּי: וְנָתַתִּי רוּחִי בָכֶם וְחַיִּיתֶם וְהִנָּחֵתִי אֶתְכֶם עַל אֶדְמַתְכֶם וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' דִּבַּרְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתִי נְאֻם ה':

And the hand of the Lord came upon me. **He brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the valley. It was full of bones.** He led me around through them all; there were so very many of them out upon the valley, and they were utterly dry. **And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I said, “God, You alone know.”** He said to me: “Prophecy to these bones; say to them: Dry bones – hear the word of the Lord! **So says the Lord God to these bones: See – I will bring breath into you, and you will come to life.** I will give you sinews, I will make flesh grow on you, I will spread skin over you, I will put breath into you, you will come to life, and you will know that I am the Lord.” I prophesied as I had been commanded. There was a noise as I was prophesying, and then a rattling, and the bones moved together, each bone to its bone. And I saw there on them sinews, flesh forming, and skin spreading a cover over them – but there was no breath in them. And He said to me: “Prophecy to the breath; Son of man, prophesy and say to the breath: **So says the Lord God: From the four winds, come; breath, breathe into these slain so that they come to life.**” I prophesied as He had commanded me, and the breath entered them, and they came to life; they stood upon their feet, a vast army. **And He said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are completely cut off.’ Therefore prophesy and say to them: This is what the God says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the Land of Israel.** You will know that I am the Lord when I open up your graves, when I lift you out of your graves, My people. **I will put My breath into you, and you will come to life; I will set you upon your soil, and you will know that I am the Lord;** I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”