



# Jerusalem story told by its gradens

ירושלים גנים סביב לה



## The Castel National Park

**A stirring national site that commemorates the struggle for the road to Jerusalem during the War of Independence. At the site are bunkers and communication trenches from the war, and signs and films depicting the course of the battle.**

The Castel lies at the top of a hill that overlooks the road that stretches from the Coastal Plain to Jerusalem. Some associate the Castel with Mount Efron, located at the territorial border between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 14: 9); the origin of the name is the Roman word Castellum, meaning fortress. At the time, the road from Emmaus in the Valley of Ayalon to Jerusalem passed along the foot of the Castel.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Crusaders built a fortress called Castellum Belveer (in French: “the castle with the beautiful view”) on the mountain. The Crusader fortress was a link in a chain of fortifications established in the Jerusalem hills. Later, a small Arab village, the Castel, was built there, preserving the ancient Roman name for the place.

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United

Nations voted in favor of the Partition Plan for Palestine. The Arabs did not accept the decision, leading to the outbreak of the War of Independence. In its early stages, the war was fought as a civil war. The Arabs focused on cutting off the roads to the Jewish settlements and the Jews attempted to break through the blockade using convoys of trucks and armored buses (“sandwiches”).

By March 1948, 1,200 Jews had been killed on the roads, about half of them civilians. The Jews understood that they had to change their strategy. On April 3, 1948, after the arrival of a large arms shipment from Czechoslovakia, the Jewish forces launched their first attack, in the framework of “Operation Nachshon”. A brigade force of 1,500 men seized land on the way to Jerusalem in order to engineer a change on this front. The Battle of the Castel was fought during this operation, at the end of which the siege of Jerusalem was breached.

The Castel remained in Arab hands until April 3. On that date, a Palmach force left the village of Kiryat Anavim and conquered the village, met by almost no resistance. After its conquest, the site was placed under the control of the fighters Moriah Battalion.

Then, by April 17, hundreds of Arabs attacked the Castel in a continuous bombardment. On April 8, Abd al-Qader al-Husseini, the revered commander of the Arab sector, arrived in the area at dawn. In the dark of night, the guard posted at the Castel saw figures; he shot and killed them, without knowing who he hit.

In light of what had happened, the Arabs began a massive

attack at 10 a.m. the next day against the exhausted fighters of the Moriah Battalion, conquering the Castel. Reinforcements left Kiryat Anavim at noon, but when they arrived, the Castel had already fallen. All that was left was to organize the withdrawal. Shimon Alfasi, deputy commander of the force, led by Nahum Arieli, ordered: “The privates will retreat and the commanders will remain to cover them.” All of the Palmach members who remained to provide cover for their comrades, and all of the reinforcements who had ascended the mountain, were killed. Of all those who attempted retreat, only four remained alive.

On April 9, a Palmach force arrived at the Castel and found the site empty of Arab fighters; they had gone to participate in the funeral of their revered commander Hussein. Since then, the Castel has remained in Jewish hands.

Eighteen Palmach members and 31 fighters of the Field Force were killed in the battle. Dozens were wounded. The conquest of the Castel symbolizes a strategic change in the struggle of the Jewish Yishuv: no further attempts to break the Arab siege using convoys; rather, an offensive strategy was adopted to conquer territories, in order to create Jewish control of the territory on the way to Jerusalem.



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## The Wohl Rose Park

**A wonderful rose garden used to receive dignitaries and a green recreation spot located near the Knesset building, government offices and the Supreme Court. Next to the garden is the famous Knesset Menorah.**

The first ornamental garden in the government complex was established in the early 1950's. At the time, the garden was called "The President's Garden". This was the place where official ceremonies were held, and the public was not allowed to visit it. Only in the 1960's, following a public struggle, did the park open to the general public; paths were paved and the first benches were erected during that period.

In 1978, Jerusalem was preparing to host the International Rose Exhibition, which was to be held in Israel in 1981. At the initiative of rose lovers and with the support of Teddy Kollek, the Mayor, it was decided to turn the President's Park into a special garden for roses. The Rose Park was established with the support of contributions from Vivian and Morris Wohl and the

Jerusalem Foundation.

The garden is spread over 81 dunams and has about 15,000 rose bushes of 400 different species. The roses in the park are displayed in plots according to their color and their use in gardening. Each plot has explanatory signs describing the variety of rose and its origins. In the Garden of Nations, the roses are planted according to the countries in which they were cultivated. In 2003, the Wohl Rose Park was awarded the International Award of Excellence by the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS) for its activities in the area of roses and its accessibility to the public.

Three ancient Jewish burial caves were discovered during the preparation of the park. Archaeologists have determined that the caves were hewn during the Second Temple period, and testify to a Judean settlement that existed there 2,000 years ago. The rose park also includes an ancient mosaic floor from the Byzantine period (about 1,500 years ago), which was transferred there from the Harod Valley. At the heart of the park is a small artificial lake fed by open channels and small waterfalls.

Next to the Rose Garden is the famous Knesset Menorah - a magnificent work of bronze, about five meters high. The lamp was given as a gift to the young State of

Israel by various individuals, including members of the British Parliament, in 1956. The creator of the lamp is the British-Jewish artist Benno Elkan. About 30 reliefs depicting the history of the Jewish people throughout the generations are engraved onto the menorah.

In the park, receptions are occasionally held for important guests of the State of Israel and of the Jerusalem Municipality. In contrast, demonstrators also gather in the garden to protest in front of the Knesset and the government.



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# Jerusalem story told by its gardens

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## The Garden of Resurrection

**The garden, found within the walls of the Old City, is surrounded by fascinating past sites. The name of the garden expresses the rebirth of the Jewish quarter from its ashes after having suffered continuous destruction.**

The location of the garden, near the southern wall of the Old City, has a long history. In the 19th century, one part of it, near the Zion Gate, housed miserable people suffering from leprosy who were ostracized from society due to their contagious disease. Their houses turned towards the wall so that the townspeople would not have to suffer the sight of their faces. It was only during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that those suffering from leprosy were transferred to sanitariums located outside the walls. The wretched houses were destroyed and the compound became part of the Jewish quarter. Until 1948, the entire area was inhabited by Sephardi Jews.

During the War of Independence, the Jordanians conquered the Jewish Quarter and the Old City. The area

returned to the control of the State of Israel during the Six-Day War (1967), and the State began to rehabilitate it, also performing archaeological excavations. It was the first time that the quarter had been thoroughly and scientifically excavated, and fascinating finds from various periods in Jerusalem's long history were revealed. Following the excavations, steps were taken to present the findings to the public.

The most important archaeological finds were discovered in the eastern part of the Garden of Resurrection. These included the ancient water reservoirs of the Nea Church, built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. The church, which was the largest church in Jerusalem in the 6th century, sprawled over a vast area (116 x 52 m), an area slightly larger than a football field!

The area of the hill was not large enough for the emperor to build the church, and he therefore expanded its boundaries artificially. The additional area is supported by large and particularly thick vaults, which have been almost perfectly preserved to this day. The spaces inside the vaults served as reservoirs. Today, the water reservoirs in the Garden of Resurrection serve as platforms for an open theater for performances, and for children's play grounds.

The central part of the garden houses the well-preserved

remains of the Armenian Monastery of St. Stephen, built during the Crusader period (about 900 years ago). Many of the monastery's pillars are visible, as are some of its exterior walls. With the establishment of the Garden of Resurrection, sports facilities, including soccer fields, basketball courts and table tennis courts, were built near the remains of the monastery.

Remains of Zion Gate dated from earlier periods were discovered in the western part of the Garden of Resurrection. The present-day Zion Gate, set in the Ottoman city wall (from the 16<sup>th</sup> century), is located to the west of, and is higher than, the historic Zion Gate. The ancient gate stood at the end of the ancient cardo, and its remains, in the form of a large gatehouse with thick walls, are still visible today.



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## Teddy Park

**The new park, located at the foot of the walls of the Old City, is dedicated to the memory of Teddy Kollek (1911-2007), the legendary mayor of Jerusalem who did much to develop and promote the city.**

Teddy Kollek served as mayor of Jerusalem for 28 years, from 1965 to 1993. He urbanized Jerusalem and made an enormous contribution to its advancement. The beautiful park, built at the foot of Jaffa Gate and the Tower of David in the Old City, was inaugurated in the year 2013 and serves as an attraction for Israelis and tourists alike. The park was established by the Jerusalem Foundation, with the contribution of many Jewish philanthropists from abroad.

Teddy Park covers over 7 dunams. The park has six gates, each of which has its own unique design. All of the gates lead to the amazing fountain located in the center of the park. The fountain operates every hour for a ten minute show: 256 jets of water burst out from different places in the fountain, rising to different

heights according to the volume of the music played. The fountain show is especially spectacular at night and takes place every evening at 8:00 p.m. and at 9:00 p.m.

In the summer, many visitors enter the fountain itself and freshen up in its water. Small children enjoy splashing in the water of the water course that exits a structure with waterfalls. Knowing Teddy Kollek, we are sure he is pleased.

Around the fountain are wide lawns that house nine stations depicting Teddy Kollek's activities and biography. Teddy, born in Hungary, immigrated to Israel and became a member of Kibbutz Ein Gev, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee; he was involved in the acquisition of weapons for the War of Independence. He founded and directed the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and was later elected Mayor of the city.

On the level above the lawns stands a special sundial, and at the level of the fountain is the Wishing Well. You can throw a coin in the well and make a wish.

The construction of the park lasted about five years and included the careful preservation of the remains of ancient buildings discovered during the work. The architects also made sure to preserve the ancient olive trees that grow on the site. One of the first buildings built in Jerusalem outside the Old City walls is also

incorporated into the park. An ancient water cistern was revealed in the area of the garden, and serves as the centerpiece for the elegant square built at the entrance to the park.



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## Cedar (Arazim) Valley

**A valley that offshoots the Jerusalem Park - a green belt that stretches over 15,000 dunams and surrounds the entire capital. The valley preserves biblical landscapes alongside modern sites.**

The Jerusalem Park is a natural space and landscape that surrounds the capital like a green belt. The park serves as a leisure and recreation spot for the residents of the city, while preserving environmental values and the heritage of the Jerusalem hills. The park includes four areas - the Tzofim Stream, the Cedar(Arazim) Valley, the Motza Valley and the Refaim Stream - which together stretch over 15,000 dunams. In the future, the different areas of the park will be connected to form one continuous green ring around the city.

The park includes planted forests and natural groves, traditional farming terraces and orchards, small mountain springs and numerous historic sites. The Jerusalem Park offers a wide variety of hiking, cycling and recreational opportunities in nature.

The Motza Valley, which is part of Nahal Soreq, has

a paved, 3 km bicycle trail. On the shoulders of the valley, Mediterranean woodlands nestle together with the remains of orchards. In the center of the valley is the Beit Zayit reservoir, which fills with flood water in the winter.

The Tzofim Stream is a short channel that drains the western slopes of Mount Scopus. The majority of the slopes are covered by the KKL Forest. Between the trees you can find a magnificent burial cave and the remains of an ancient quarry.

The Arazim Valley in the park has a unique history. In the valley stems a group of small springs, called Einot Telem. Next to the springs is a two-story house, a remnant of the small Hebrew settlement of Beit Telem. In 1906, Aharon Eisenberg and chemist Dov Klimker purchased a plot of land of 230 dunams. The two hoped to produce lubricant oils from olive waste (the waste that remains from the olives after the production of olive oil).

They were followed by a group of workers who called their settlement "Cedar Valley", after the trees that had been planted there. The trees were cypresses and not cedars, but in those days, the botanical differences between cypresses and cedars were not widely known. This group too abandoned the place, but the name

Cedar Valley and the ancient cypress trees planted there remain to this day.

In 1922, eight Jewish families moved to the site from Jerusalem. They left the area in the 1929 riots. Arabs attacked the settlement, but one of the Arab residents of the neighboring Beit Tolma saved the Jewish settlers and helped them escape.

The KKL erected a special monument, a piece created by the artist Eliezer Weishoff, at the top of the hill above Cedar Valley. At the center of a round stone square stands a large metal statue, nine meters high, shaped like an American flag; its top section resembles a tongue of fire reaching skywards, and in a glass window at the base of the statue is a section of steel from one of the Twin Towers, commemorating the names of the 2,974 people murdered, including five Israelis. Every year, on September 11, a main memorial ceremony is held at the site to commemorate the horrific tragedy.



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## The Jerusalem Forest

**This is the place where the residents of Jerusalem go to spend time in nature and enjoy the mountain air, clear as wine. Alongside the forest are the important sites Mount Herzl and Yad Vashem.**

The KKL began to plant the forest in 1956. The first tree was planted by Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, the second president of the State of Israel, who wished to demonstrate how important it is to plant trees in the Jerusalem hills, which until then had been virtually devoid of trees. Two years later David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, planted another tree in the forest.

At its largest, the forest encompassed 4,700 dunams; but due to the development of the city, its area was reduced to a mere 1,250 dunams. The forest has recently suffered damage from snow and fires. The KKL, in cooperation with the residents of the neighborhoods near the forest, is leading the struggle to cultivate the forest and preserve its character.

Many slopes in the forest are adorned with agricultural terraces. For thousands of years, this was the accepted

method of growing agricultural crops. In the past few years, old farming terraces along the Ein Karem stream, which flows through the forest, have been restored and orchards have been planted, as in the days of old.

In the Jerusalem Forest, the KKL has established many parking lots and a hiking route that reaches the forest's most important sites, including Erez Ben Gurion, communication trenches dug by the Turks during the First World War, and outlook points which afford a view of the surrounding area. An especially touching site is Australia Park, in which there is a special corner in honor of the late Ilan Halimi, who was brutally murdered in France in 2006 by a gang of Muslims.

The Jerusalem Forest also houses the Grove of Nations, where world leaders plant trees to express their solidarity with the State of Israel and promote environmental awareness.

## Mount Herzl

Mount Herzl houses the burial plots of the nation's leaders - here, the leaders of the State and Zionism, headed by Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl, are buried. Mount Herzl is also Israel's main military cemetery. At the entrance to the mountain is the Herzl Museum. The Herzl Museum operates four audiovisual displays that

recount the story of Herzl's life and compares his vision and the achievements realized by the State of Israel. Herzl's original work study is also incorporated into the museum.

On Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism, the main ceremony commemorating the fallen among the security forces and the victims of terrorism is held on Mount Herzl. The ceremony, attended by the heads of state, marks the opening of Independence Day events.

## Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, is responsible for documenting the history of the Jewish people before and during the Holocaust and for imparting the legacy of the Holocaust to future generations. The institute is authorized to award the title of "Righteous Among the Nations" to non-Jews who worked to save Jews during the Holocaust at the risk of their lives.



# Jerusalem story told by its gardens

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## The Botanical Gardens at Givat Ram

**The University Botanical Gardens at Givat Ram is a gem of nature in the heart of Jerusalem. The Garden acts as an educational and research center and contains a diverse collection of plants from around the world.**

The Botanical Gardens at Givat Ram extend over 150 dunams and represent the largest botanical garden in Israel. The collection at the Botanical Gardens includes more than 6,000 species of plants from around the world, which are presented according to six geographical regions - Southern Africa, Europe, North America, Australia, Southwest and Central Asia and the Mediterranean Sea. The plots at the Botanical Gardens display the flora typical of each region and exhibit spectacular blossoms throughout the year. The Botanical Gardens also serves as a focal point for entertainment, tourism and cultural events.

The KKL has created the Path of Discovery in the botanical garden - a special path for children made of concrete and wood, 460 meters long, which includes

four stations, each depicting the composition of the environment in which trees grow: water, stone, treetops and roots. The activities at each station are designed to break down the complex theme of ecology to a series of simple activities that focus on the interaction between plants and the various elements in their environment. While touring along the path, the children enjoy a wealth of experiences that stimulate all the senses.

In addition to presenting a wide range of plants from around the world, the Botanical Gardens at Givat Ram are also involved in other fields. The Botanical Gardens preserve many plants which have aesthetic, botanical and agricultural value and serve as a sanctuary for more than 300 species of endangered plants in Israel. In the garden, rare Israeli plants are cultivated in order to return them to nature. The Botanical Gardens maintain a large collection of seeds, which are used to supplement and increase the vegetation across the country and which are distributed to botanical gardens around the world.

The Botanical Gardens at Givat Ram also engage in education and the promotion of scientific knowledge in the field of botany, train professional gardeners, and teach children and adults about the world's flora. Education promoting a love of vegetation is the basis for imparting values that support the conservation of nature.

The Botanical Gardens organize guided tours for private visitors and groups and produces informational materials for travelers who wish to tour the gardens independently. Recreational activities and cultural events dealing with botany and art are held throughout the year.



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## The Mount Scopus Botanical Garden

**The Garden focuses on the presentation of the wild plant species of Israel and has resumed activities after a long hiatus during which access to the site was not permitted. Within the confines of the Botanical Garden is a burial cave from the Second Temple period.**

The Botanical Garden was established in 1931 by Prof. Otto Warburg - founder of the Department of Botany at the Hebrew University, and Dr. Alexander Eig, one of the first researchers in the field of botany and phytogeography in Israel. The garden covers about 25 dunams and houses approximately 950 plant species, representing over 40% of the wild plant species of Israel.

The Botanical Garden is built as an ecological botanical garden. It presents and preserves the variety of Israeli plant species according to habitats that characterize the different regions of the country, such as the Mediterranean scrub, desert grasslands, Negev mountain ranges, coastal sand dunes, bodies of water

and traditional orchards. The garden also preserves the natural appearance of these habitats.

During the War of Independence, Mount Scopus was cut off from Israel, remaining an enclave in Jordanian territory. The cultivation of the garden plants was halted, but many of the plants survived. The garden was rebuilt after the Six-Day War. In 2008, a joint project of the Hebrew University and the Jewish National Fund was launched, dedicated to the conservation of the Botanical Garden.

A burial cave system from the Second Temple period (the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE) was discovered in the garden. In the cave, which is hewn in bedrock, there are several burial grounds. Outside the cave is a rectangular courtyard with seating areas. The entrance to the cave has five openings. Magnificent burial caves such as this one were dug at the time by Jerusalem's wealthy.

Seven ossuaries (coffins containing the bones of the deceased) were discovered in the cave. Four of the ossuaries were decorated. Several metal nails were found during the cleaning and excavation works, indicating that wood coffins were also used there, and that they were dismantled and lost over the years. On one of the ossuaries is an inscription mentioning Nicanor, who built the doors. It appears that the reference is to Nicanor who brought the pumpkins from Alexandria

to Nicanor Gate - a magnificent and famous gate at the Second Temple that separated the women's section from the men's section. According to archaeologist Eliezer Sukenik, the bones of Nicanor's sons were buried in the ossuary.

1,900 years after it was quarried, the cave again began to fulfill its original function. The initiator of the idea was Menachem Ussishkin, one of the heads of the Zionist movement and chairman of the Jewish National Fund from 1923 to 1941. Ussishkin, who helped purchase the land on Mount Scopus, initiated a plan to establish a pantheon for the leaders of the Zionist movement in the area of Nicanor's Cave. In 1941, Ussishkin was brought to the site for burial in a state burial ceremony, during which his grave was covered with earth from all over the country.

After the War of Independence the need arose to find another place for the nation's leaders, since it was impossible to reach Mount Scopus. The place chosen was Mount Herzl. The graves of Ussishkin and Pinsker are still found in the botanical garden on Mount Scopus.



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## The Peace Forest

**The Peace Forest is located in southeast Jerusalem, at the foot of the Armon Hanatziv promenade, and overlooks the magnificent view of Old Jerusalem, the Kidron Valley, the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus.**

The KKL began planting the Peace Forest in 1968, one year after the Six-Day War. The forest sprawls over about 400 dunams, and is located in an area which, before the Six-Day War, was included in the no man's land between Jordanian and Israeli Jerusalem. The majority of the forest is planted with pine, cypress and cedar trees and is used as a recreation and relaxation site. The KKL paved paths throughout the forest and built seating areas. In 1995, in honor of Jerusalem's 3000<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the KKL established the "Children of Israel Garden" in the forest, which houses outlooks over sites representing different periods in the city's history.

The Armon Hanatziv promenade actually includes three different promenades, which are connected

- the Sherover Promenade, the Haas Promenade, and the Goldman Promenade; its overall length is about 3 kilometers. The promenade, decorated with ancient olive trees and well-kept buildings, benches and pergolas, affords a view of the area between the Old City of Jerusalem and the Judean Desert, as far as the Moab Mountains in Jordan. The view from the promenade is a must for anyone who visits Jerusalem and wants to understand the location of ancient Jerusalem in the area and its character in terms of a city located on the border of the desert.

Alongside the promenade is Armon Hanatziv - the government building built in Jerusalem during the British Mandate. At the time, the building served as the residence and office of the British High Commissioner. The Mandate authorities called the place Government House. The house now serves as the headquarters of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

As is usually the case in Jerusalem, ancient remains were discovered near the Peace Forest and the promenade. One of them is a water aqueduct from the time of the Second Temple, which brought water from springs in the Bethlehem area to Jerusalem, a distance of about ten kilometers, and was built during the era of the Hasmonean dynasty (during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE), when

the city of Jerusalem expanded and required increasing amounts of water. The aqueduct was also used in later periods - in the Middle Ages, during Ottoman rule, and even during the British Mandate.

Numerous burial caves have been excavated in the area of the Peace Forest, dating to the Herodian period (The period of Herod's rule - the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE). The caves are built as clusters of rock-hewn rooms. The walls of the rooms are hewn with niches used as ossuaries (coffins used for gathering the bones of the deceased). In the excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority, decorated ossuaries with Hebrew inscriptions were discovered in the area.



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## Rabin Park

**This is the area in which Yitzhak Rabin commanded the Harel Brigade, which fought for the road to Jerusalem during the War of Independence. The park, located on both sides of Sha'ar Hagai, commemorates many events of the difficult war.**

The Yitzhak Rabin Park is a vast green area stretching over 15,000 dunams on the way to Jerusalem. Most of the area is covered by KKL forests and natural groves, and the KKL has created numerous hiking trails, parking lots and observation posts, which join the many sites of the past - ancient terraces used for traditional agriculture, the remnants of Biblical settlements, Roman watchtowers and roads and settlement sites from the modern era.

Fierce battles for the road to Jerusalem were fought in this area during the War of Independence. The Arab forces blocked the road at Latrun and Sha'ar Hagai, besieged Jerusalem and hoped to conquer the entire city. David Ben-Gurion ordered that the road be opened at all costs - and so it was.

One of the important tour routes reconstructs the Burma Road. The need for the road began on May 18, 1948. At the time, the Arab Legion (the Jordanian) had seized the Latrun area and blocked the road between Latrun and Sha'ar Hagai; this was how the siege of Jerusalem began. The combat forces found a challenging path through the hills that bypasses Latrun. This path was called by several names until the American journalist Kenneth Bilby coined it the Burma Road, after a road paved by Allied forces during World War II to bypass a road under Japanese control.

The Burma Road was Jerusalem's lifeline. Trucks transported food, ammunition and medicines from Tel Aviv to the point where further passage was impossible. Fighters and volunteers then carried the supplies on their backs to Jerusalem, where trucks were waiting. Later on, the road was improved and conditions became easier.

The KKL reconstructed the Burma Road and put up explanatory placards and illustrative figures shaped like jeeps, armored vehicles and combat figures. One special place is called the "Serpentine trail". This is a steep and winding road, which today as well can only be travelled on by jeep. At the foot of the "Serpentine trail" is a length of rusty pipe, a monument to the "Shiloah Line" - a water pipe that was quickly installed along the route of Burma Road at the beginning of the war. The Jordanians blew up the main water line to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem was only saved from thirst thanks to this pipe.

The KKL has also tended to the high hills towering over both sides of Sha'ar Hagai. These hills housed the military posts of the Palmach, which guarded the road to Jerusalem. The scenic views and trail routes pass between the old military posts and remind the travelers of the difficult days of the fighting.

The KKL erected a special monument on the Burma Road - the Machal Memorial (for Overseas Volunteers). During the War of Independence, some 3,500 young volunteers from 29 countries fought alongside the Israelis. These volunteers, veterans of the World War II, served as regular fighters in Israel, despite their past military rank. 123 of these volunteers fell in battle. The volunteers arrived in Israel from the recruitment center for Machal volunteers in Paris, via the southern ports of France.

In the Rabin Park area, near Sha'ar Hagai, is a prominent stone structure. This is a road inn built by the Turks at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a way station on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Next to the inn are the skeletons of armored cars, in which the Israeli forces attempted to transport supplies at the start of the War of Independence.



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## The Ramat Rachel Archaeological Park

**The fascinating remains that were found at Ramat Rachel testify to a large administrative center that existed at the site during the time of the Judean kings. Mitzpeh Yair, which is part of the park, offers a spectacular view of Jerusalem.**

Kibbutz Ramat Rachel was founded in 1926 on land purchased by the KKL near Jerusalem. The founders were immigrants from Lithuania and Russia. In 1929, Arab rioters attacked the kibbutz and burned it to the ground. The settlers, together with other members who joined the kibbutz, rebuilt it.

The kibbutz was destroyed again during the War of Independence. The Egyptian army and the Jordanian army occupied the kibbutz. Fourteen members of the kibbutz and one soldier fell in battle, but in the end Ramat Rachel remained in Israeli territory. The kibbutz was completely surrounded by Jordanian territory and there remained only a narrow passage connecting the kibbutz to Jerusalem.

The residents of Ramat Rachel were not the first to settle

there. Excavations of the area reveal a place that was already inhabited as early as 3,000 years ago. Several settlement strata were discovered in the excavations conducted at the site in the 1950's. The most important finds belong to a palace attributed to one of the last kings of Judea (in the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE). The excavator of the site, Yochanan Aharoni, identified the place as Beit HaKerem, one of the sites where torches were lit at the end of the First Temple period: "Flee for safety, people of Benjamin! Flee from Jerusalem! Sound the trumpet in Tekoa! Raise the signal over Beit HaKerem!"(Jeremiah 6: 1). Five pillars built in the proto-Aeolian style, which is similar to Phoenician architecture, were discovered at the site.

More than 100 stamps bearing the inscription "for the King" were found in ancient Hebrew script at Ramat Rachel. The seals were stamped on storage jars, found mainly around Jerusalem. It is believed that the jars contained oil or wine collected as taxes and designated for the king's treasure. The seals found at Ramat Rachel indicate that the site functioned as an administrative center in the Kingdom of Judah, even before the palace was built.

In 2004, additional excavations were conducted at the site. Archaeologists have uncovered a garden with an ancient system of pools and pipes that were designed for aesthetic purposes. The researchers identified the remains of citron (Ethrog) trees preserved in the plaster that coated the pools. One hypothesis, based on the

construction style and technical characteristics of the system, is that the finds originate from a palace that was built during the Persian period (the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE).

A large bathhouse from the Roman period (the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE) was also uncovered at Ramat Rachel. Many bricks were found in the bathhouse, some of which bore the stamp of the Roman Tenth Legion. During the Byzantine period there was a large settlement on the site, where several thousand monks lived, raising olives and vines. They built many buildings, including a large church.

Near the palace, which dates from the era of the Judean kings, is "MitzpeYair", which was established in memory of a kibbutz member, Yair Engel, who was killed in 1996 during his military service in the naval commando unit. The observatory is shaped in the form of a curl, inspired by the shape of the proto-Aeolian inscription that was discovered in the Ramat Rachel excavations. From the observatory you can see the magnificent view of Jerusalem.

A statue of the olive pillars stands just a few steps east of the excavation site. The sculpture is composed of three olive trees that stand on pillars 15 meters high, and is clearly visible from many places in Jerusalem.



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# Jerusalem story told by its gradens

ירושלים גנים סביב לה

## The San Simon Gardens

**A pleasant public garden, home to an ancient pine grove and even a small vestige of the vast Mediterranean grove of yore, situated on the site of one of the most difficult battles of the War of Independence.**

In the heart of the Katamon neighborhood, next to the public park, stands the stone building of the San Simon Monastery. The monastery was built in the mid-19th century on the ruins of an ancient monastery. Medieval maps tell of a tradition that considers the site to be the home and burial place of St. Simon, one of the first followers of Jesus. Several ancient burial caves were discovered in the area of the monastery, bearing the names of the buried. These were members of the Yashevav family of Kohanim (High Priests). The head of the family was Yehosef Klon, son of Shimon.

The peaceful garden and the quiet monastery on the grounds today betray no signs of the difficult battle that took place there during the War of Independence. When Rafael ("Raful") Eitan was appointed IDF Chief of Staff in 1968, he delivered a speech at the President's

Residence in Jerusalem, saying: "Not far from here, 30 years ago, Jerusalem's future as the renewed capital of the Jewish people was determined in a difficult battle. I had the privilege to participate in that battle, and it is a great honor for me today to accept the post of Chief of Staff in this place".

The battle that Raful referred to was the Battle of San Simon, one of the greatest dramas in the War of Independence. Katamon was under Arab control. If Katamon would remain in Arab hands, the old neighborhoods of Jerusalem - Talpiot, Arnona, Mekor Chaim and Kibbutz Ramat Rachel - would fall. Not only was Jerusalem besieged - these neighborhoods too were under siege during the war.

Hundreds of volunteers from the Iraqi battalion occupied Arab Katamon. The Palmach took action, sending an armed force to capture Katamon on April 27; however, they were spotted and came under heavy fire. The force retreated.

The second attack was launched three days later. After nightfall, two companies of the 4th Battalion of the Harel Brigade arrived at the site. Rafael Eitan and David ("Dado") Elazar, later the ninth IDF Chief of Staff, were among the platoon commanders. The Arabs spotted them, waited for them to approach and opened very heavy fire against them. There were many casualties. The soldiers of the companies stormed the site in the face of the barrage, and at 2:30 p.m. they manage to breach it.

Not giving in, the Arabs opened massive fire at 4:30, barraging the monastery in waves. Death traps, shells, mortars, absolute hell! An Arab armored vehicle, positioned in an alley, spits fire. The soldiers return fire and throw grenades. Raful is wounded in the head but continues to fight, strapped to a chair. Many Arabs are injured, but they continue their offensive.

In the morning the fighters discover that they are completely surrounded. 10 were killed and 80 injured. Half of the force is unable to fight. Their ammunition is running out. The force receives approval to withdraw, but withdrawing together with the wounded is impossible. A plan is already in place to blow up those seriously injured, so that they won't be taken prisoners alive.

At this difficult moment, just before their withdrawal, the fighters learned that the Arabs, who had also suffered severe losses, had lost heart at the sight of Jewish reinforcements who had joined the battle, and began to retreat. Arab Katamon fell, and the Jerusalem neighborhoods under siege were saved.

Eighteen fighters were killed in the battle for Katamon. A memorial plaque in San Simon Gardens bears their names.



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# Jerusalem story told by its gradens

ירושלים גנים סביב לה

## The King's Garden

**At the heart of ancient Jerusalem, at the foot of the Canaanite city and the City of David, and at the site of the Shiloah Pool, parts of which were recently revealed.**

The place known today as "The King's Garden" is the area in which the Kidron Valley meets the Valley of Hinnom. Most scholars identify the place with the Garden of the King mentioned in the Bible, relying on continuous traditions passed down from antiquity and the descriptions of the Bible, especially those mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah, which mentions the Garden of the King located on the steps descending from the City of David (Nehemiah 3:15). Joseph ben Matityahu (Josephus), a historian from the Roman period, refers to the spring located on the site (Ein Rogel) as the spring in the Garden of the King. Today, the spring is dry and is thought to be Bir Ayoub - a well located inside the mosque in the nearby village of Silwan.

In the past, many trees grew in the area, and to this day the area is called "the orchard" by the residents of Silwan (Kfar HaShiloach). Today, the site is home to a conglomeration of the houses of the village of Silwan; the remains of Canaanite Jerusalem; the city from the First Temple period; Zedekiah's aqueduct, which brought the waters of the Gihon spring water to the walls of Jerusalem; and

the Shiloah Pool from the time of the Second Temple. The Jerusalem municipality plans to restore part of the King's Garden, direct the flow of the Gihon River to the Kidron Valley and restore the orchards that once grew there, to serve as an open garden for tourism. The King's Valley will be part of a national park surrounding the Jerusalem's Old City walls.

Until then, you can tour the area of the City of David, a very exciting site. The City of David is the site of ancient Jerusalem, which stood from the beginning of the Middle Ages (2000 - 1550 BCE) throughout the days of the Kings of Judah and up to the Middle Ages. Today, the site is within the boundaries of the village of Silwan.

The story of the city begins 3,000 years ago, when King David leaves his city, Hebron, and establishes his capital in the city of Yevus. A tour of the city starts with a lookout from Beit Hatzofeh, which provides clear support for the verse "the mountains surround Jerusalem". However, the hill of the City of David is protected by the deep channel of Nahal Kidron in the east and the small valley known simply as "The Valley". At the foot of the hill is the Gihon Spring, which in itself represents a good reason for the construction of the settlement near the hill. Beit Hatzofeh offers a three-dimensional, 15 minute presentation which gives an overview the history of the City of David.

The visit to the City of David provides an opportunity to tour the remains of the large stone building, which has been identified by some as the palace of King David. At its base is the Government Compound (Area G). Discovered here, among other things, are the remains of ancient

government archives, which bear the signatures of personages mentioned in the Old Testament, including Gmaryahu ben Shafan and Azaryahu ben Hilkiyah; and the seal of Birkiyahu ben Neriah (Baruch ben Neriah), the prophet Jeremiah's scribe. The remnants of furniture from the First Temple period and dozens of arrows testifying to the battle against the Babylonians that took place on the site were found in a burnt-out room.

In the city of David is Hezekiah's tunnel. This is a 536-meter-long tunnel that transferred the Gihon spring water, which flowed outside the wall, into the Shiloah Pool inside the city. This was an unusual engineering operation, considering that the difference in height between the spring and the Shiloah Pool is only 33 cm. Visitors can enter the tunnel and walk in the water to the Shiloah Pool.

The magnificent Shiloah Pool that was built during the reign of King Herod and parts of the pavement of the street along which the pilgrims ascended to the Temple Mount and the Temple have been uncovered in the city of David. A special experience is the walk through Jerusalem's ancient drainage channel, dating from the time of the Second Temple. The channel begins next to the Shiloah Pool, and it is possible to walk beneath it, underground, emerging in the archaeological garden next to the Western Wall.



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# Jerusalem story told by its gardens

ירושלים גנים סביב לה



## The Wall Builders Garden

**The Wall Builders Garden (Habonim Park) accompanies the walls of the Old City from Jaffa Gate eastwards. The garden adds to Jerusalem's walls and offers a spectacular view of the Valley of Hinnom and Jerusalem.**

The Wall Builders Garden is located at the western foothills of the Old City walls. The Garden extends over about 8 dunams and includes the remains of walls from various historical periods. The wall that borders the Garden (the "Armenian Wall") was preserved throughout the city's history, beginning with Hezekiah's Wall, built at the end of the First Temple Period. Those touring the Garden can identify seven periods depicted by the wall: the Hasmonean, Herodian, Byzantine, Fatimid, Crusader, Ayyubid, and Ottoman walls.

The walls surrounding the Old City were built during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (in the 16th century). The total length of the wall, which is built on earlier foundations, is 4.5 kilometers and it encloses one square kilometer (today's Old City). The wall is about 10 meters high and 2.5 meters wide. There

is a promenade along the top of the wall, which affords a unique view of the Old City.

At the foot of the garden lies the Valley of Hinnom, which is mentioned in the Bible as "the site of the inferno", a place where rituals were performed to worship the God Moloch. The prophet Jeremiah explicitly states that the ritual of Moloch included the offering of a human sacrifice (Jeremiah 7:31), but many commentators on the Bible, including Maimonides, claim that the children were only passed between bonfires, and were not harmed.

At the foot of the Garden is the Sultan's Pool. An ancient dam built in the Valley of Hinnom stopped the drainage of the valley and created a water reservoir behind it. This is probably the "pool of snakes" that was mentioned in the writings of Joseph ben Matityahu (Josephus), a historian from the Roman period. The Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent repaired the dam and the pool is now named after him. Cultural performances and events are held at the pool on summer evenings.

On the slope above the Sultan's Pool are the red roofs of the Yemin Moshe neighborhood. The neighborhood was founded in the 1890's and is named for Sir Moses Montefiore. Towers in all their splendor at the top of the hill are the King David Hotel; and the famous YMCA tower.

Near the Yemin Moshe neighborhood is the long building located to the left of Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first

neighborhood built outside the walls of the Old City. The neighborhood was founded in 1860 at the initiative of Moses Montefiore and built with the help of donations made by Yehuda Tura; it symbolizes the beginning of the period of the exit from the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. The houses in Mishkenot Sha'ananim have been renovated and are now used as a convention center, a music center and a guest house. The windmill, which was the symbol of the neighborhood, was built in 1857.

To the left of Mishkenot Sha'ananim is the Begin Heritage Center, and above it is the Scottish Church St. Andrews, which was built in 1927. Next to it is the Mount Zion Hotel, which is located in the historic building of St. John's English Hospital, built in 1882 as a place for the treatment of ocular diseases. The hospital operated until 1948. During the War of Independence, the building was at the center of a difficult battle and served as an outpost for the Haganah forces. A cable car was installed by the Haganah at the outpost, which carried a supply trolley over the Valley of Hinnom to the besieged Jewish quarter. The Cable Car Museum, which is in the Mt. Zion Hotel, tells the story of this special cable car.



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