

## Preserving a Source of Life

In late January 2016, we celebrate *Tu B'Shevat*—the Jewish new year of trees. Commemorating this celebration through the planting of trees provides us an opportunity to take concrete action and make the world a better place.

As many parts of the world—including several American states—face droughts and water shortages, protecting our water resources (on which trees and all life depend) must be a major priority in the twenty-first century.

Consider a few facts:

- The average American uses 100-176 gallons of water at home each day.
- 663 million (1 in 10) people worldwide lack access to safe water.
- 1/3 of all schools in the world lack access to safe water and adequate sanitation.<sup>1</sup>

To combat these growing challenges, Israel—the “startup nation”—is applying its cutting-edge innovation and entrepreneurial spirit toward pioneering water preservation technologies. The widespread planting of trees and an innovative use of water resulted in this amazing feat: Israel is the only country in the world with a receding desert.

In addition, the Jewish state now recycles a remarkable 85 percent of all its water—while 60 percent of all crops in Israel are irrigated with recycled urban wastewater.<sup>2</sup>

In his recent book, *Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World*, Seth M. Siegel explores Israel's water challenges, the innovations that led it to global prominence in water science and technology, and how the Jewish state can help the world adapt to and mitigate the effects of water-shortages worldwide. According to Siegel, the United States, Israel and the entire world can benefit immensely from increased U.S.-Israel cooperation in water preservation.

“Israel is being used as a model for countries all over the world as they grapple with water scarcity problems,” Siegel said in an [interview](#) with *Near East Report*. “Just as America has done so much to help Israel, Israel can do so much to help America assure itself of a secure, robust water future...I have no doubt that the U.S.-Israel partnership will deepen due to water-sharing technologies and practices.”

In 2014, Congress signed the [U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act](#), which calls for bilateral “improvement of energy efficiency and the overall performance of water technologies through research and development in water desalination, wastewater treatment and reclamation, and other water treatment refiners.”

To learn more about how the United States and Israel are partnering to improve global water deprivation and other environmental concerns, visit [www.aipac.org](http://www.aipac.org).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://water.org/water-crisis/water-sanitation-facts/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/Solutions-to-Californias-Water-Crisis-352348071.html>