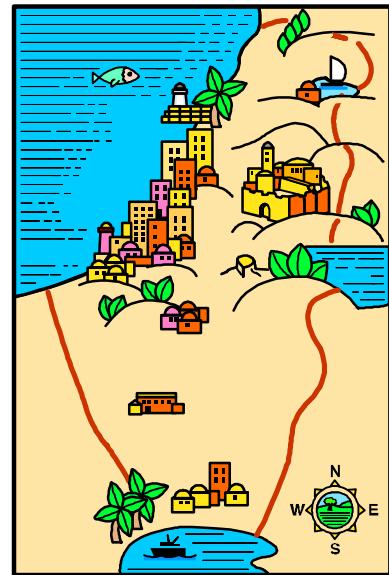


LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael
by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

ENOUGH TO BE THANKFUL FOR "DAYENU!"

This is the title of the most popular song of the Passover Seder, in which we enumerate the historical kindness bestowed on our people by our Creator. After mentioning each kindness — from the Exodus from Egypt to the building of the *Beis Hamikdash* — we declare in melodic fashion that any one of them would have been enough for us (*Dayenu*) to be thankful for. The final pair of this long list is arranged in a pattern which teaches an important lesson in our scale of values: "Had He given us the Torah and not brought us into *Eretz Yisrael* — it would have been enough." Torah without *Eretz Yisrael* is a viable formula for the fulfillment of our identity as a chosen people. For thousands of years Jews have preserved their identity in lands not their own. *Eretz Yisrael* without Torah, on the other hand, can degenerate into the empty nationalism of other peoples. Once we have the Torah, however, *Eretz Yisrael* becomes the ideal setting for the development of our spiritual potential, and the *Beis Habechira* — the house in Jerusalem chosen by Hashem as the dwelling place for His presence — becomes the sacred shrine for facilitating total development of our human potential to connect with our Creator. Today, when all Jews have the Torah and the opportunity to come to *Eretz Yisrael* — even if we have not yet merited having the *Beis Habechira* in our midst — we can joyously sing: *Dayenu!*



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