

The conventional wisdom said that this water -- laced with epsom salts and gypsum -- could never be used for agriculture.

But the conventional wisdom was wrong.

At Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, some of the world's most creative scientists and engineers have made an art form of challenging conventional wisdom.

And because of those ingenious scientists at Ben-Gurion University, we now know that with the bitter waters which lie beneath the desert, it is possible to nurture crops that will, in turn, sustain human life.

Crops like wheat...tomatoes...even watermelons and cucumbers.

All of them growing and flourishing in the so-called "worthless" desert.

And knowing beyond a doubt that the Negev is -- and always will be -- a home for the Jewish people.

The Negev is ours.

Without question, it is ours.

Without controversy, ours.

And because the indomitable pioneer spirit of Israel is alive and well and flourishing at Ben-Gurion University, we can look to the Negev as a source of healthy optimism about the long-term prospects of the Jewish State.

A dream?

Israel itself is a dream -- a dream which has become reality through sweat, toil and above all, through the practical application of human intelligence.

Making dreams into reality -- that is what Ben-Gurion University is all about.

- ** BGU researchers pioneered a technique for growing almond and pistachio trees on as little as two cups of water per year.
- ** BGU experts are working to domesticate, for the first time in history, valuable fruit and nut trees that now grow wild in deserts around the world.
- ** At BGU, veterinary scientists are working to make the camel the dairy cow of the desert. Camel milk is extremely nutritious -- and does not go sour.