



The Asper Foundation Inc.

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**The Asper Foundation Announces Major Gift
to the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem, Israel**

*Center to be a Living Testament to
a Man of Courage and Vision*

WINNIPEG, MB. – *February 25, 2002* –The Asper Foundation is very pleased to announce a gift of \$1,000,000 Cdn. towards the capital campaign and Graduate Student Scholarship Program of the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Israel. Already under construction in Jerusalem, the country's capital, the Menachem Begin Heritage Center is one of the major program initiatives of The Menachem Begin Heritage Foundation.

The objective of the Foundation is to perpetuate the thoughts, deeds and achievements of Prime Minister Menachem Begin as representative of a major part of the Jewish experience of the 20th century. The 65,000 sq. ft., four-story complex will house the Begin Archives and Library, the Begin Museum, the Begin Research Institute and lecture halls and video screening rooms.

“As arguably Israel's greatest Prime Minister and one of the great statesmen in world history, it is indeed an honour for The Asper Foundation to play a primary role in making this gift to the Menachem Begin Heritage Center as a lasting tribute to this most gifted man”, said Dr. Israel Asper, Founder and President of The Asper Foundation.

The Begin Archives and Library will house documents, letter, speeches, videotapes, conference minutes, interviews and audiotapes related to Prime Minister Begin's life. The Begin Museum will employ cutting edge technology to portray every facet of Begin's life, work and accomplishments. A special section will be devoted to the life of his wife Aliza Begin.

Mr. Harry Hurwitz, Head of the Menachem Begin Heritage Center commented, “We are honoured that The Asper Foundation is making this important contribution to help ensure the legacy of Menachem Begin lives on in perpetuity. Whether as a gifted and charismatic orator, head of Betar in Poland, organizer of protests against the British blockade in Palestine, commander of the Irgun Tzeva'i Le'umi, founder of the Herut Movement in Israel, parliamentarian, Israel's sixth Prime Minister from 1977-1983, fighter of the scourge of Arab terrorism, leader of a national campaign for the right of Soviet Jews' repatriation in Israel, leader of the evacuation of the Ethiopian Jewish community or having the courage to achieve a peace agreement with Egypt

and receiving the Nobel Peace Prize with President Anwar Sadat, Prime Minister Menachem Begin serves as a beacon of inspiration not only to Jews but to all those who strive for excellence and yearn for peace.”

The Begin Research Institute will be a dynamic place where scholars will study, record and publish on topics such as Striving for Freedom, Peace and International Understanding, Project Renewal: Impacting Socio-Economic Change, The Ethics of Governance and Begin’s View of Judaism. The lecture halls and video screening rooms will be a meeting place for visiting groups, especially soldiers, students and schoolchildren.

“Prime Minister Begin's most outstanding life achievement was the signing of the Peace Treaty with Egypt. It proved that Israel was willing and able, as difficult as it was, to withdraw from land that it had acquired through defensive measures. It also demonstrated that Israel supported the establishment of Palestinian autonomy in exchange for peace. The Menachem Begin Heritage Center will celebrate the vision of a man who was courageous to know the importance and meaning of sacrifice”, Dr. Asper added.

Mr. Hurwitz observed “The Menachem Begin Heritage Center will also recognize the importance of achieving peace through standing by one’s convictions even in the face of opposition. Given the scourge of Arab terrorism in the world today, Prime Minister Begin was prescient in ordering the Israel Air Force to destroy the nuclear reactor in Osirak near Baghdad, Iraq, in 1981 shortly before it was to become operative. The international community at the time condemned the action. However, the wisdom of this decision became quite obvious a decade later - in the 1991 Gulf War. This wisdom is even more apparent today given the tragedy of the events of September 11, 2001 and beyond.

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