

# Atmosphere

Issue 234 | February 2018

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## The Other Side of the Coin

A new book casts light on Israeli-Chinese relations and presents an interesting and different angle on the economic relationship between the two countries. Writer Lionel Friedfeld, believes that there's a connection between the strategic relationship and their spiritual and cultural affinity / **Joel Tzafrir**

**Book**

There's almost no precedent to the speed and power at which diplomatic and economic ties between Israel and China have developed in the 25 years since the two countries established diplomatic relations. Bilateral trade now amounts to about \$8 billion, and tourism and investment have increased at a rapid rate. The Chinese have made large investments in Israel – in infrastructure projects, and more recently, with capital investments in technology initiatives. Israeli's, on the other hand, see China as a gigantic market which can, to some extent, balance their dependence on their two principal markets in the U.S.

and Europe. China is hungry for Israeli innovation, in keeping with the emphasis placed upon it in Chinese President Xi Jinping's 13th, five-year plan.

### From the ancient to the new Silk Road

Israel and China: From Silk Road to Innovation Highway, a new book by Lionel Friedfeld (together with Philip Metoudi) paints a fascinating picture that digs deep in history. It indicates that Israeli-Chinese ties can be traced back to the Jewish communities that existed in China in the early 2nd century C.E., when Jewish merchants made significant contributions

to the establishment of the Silk Road, the main axis connecting Asia and Europe at the time. The book consists of three parts. The first focuses on the historical background of relations between the two nations, zeroing in on the important role Jewish merchants played in China's commerce with the outside world and the establishment of Jewish villages along the ancient Silk Road. The second part is all business and practicality, explaining Israel's importance to China, due both to its innovation and its strategic location. It discusses the Belt and Road Action Plan, an ambitious initiative aimed at reviving the Silk Road as a commercial connection between China and the world. The Chinese have promised to invest \$124 billion in the plan to bring that historic commercial passageway back to life for trade with the rest of Asia, Europe and Africa. The third section deals with cultural relations. The authors were inspired by Israel Prize laureate winner and Chabad Hassid Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, whose works draw a connection between the Chinese and Jewish cultures.

### Complimentary economies

Lionel Friedfeld is an international investment banker with a great deal of experience in various branches of finance and investment, especially in technology, telecommunications and space. Not only is he a prolific writer and lecturer about investment in the age of technology, his life also







**Or Lamishpachot**  
(Lights for Families)  
- Choosing Life -

**The non profit organization Or Lamishpachot was founded in 2008 with the objective of fortifying, uplifting and empowering parents who lost their children in the battle for the State of Israel.**

Or Lamishpachot offers parents empowering experiences and sets active engagement and non-routine activities in motion. The organization does not have offices and is not supported by any governmental entity.

The NPO's chair and founder, Lieutenant Colonel (res.) Irit Орен Gunders carries out her work in the NPO on a purely voluntary basis.

Or Lamishpachot generated a revolution in the perception of bereavement in Israel and received the Presidential Volunteer Medal for 2013. This important work is made possible by the generous support of donors and volunteers.

Currently, thousands of parents, members of Or Lamishpachot, draw strength from the organization and choose life.

**Your contribution is important to us.  
Please help us light up deserving hearts.**

Have a pleasant flight

**Contributions:**

**Bank Otsar HaHayal, Reut Branch, 345, Account Number 566149  
Or Lamishpachot, P.O. Box 1336 Maccabim Reut, postal code: 7179902  
Donations call center: \*2624 | Website: [www.or-family.com](http://www.or-family.com)**

"This tune cannot be stopped"  
The tune of your giving  
has moved our hearts again  
and wakened our joy.  
**Miriam Peretz**  
Mother of 1st Lt Oriel,  
November 1998,  
Major Eliraz, March 2010

Dear Irit and Shlomo!  
Everybody asks us, the "strong"  
families – where we find our  
strength. And I say from people like  
yourselves.  
**Dalia Emanueloff, mother of SSG  
Dvir,**  
who fell during Operation Cast  
Lead, January 2009

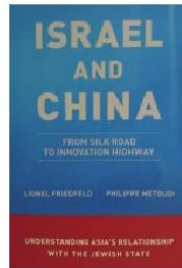
You did it again.  
Once again you elevated us, like a  
family, from the depths of despair back  
to the land of the living.  
I am happy in the knowledge that Guy  
and his friends know that we have not  
been forsaken and that thanks to people  
like you, they did not die in vain.  
**Liora and Yanka'le Hason**  
Parents of ISG (res.) Guy,  
Second Lebanon War



Irit, founder and chair of Or Lamishpachot receiving the Presidential Volunteer Medal from the Ninth President of the State of Israel, the late Mr. Shimon Peres.



A fortifying and empowering mother's get-together



▶▶▶ exemplifies the age of globalization. Born in France to a Jewish family whose origins trace back to Spain and Morocco, he studied in Canada, worked for years in Asia – mostly in Hong Kong, and now lives in Israel. He has academic degrees from McGill University in Montreal and the Sorbonne in Paris, the latter in Financial Engineering. He now heads the AF fund, which assists Asian companies in making strategic technology investments in Israel.

**What initiated the book on Israel and China?**

"My work involves Chinese investments in Israel and Israeli investments in China. I became an expert in the field and was flooded with questions about it. I saw that there was great interest from the business communities in both countries to understand the other side, so I decided to write a book. It was written in English, but translations into French and Chinese became best sellers in Hong Kong. The book emphasizes that both countries are active players on the global scene, and that their economies compliment

each other – Israel due to its technology, China for its economic depth and industrial capacity."

**The book emphasizes the cultural- spiritual connection between the two countries. Why is that important for business relationships, which are based on economics?**

"First of all, historical background influences what is happening now; for example, the respect that the Chinese have for Jews and their heritage. Understanding of the historical background provides a unique angle for comprehending the forces behind the current relationship of the two states. Beyond that, I feel that there's a strong connection between doing business and culture. Cultural background often serves to explain a nation's economic accomplishments. Both have a lot in common, for example the emphasis on family and the ethical value of hard work. But there are also many gaps between the two cultures. Being aware of the similarities and differences may help both sides find the business opportunities that exist on the Israel-China axis." ➔