

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR OF
*FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM AND
LONGITUDES AND ATTITUDES*

THE LEXUS AND THE OLIVE TREE

NEWLY UPDATED AND EXPANDED EDITION

3

The Lexus and the Olive Tree



Jerusalem, December 29, 1998: Shimon Biton places his cellular phone up to the Western Wall so a relative in France can say a prayer at the holy site (*Photograph by Menahem Kahana, Agence France-Presse*)

Once you recognize that globalization is the international system that has replaced the Cold War system, is this all you need to know to explain world affairs today? Not quite. Globalization is what is new. And if the world were made of just microchips and markets, you could probably rely on globalization to explain almost everything. But, alas, the world is made of microchips and markets and men and women, with all their peculiar habits, traditions, longings and unpredictable aspirations. So world affairs today can only be explained as the interaction between what is as new as an Internet Web site and what is as

old as a gnarled olive tree on the banks of the river Jordan. I first started thinking about this while riding on a train in Japan in May 1992, eating a sushi box dinner and traveling at 180 miles per hour.

I was in Tokyo on a reporting assignment and had arranged to visit the Lexus luxury car factory outside Toyota City, south of Tokyo. It was one of the most memorable tours I've ever taken. At that time, the factory was producing 300 Lexus sedans each day, made by 66 human beings and 310 robots. From what I could tell, the human beings were there mostly for quality control. Only a few of them were actually screwing in bolts or soldering parts together. The robots were doing all the work. There were even robotic trucks that hauled materials around the floor and could sense when a human was in their path and would "beep, beep, beep" at them to move. I was fascinated watching the robot that applied the rubber seal that held in place the front windshield of each Lexus. The robot arm would neatly paint the hot molten rubber in a perfect rectangle around the window. But what I liked most was that when it finished its application there was always a tiny drop of rubber left hanging from the tip of the robot's finger—like the drop of toothpaste that might be left at the top of the tube after you've squeezed it onto your toothbrush. At the Lexus factory, though, this robot arm would swing around in a wide loop until the tip met a tiny, almost invisible metal wire that would perfectly slice off that last small drop of hot black rubber—leaving nothing left over. I kept staring at this process, thinking to myself how much planning, design and technology it must have taken to get that robot arm to do its job and then swing around each time, at the precise angle, so that this little thumbnail-size wire could snip off the last drop of hot rubber for the robot to start clean on the next window. I was impressed.

After touring the factory, I went back to Toyota City and boarded the bullet train for the ride back to Tokyo. The bullet train is aptly named, for it has both the look and feel of a speeding bullet. As I nibbled away on one of those sushi dinner boxes you can buy in any Japanese train station, I was reading that day's *International Herald Tribune*, and a story caught my eye on the top right corner of page 3. It was about the daily State Department briefing. State Department spokeswoman Margaret D. Tutwiler had given a controversial interpretation of a 1948 United Nations resolution, relating to the right of return for Palestinian refugees

to Israel. I don't remember all the details, but whatever her interpretation was, it had clearly agitated both the Arabs and the Israelis and sparked a furor in the Middle East, which this story was reporting.

So there I was speeding along at 180 miles an hour on the most modern train in the world, reading this story about the oldest corner of the world. And the thought occurred to me that these Japanese, whose Lexus factory I had just visited and whose train I was riding, were building the greatest luxury car in the world with robots. And over here, on the top of page 3 of the *Herald Tribune*, the people with whom I had lived for so many years in Beirut and Jerusalem, whom I knew so well, were still fighting over who owned which olive tree. It struck me then that the Lexus and the olive tree were actually pretty good symbols of this post-Cold War era: half the world seemed to be emerging from the Cold War intent on building a better Lexus, dedicated to modernizing, streamlining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization. And half of the world—sometimes half the same country, sometimes half the same person—was still caught up in the fight over who owns which olive tree.

Olive trees are important. They represent everything that roots us, anchors us, identifies us and locates us in this world—whether it be belonging to a family, a community, a tribe, a nation, a religion or, most of all, a place called home. Olive trees are what give us the warmth of family, the joy of individuality, the intimacy of personal rituals, the depth of private relationships, as well as the confidence and security to reach out and encounter others. We fight so intensely at times over our olive trees because, at their best, they provide the feelings of self-esteem and belonging that are as essential for human survival as food in the belly. Indeed, one reason that the nation-state will never disappear, even if it does weaken, is because it is the ultimate olive tree—the ultimate expression of whom we belong to—linguistically, geographically and historically. You cannot be a complete person alone. You can be a rich person alone. You can be a smart person alone. But you cannot be a complete person alone. For that you must be part of, and rooted in, an olive grove.

This truth was once beautifully conveyed by Rabbi Harold S. Kushner in his interpretation of a scene from Gabriel García Márquez's classic novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*:

Márquez tells of a village where people were afflicted with a strange plague of forgetfulness, a kind of contagious amnesia. Starting with the oldest inhabitants and working its way through the population, the plague causes people to forget the names of even the most common everyday objects. One young man, still unaffected, tries to limit the damage by putting labels on everything. "This is a table," "This is a window," "This is a cow; it has to be milked every morning." And at the entrance to the town, on the main road, he puts up two large signs. One reads "The name of our village is Macondo," and the larger one reads "God exists." The message I get from that story is that we can, and probably will, forget most of what we have learned in life—the math, the history, the chemical formulas, the address and phone number of the first house we lived in when we got married—and all that forgetting will do us no harm. But if we forget whom we belong to, and if we forget that there is a God, something profoundly human in us will be lost.

But while olive trees are essential to our very being, an attachment to one's olive trees, when taken to excess, can lead us into forging identities, bonds and communities based on the exclusion of others. And when these obsessions really run amok, as with the Nazis in Germany, or the murderous Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan or the Serbs in Yugoslavia, they lead to the extermination of others.

Conflicts between Serbs and Muslims, Jews and Palestinians, Armenians and Azeris over who owns which olive tree are so venomous precisely because they are about who will be at home and anchored in a local world and who will not be. Their underlying logic is: I must control this olive tree, because if the other controls it, not only will I be economically and politically under his thumb, but my whole sense of home will be lost. I'll never be able to take my shoes off and relax. Few things are more enraging to people than to have their identity or their sense of home stripped away. They will die for it, kill for it, sing for it, write poetry for it and novelize about it. Because without a sense of home and belonging, life becomes barren and rootless. And life as a tumbleweed is no life at all.

So then what does the Lexus represent? It represents an equally fundamental, age-old human drive—the drive for sustenance,

improvement, prosperity and modernization—as it is played out in today's globalization system. The Lexus represents all the burgeoning global markets, financial institutions and computer technologies with which we pursue higher living standards today.

Of course, for millions of people in developing countries, the quest for material improvement still involves walking to a well, subsisting on a dollar a day, plowing a field barefoot behind an ox or gathering wood and carrying it on their heads for five miles. These people still upload for a living, not download. But for millions of others in developed countries, this quest for material betterment and modernization is increasingly conducted in Nike shoes, shopping in integrated markets and using the new network technologies. The point is that while different people have different access to the new markets and technologies that characterize the globalization system, and derive highly unequal benefits from them, this doesn't change the fact that these markets and technologies are the defining economic tools of the day and everyone is either directly or indirectly affected by them.

The Lexus versus the olive tree, though, is just a modern version of a very old story—indeed one of the oldest stories in recorded history—the story of why Cain slew Abel. The Hebrew Bible says in Genesis: "Cain said to his brother Abel; And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' And the Lord said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.' "

If you read this paragraph closely you notice that the Hebrew Bible never tells us what Cain actually said to Abel. The sentence reads that "Cain said to his brother Abel," and then it just stops. We are not privy to the conversation. What happened in the conversation between them that got Cain so angry that he would actually kill his brother Abel? My theology teacher, Rabbi Tzvi Marx, taught me that the rabbinic sages in Genesis Rabbah, one of the fundamental rabbinic commentaries on the Bible, give three basic explanations of what was said. One is that the two brothers were arguing about a woman—Eve. After all, there was only one woman on earth at the time, their mother, and they were arguing over which brother would get to marry her. They were arguing over sexual fulfillment and procreation. Another interpretation posits that Cain and

Abel had basically divided up the world between them. Cain had all the real estate—or as the Bible says, “Cain became a tiller of the soil”—and Abel had all the movables and livestock—“Abel became a keeper of sheep.” And according to this interpretation, Cain told Abel to get his sheep off Cain’s property and this triggered a fight over territory that eventually ended with Cain slaying Abel in the heat of the argument. They were fighting over economic development and material fulfillment. The third interpretation is that the two brothers had already neatly divided everything in the world between them, except one critical thing that was still up for grabs: Where would the Temple be built that would reflect their particular religious and cultural identity? Each wanted to control that Temple and have it reflect his identity. Each wanted the Temple in his olive grove. They were fighting over the issue of identity and which of them would be the keeper of their family’s source of legitimacy. So, the rabbis noted, all the basic elements of human motivation are potentially there in one story: the need for sexual intimacy, the need for sustenance and the need for a sense of identity and community. I will leave matters of sex for somebody else. This book is about the other two.

That’s why I like to say that information arbitrage provides the lenses we need to look into today’s world, but lenses alone are not enough. We also need to know what we are looking at and for. And what we are looking at and for is how the age-old quests for material betterment and for individual and communal identity—which go all the way back to Genesis—play themselves out in today’s dominant international system of globalization. This is the drama of the Lexus and the olive tree.

In the Cold War system, the most likely threat to your olive tree was from another olive tree. It was from your neighbor coming over, violently digging up your olive tree and planting his in its place. That threat has not been eliminated today, but, for the moment, it has been diminished in many parts of the world. The biggest threat today to your olive tree is likely to come from the Lexus—from all the anonymous, transnational, homogenizing, standardizing market forces and technologies that make up today’s globalizing economic system. There are some things about this system that can make the Lexus so overpowering it can over-run and overwhelm every olive tree in sight—breaking down commun-

ties, steamrolling environments and crowding out traditions—and this can produce a real olive tree backlash. But there are other things about this system that empower even the smallest, weakest political community to actually use the new technologies and markets to preserve their olive trees, their culture and identity. Traveling the world in recent years, again and again I have come on this simultaneous wrestling match, tug-of-war, balancing act between the Lexus and the olive tree.

The Lexus and olive tree wrestling with each other in the new system of globalization was reflected in Norway’s 1994 referendum about whether or not to join the European Union. That should have been a slam dunk for Norwegians. After all, Norway is in Europe. It is a rich, developed country and it has a significant amount of intra-European trade. Joining the EU made all the economic sense in the world for Norway in a world of increasing globalization. But the referendum failed, because too many Norwegians felt joining the EU would mean uprooting too much of their own Norwegian identity and way of life, which, thanks to Norwegian North Sea oil (sold into a global economy), the Norwegians could still afford to preserve—without EU membership. Many Norwegians looked at the EU and said to themselves, “Now let me get this straight. I am supposed to take my Norwegian identity and deposit it into a Euro-Cuisinart, where it will be turned into Euromush by Eurobureaucrats paid in Eurodollars at the Euro-Parliament in the Eurocapital covered by Eurojournalists? Hey, no, thanks. I’d rather be Sten from Norway. I’d rather cling to my own unique olive tree identity and be a little less efficient economically.”

The olive tree backlashing against the Lexus is the August 1999 story from France, by *The Washington Post*’s Anne Swardson, about Philippe Folliot, the mayor of the southwestern French village of St. Pierre-de-Trivisy—population 610. Folliot and the St. Pierre-de-Trivisy town council slapped a 100-percent tax on bottles of Coca-Cola sold at the town’s camp ground, in retaliation for a tariff that the United States had slapped on Roquefort cheese, which is produced only in the southwestern French region around St. Pierre-de-Trivisy. As he applied some Roquefort to a piece of crusty bread, Folliot told Swardson, “Roquefort is made from the milk of only one breed of sheep, it is made in only one place in France, and it is made in only one special way. It is the opposite of globalization. Coca-Cola you can buy anywhere in the world and it is

exactly the same. [Coke] is a symbol of the American multinational that wants to uniformize taste all over the planet. That's what we are against."

The Lexus and the olive tree in a healthy balance was the story related to me by Glenn Prickett, a senior vice president at the environmental group Conservation International, about when he visited the Kayapo Indian village of Aukre, which is located in a remote corner of the Brazilian Amazon rain forest reached only by small-engine plane. "Touching down on the grass landing strip we were met by the entire village in traditional dress—and undress—and painted faces, with a smattering of American baseball caps bearing random logos," recalled Prickett. "I was there with Conservation International to inspect the progress of a biological research station we were running upriver with the Kayapo. The Kayapo have defended a large chunk of intact Amazon for centuries through sheer force. Now they are learning to protect it through alliances with international scientists, conservationists and socially conscious businesspeople. Their village has a little main street with a Conservation International store and a branch of the Body Shop, the ecoconscious soap makers. So after a two-day stay at the biological research station, we came back to the village to do a final bit of business. We had arranged for an open-air market of Kayapo culture, artifacts, baskets, war clubs, spears and bows and arrows to be set up. Then our group proceeded to buy all of it for very steep prices in U.S. dollars. We then went and sat in the men's hut in the center of this Kayapo village, which could have come out of prehistory. While sitting in this hut with the leading men of the village, I noticed that they were all watching a single TV connected to a large satellite dish. The men were flipping the channel back and forth between a Brazilian soccer match and a business channel that carried the running price of gold on world markets. The Kayapo men wanted to be sure that they were charging the small miners, whom they let dig on the edges of their rain-forest property, the going international rate for whatever gold they found. They then used these profits earned on the world gold market to protect their own unique lifestyle in the middle of the Amazon rain forest."

The Lexus struggling with the olive tree was a scene I witnessed at NATO headquarters in Brussels. I was sitting on a couch in the lobby waiting for an appointment. Nearby was a lady Russian journalist speaking Russian into her cell phone. But what struck me most was

fact that she was walking in circles next to the Coke machine, underneath a television tuned to CNN that was broadcasting the surprise entry of Russian troops into Pristina, Kosovo—ahead of NATO forces. A Russian journalist, circling the Coke machine, under the CNN screen, speaking Russian into a cell phone, in NATO headquarters, while Kosovo burned—my mind couldn't contain all the contradictions.

The Lexus being exploited by the olive tree was the report in *The Economist* of August 14, 1999, entitled "Cyberthugs." It stated that "The National Criminal Intelligence Service blamed the increasingly sophisticated nature of football hooligans for the organized violence last weekend between fans of Millwall and Cardiff City. Rival bands of thugs are apparently prepared to cooperate by fixing venues for fights via the Internet. Information is exchanged in closed or open Websites. Some even report the violence as it happens: 'It's kicking off right now as I speak,' wrote Paul Dodd, a particularly dopey hooligan known to cyber nerds and police alike. The police now say they surf for such Websites, hoping to discover other planned attacks."

West Side Story meets the World Wide Web.

The olive tree exploiting the Lexus is the story that came to light in the summer of 1999 about Adolf Hitler's racist manifesto *Mein Kampf*, which is banned in Germany by the German government. You cannot sell it in any German bookstore, or publish it in Germany. But Germans found that they could order the book over the Internet from Amazon.com and it would come in the mail in a way that the German government was powerless to stop. Indeed, so many Germans ordered *Mein Kampf* from Amazon.com that in the summer of 1999 Hitler made Amazon.com's top-ten bestseller list for Germany. Amazon.com at first refused to stop shipping *Mein Kampf* to Germany, insisting that the English translation was not covered by censorship, and that it was not going to get in the business of deciding what its customers were allowed to read. However, after this was publicized, Amazon.com was so bombarded with angry E-mails from all over the world that it stopped selling Hitler's works.

The olive tree trumping the Lexus, and then the Lexus then coming right back to trump the olive tree, was the nuclear-testing saga that unfolded in India in the late 1990s. In the spring of 1998 India's newly elected nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) decided to defy the world and resume testing its nuclear weapons. Asserting India's right to

test had been a key plank in the BJP's election campaign. I visited India shortly after the tests, where I talked to rich and poor, government and nongovernment types, villagers and city slickers. I kept waiting to meet the Indian who would say to me, "You know, these nuclear tests were really stupid. We didn't get any additional security out of them and they've really cost us with sanctions." I am sure that sentiment was there—but I couldn't find anyone to express it. Even those Indian politicians who denounced their nuclear tests as a cheap, jingoistic maneuver by India's new Hindu nationalist government would tell you that these tests were the only way for India to get what it wants most from the United States and China: R-E-S-P-E-C-T. I finally realized the depth of this sentiment when I went to see a saffron-robed Indian human rights campaigner, Swami Agnivesh. As the two of us sat cross-legged on the floor of his living room in his simple Delhi home, I thought, "Surely he will disavow this test." But no sooner did we start talking than he declared to me: "We are India, the second-largest country in the world! You can't just take us for granted. India doesn't feel threatened by Pakistan, but in the whole international game India is being marginalized by the China-U.S. axis." The next day I went out to Dasna, a village north of New Delhi, where I randomly stopped shopkeepers to talk. Dasna is one of the poorest places I have ever seen. Nobody seemed to have shoes. Everyone seemed to be skin and bones. There were more water buffalo and bicycles than cars on the road. The air was heavy with the smell of cow dung used for energy. But they loved their government's nuclear sound-and-light show. "We are nine hundred million people. We will not die from these sanctions," pronounced Pramod Batra, the forty-two-year-old village doctor in Dasna. "This nuclear test was about self-respect and self-respect is more important than roads, electricity and water. Any way, what did we do? We exploded our bomb. It was like shooting a gun off into the air. We didn't hurt anybody."

But while India's olive tree impulse seemed to have prevailed over its needs for a Lexus, when this happens in today's globalization system there is always a hidden long-term price. While in New Delhi, I stayed at the Oberoi Hotel, where I swam laps in the pool at the end of each day to recover from the sweltering 100-degree heat. My first day there, while I was doing my breaststrokes, there was an Indian woman also swimming laps in the lane next to me. During a rest stop we started talking and she

told me she ran the India office of Salomon Brothers-Smith Barney, the major American investment bank. I told her I was a columnist who had come over to write about the fallout from the Indian nuclear tests.

"Have you heard who's in town?" she asked me as we each trod water. "No," I said, shaking my head. "Who's in town?"

"Moody's," she said. Moody's Investors Service is the international credit-rating agency which rates economies, with grades of A, B and C, so that global investors know who is pursuing sound economics and who is not, and if your economy gets a lower rating it means you will have to pay higher interest rates for international loans. "Moody's has sent a team over to re-rate the Indian economy," she said.

"Have you heard anything about what they decided?"

No, I hadn't, I replied.

"You might want to check," she said, and swam away.

I did check. It turned out that the Moody's team had moved around New Delhi almost as quietly and secretly as India's nuclear scientists had prepared their bomb. I couldn't find out anything about their decisions, but the night I left India, I was listening to the evening news when the fourth item caught my ear. It said that in reaction to the Indian government's new bloated, directionless budget, and in the wake of the Indian nuclear tests and the U.S. sanctions imposed on India for blowing off some nukes, Moody's had downgraded India's economy from "investment grade," which meant it was safe for global investors, to "speculative grade," which meant it was risky. The Standard & Poor's rating agency also changed its outlook on the Indian economy from "stable" to "negative." This meant that any Indian company trying to borrow money from international markets would have to pay higher interest. And because India has a low savings rate, those foreign funds are crucial for a country that needs \$500 billion in new infrastructure over the next decade in order to be competitive.

So yes, the olive tree had had its day in India. But when it pushes out like that in the system of globalization, there is always a price to pay. You can't escape the system. Sooner or later the Lexus always catches up with you. A year and a half after India's nuclear test, I picked up *The Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 7, 1999) to read the following headline: "India's BJP Is Shifting Priority to the Economy." The story noted that the BJP came to power some two years earlier "calling for India to assert its nuclear

capability—a pledge it fulfilled two months later with a series of weapons tests that sparked global sanctions and stalled investment.” Upon its reelection, though, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wasn’t even waiting for the votes to be counted before signaling his new priority: economic reform. “The priority is to build a national consensus on the acceptance of global capital, market norms and whatever goes with it. You have to go out and compete for investments,” Vajpayee told the *Indian Express* newspaper.

An example of the Lexus and olive tree forces in balance was the Gulf Air flight I took from Bahrain to London, on which the television monitor on my Business Class seat included a channel which, using a global positioning satellite (GPS) linked into the airplane’s antenna, showed passengers exactly where the plane was in relation to the Muslim holy city of Mecca at all times. The screen displayed a diagram of the aircraft with a white dot that moved around the diagram as the plane changed directions. This enabled Muslim passengers, who are enjoined to pray five times a day facing toward Mecca, to always know which way to face inside the plane when they unrolled their prayer rugs. During the flight, I saw several passengers near me wedge into the galley to perform their prayer rituals, and thanks to the GPS system, they knew just which way to aim.

The Lexus ignoring the olive tree in the era of globalization was a computer part that a friend of mine sent me. On the back was written “This part was made in Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, China, Mexico, Germany, the U.S., Thailand, Canada and Japan. It was made in so many different places that we cannot specify a country of origin.”

The Lexus trumping the olive tree in the era of globalization was the small item that appeared in the August 11, 1997, edition of *Sports Illustrated*. It said: “The 38-year-old Welsh soccer club Llansantffraid has changed its name to ‘Total Network Solutions’ in exchange for \$400,000 from a cellular phone company.”

The Lexus and olive tree working together in the era of globalization was on display in a rather unusual *Washington Times* story of September 21, 1997, which reported that Russian counterintelligence officers were complaining about having to pay twice as much to recruit a CIA spy as a double agent than the other way around. An official of Russia’s Feder-

Security Service (the successor to the KGB), speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Itar-Tass news agency that a Russian spy could be bought for a mere \$1 million, while CIA operatives held out for \$2 million to work for the other side.

At roughly the same time that this report appeared, Israel’s *Yediot Aharonot* newspaper published what seemed to me to be the first-ever totally free-market intelligence scoop. *Yediot* editors went to Moscow and bought some Russian spy satellite photographs of new Scud missile bases in Syria. Then *Yediot* hired a private U.S. expert on satellite photos to analyze the pictures. Then *Yediot* published the whole package as a scoop about Syria’s new missile threat, without ever having once quoted a government official. Who needs Deep Throat when you have deep pockets?

Finally, my favorite “Lexus trumps olive tree in the era of globalization” story is about Abu Jihad’s son. I was attending the Middle East Economic Summit in Amman, Jordan, in 1995, and was having lunch by myself on the balcony of the Amman Marriott. Out of the blue, a young Arab man approached my table and asked, “Are you Tom Friedman?” I said yes.

“Mr. Friedman,” the young man continued politely, “you knew my father.”

“Who was your father?” I asked.

“My father was Abu Jihad.”

Abu Jihad, whose real name was Khalil al-Wazir, was one of the Palestinians who, with Yasser Arafat, founded el-Fatah and later took over the Palestine Liberation Organization. Abu Jihad, meaning “father of struggle,” was his nom de guerre, and he was the overall commander of Palestinian military operations in Lebanon and the West Bank in the days when I was the *New York Times* correspondent in Beirut. I got to know him in Beirut. Palestinians considered him a military hero; Israelis considered him one of the most dangerous Palestinian terrorists. An Israeli hit team assassinated Abu Jihad in his living room in Tunis on April 16, 1988, pumping a hundred bullets into his body.

“Yes, I knew your father very well—I once visited your home in Damascus,” I told the young man. “What do you do?”

He handed me his business card. It read: “Jihad al-Wazir, Managing Director, World Trade Center, Gaza, Palestine.”

I read that card and thought to myself, "That's amazing. From Jesus James to Michael Milken in one generation."

The challenge in this era of globalization—for countries and individuals—is to find a healthy balance between preserving a sense of identity, home and community and doing what it takes to survive within the globalization system. Any society that wants to thrive economically today must constantly be trying to build a better Lexus and driving it out into the world. But no one should have any illusions that merely participating in this global economy will make a society healthy. If that participation comes at the price of a country's identity, if individuals feel their olive tree roots crushed, or washed out, by this global system, those olive tree roots will rebel. They will rise up and strangle the process. Therefore the survival of globalization as a system will depend, in part, on how well all of us strike this balance. A country without healthy olive trees will never feel rooted or secure enough to open up fully to the world and reach out into it. But a country that is only olive trees, that is only roots and has no Lexus, will never go, or grow, very far. Keeping the two in balance is a constant struggle.

Maybe that's why of the many stories you will read in this book my favorite comes from my old college friend Victor Friedman, who teaches business management at the Ruppin Institute in Israel. I telephoned him one day to say hello and he told me he was glad that I called because he no longer had my phone numbers. When I asked why, he explained that he no longer had his handheld computer, in which he kept everything—his friends' addresses, E-mail addresses, phone numbers and his schedule for the next two years. He then told me what happened to it.

"We had a [desktop] computer at home that broke down. I took it to be repaired at a computer shop in Hadera [a town in central Israel]. A couple weeks later the shop called and said my PC was repaired. So I tossed my palm computer into my leather briefcase and drove over to Hadera to pick up my repaired PC. I left the shop carrying the big PC computer and my briefcase, which had my palm computer inside. When I got to the car, I put my briefcase down on the sidewalk, opened the trunk of my car and very carefully placed my repaired PC in the trunk to make sure that it was secure. Then I got in the car and drove off, leaving

my briefcase on the sidewalk. Well, as soon as I got to my office and looked for my briefcase I realized what had happened—and what was going to happen next—and I immediately called the Hadera police to tell them 'Don't blow up my briefcase.' [It is standard Israeli police practice to blow apart any package, briefcase or suspicious object left on a sidewalk, because this is how many Palestinian bombs against Israeli civilians have been set off. Israelis are so well trained to protect against this that if you leave a package for a minute, the police will already have been called.] I knew no one would steal the briefcase. In Israel, a thief wouldn't touch such an object left on the sidewalk. But I was too late. The police dispatcher told me that the bomb squad was already on the scene and had 'dealt with it.' When I got to the police station they handed me back my beautiful leather briefcase with a nice neat bullet hole right through the middle. The only thing it hurt was my handheld computer. My Genius OP9300 took a direct hit. My whole life was in that thing and I had never made a backup. I told the police I felt terrible for causing such a problem, and they said, 'Don't feel bad, it happens to everyone.' For weeks I walked around campus with my briefcase with the bullet hole in it to remind myself to stop and think more often. Most of my management students are in the Israeli Army and as soon as they saw the briefcase and that bullet hole they would immediately crack up laughing, because they knew just what had happened."

After Victor finished telling me this story, he said, "By the way, send me your E-mail address. I need to start a new address book."