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DEAL OR NO DEAL

By Shani Sorko-Ram Ferguson

The latest attempt at achieving the impossible dream of peace between Jews and their Arab cousins was submitted just over a month ago by U.S. President Donald Trump. While discussions of peace have been going on almost non-stop since Israel's rebirth in 1948, actual sit-downs that led to signed agreements have been few. Therefore, it would first be worth trying to grasp the gravity of taking on this noble task.

Since I was born in Israel some 40 years ago, there have been two prime ministers – Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon – who gave land to the Palestinians in hopes of receiving peace in return. Both prime ministers would be removed from their post within months.

The Kabbalah Curse

I was a teenager when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was murdered in 1995. Over half of the nation didn't like him for signing the Oslo Accords with then-President Bill Clinton and PLO leader Yasser Arafat. This agreement gave large parts of Judea and Samaria (West Bank) away as an initial stage of a roadmap to peace. Years prior, Arafat and his Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had been kicked out of Jordan because they were such a menace to the country. After stirring up terrible chaos in Lebanon, Israel succeeded in forcing them out of that country, too.

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Unfortunately, with no place left to go, Arafat would plant his PLO headquarters in the West Bank and torment Israel for the rest of his life. He became known as the father of modern-day terrorism to some – and an ignominious savior to the Palestinian people to others. In the end, it wasn't his violence that got Arafat what he wanted. It was his political savvy.

Reconsidering his strategy, in the mid 1960's Arafat began creating the sad narrative of his longing for his "hometown of Jerusalem" – even though his Arabic accent gave away his Egyptian origin. Over time, the PLO convinced world leaders their wild aggression was merely in reaction to losing their homes. They went from bloody butchers who killed women and children (in neighboring Arab lands) with their bare hands, to wounded puppies



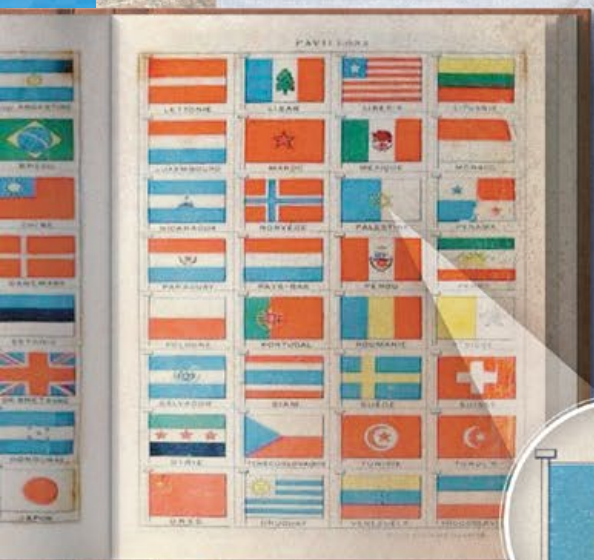
Egypt's Nasser negotiates a truce between Jordan's King Hussein and the PLO's Yasser Arafat. The PLO which ignored the king's laws and essentially ran their own country within a country, would be kicked out of Jordan but later use the same tactic of trying to form their own country within Israel.

who just needed a warm home, in the eyes of the world. Even some Israelis bought into the idea and saw themselves as believing against hope – like Anne Frank – that, "in spite of everything, people are really good at heart."

Before the age of the internet, the PLO could easily speak in Arabic of paving the road to Jerusalem with their blood to inspire armed resistance against the evil Zionists, while in English they spoke of their longing to simply go home to

PALESTINE

Credit: Alamy Stock Photo



In this 1939 French dictionary "Palestine" is clearly identified as a Jewish term

THE HIJACKING

There is often confusion in regards to the term "Palestine" mostly because its ancient and modern meanings are very different from each other. In ancient times, when the Romans ruled over vast lands, the conquered region of Judea was always a source of consternation as Jews refused to accept Rome's pagan practices and Caesar as their god.

Fed up with the scuffles and uprisings by religious zealots, Rome finally crushed Jerusalem and banished most of its Jewish inhabitants. As a parting shot for the endless troubles those people had caused Caesar, Rome renamed Israel "Palestine" after Israel's infamous arch enemy, the Philistines. The term wouldn't technically allot the land to any particular people group since the Philistines had ceased to exist hundreds of years before (and had no relation to the Arab race). But it was the insult that counted. The name *Palestine* stuck from the time the Israelites were banished in 70 A.D. to 1948 when their descendants returned and declared independence. The area would never become a sovereign state to anyone else.

Jerusalem, raise their families and worship Allah peacefully on the Temple Mount.

All the warning signs were there for those who were willing to look. Even the PLO logo at the time included a map of Palestine – which happened to look exactly like the map of Israel – just without the word “Israel.” But Rabin bought into the wounded puppy idea and signed the Oslo Accords.

Many Israelis were unhappy about the agreement, but the ultra-Orthodox Jews were livid. Rabin had “given away God’s land” to worshippers of Allah in exchange for a mere promise of peace. In response, a sect of radical Jews who adhere to mystical Kabbalah practices, promptly and publicly cast the Pulsa diNura curse on Rabin. Much of this



If you look up “Abraham’s Promised Land”, you will find a variety of illustrated maps because God’s promised borders covered general areas such as the “Euphrates River to the River of Egypt.” This leaves the reader wondering details such as - is the River of Egypt the Nile or another river in Egypt? And does the border include the entire river, or only reach to a point along the river – and if so, where is that point?

Still, while it’s hard to guess exactly where those borders should be, two things are for certain: 1. The land God promised Israel is definitely more than it possesses today – and even more than the British mandate would’ve given it. 2. Even at its largest size during Solomon’s reign, Israel has never possessed all the land God promised Abraham.

OF “PALESTINE”

Even after Israel’s rebirth, the term “Palestinian” would not be used on any official documentation until the 1960’s. And it would mostly be used to describe Jews who lived in the area. Even dictionaries in the early 20th century had a decidedly Jewish looking flag under the name “Palestine.” Jews had no problem referring to themselves as Palestinian Jews – as the name wasn’t associated with anything else other than its historical reference. The 73-piece Palestine Orchestra would consist entirely of Jews, and the local paper, run by Jews, was called the *Palestine Post*. In 1950 the paper would change its name to become the now famous *Jerusalem Post*. The Jews would, however, replace the term with “Israeli” once Israel became a nation.



In a stroke of genius, frustrated Arabs would snatch up the term and redefine it from describing a group of people to describing a people group. Branding themselves Palestinian gave Arabs two main advantages in the war over the Holy Land. First, it gave them an automatic historical association with the location as if the land was named after them rather than the other way around. Second, it marketed them as a much smaller, underdog type group rather than the diverse Arab clans from all around the Middle East that they were. And that is how in the 1960’s the meaning of the term “Palestine” changed and the “ancient” story of the Palestinian people was born.

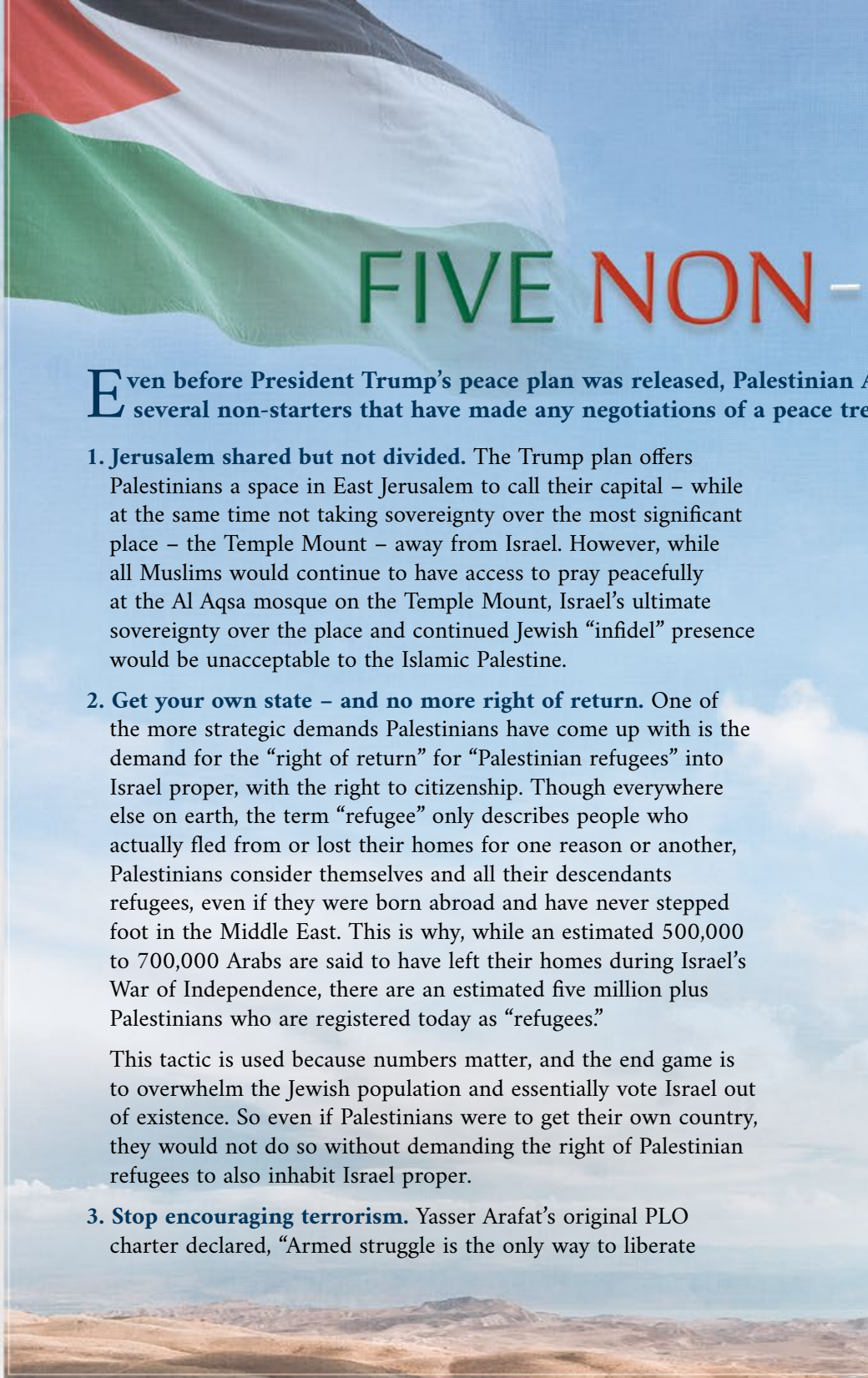
ceremony is hush hush so it's hard to get a consensus on the nature and practice of this curse. Ultimately though, the witchcraft-like curse is supposed to evoke destroying angels to bring about the death of an individual who has committed a grave sin against God. Rabin would be shot and killed within the month.



Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton, and Yasser Arafat during the Oslo Accords on 13 September 1993

It was one of those life moments you remember where you were standing when the news broke. It wasn't just that Rabin had been murdered. True, living in Israel, we were always under threat of one terrorist attack or another. But Rabin had been murdered by one of our own – by a Jew – an ultra-radical Orthodox Jew. Despite secular and religious Jews holding to vastly different opinions on how to live life, there was an unspoken rule: We were surrounded by enemy nations who wanted us dead – so we would never help their cause by killing each other.

About ten years later, Ariel Sharon evacuated thousands



Even before President Trump's peace plan was released, Palestinian A several non-starters that have made any negotiations of a peace tre

- 1. Jerusalem shared but not divided.** The Trump plan offers Palestinians a space in East Jerusalem to call their capital – while at the same time not taking sovereignty over the most significant place – the Temple Mount – away from Israel. However, while all Muslims would continue to have access to pray peacefully at the Al Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount, Israel's ultimate sovereignty over the place and continued Jewish "infidel" presence would be unacceptable to the Islamic Palestine.
- 2. Get your own state – and no more right of return.** One of the more strategic demands Palestinians have come up with is the demand for the "right of return" for "Palestinian refugees" into Israel proper, with the right to citizenship. Though everywhere else on earth, the term "refugee" only describes people who actually fled from or lost their homes for one reason or another, Palestinians consider themselves and all their descendants refugees, even if they were born abroad and have never stepped foot in the Middle East. This is why, while an estimated 500,000 to 700,000 Arabs are said to have left their homes during Israel's War of Independence, there are an estimated five million plus Palestinians who are registered today as "refugees." This tactic is used because numbers matter, and the end game is to overwhelm the Jewish population and essentially vote Israel out of existence. So even if Palestinians were to get their own country, they would not do so without demanding the right of Palestinian refugees to also inhabit Israel proper.
- 3. Stop encouraging terrorism.** Yasser Arafat's original PLO charter declared, "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate

of Israelis from their homes and relinquished control of Gaza in hopes of giving Palestinians an opportunity to prove they could eventually handle peacefully running their own state. He promptly received the same treatment by the Kabbalists. I remember secular media complaining about the publicity

surrounding Sharon's Pula diNura. Though they didn't believe in its effectiveness, they were concerned it would simply inspire another young radical and thus be a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. Six months later however, Sharon suffered a stroke which rendered him braindead. He would remain unconscious and on

STARTERS

an Authority President Abbas had his “1000 no’s” ready. This is due to the treaty virtually impossible between Palestinian Arabs and Israelis.

Palestine. This is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase.” Abbas’ Palestinian Authority continues to push this agenda of terrorism and martyrdom as well as reward terrorists by supporting their families. Stopping this would require a complete revamping of the school system which currently lauds the virtues of paving the road to Jerusalem with Jewish and Palestinian martyr’s blood. As recently as 2016 Abbas named a school after the terrorist who killed 11 Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich in 1972.)

4. **The not-so-secret map.** The ultimate Palestinian underlying goal is evident in the not-so-subtle image of their envisioned Palestine on the logo of the three main parties who have claimed leadership of the Palestinian people: PLO, Fatah and Hamas.



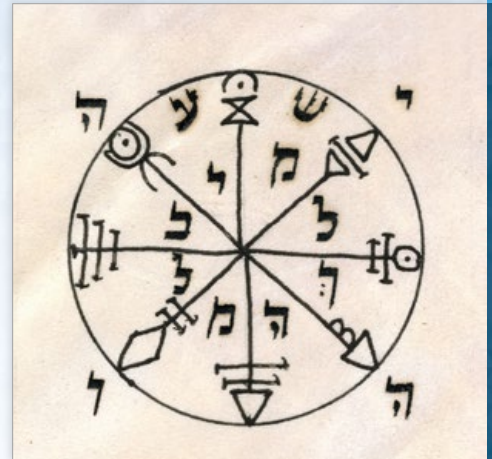
5. **Recognize the Jewish people** – Palestinians fundamentally do not recognize Jews as a race of people – descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Rather, they consider today’s Jews to be a random group of people who believe in the religion of Judaism and adhere to a book of folklore. Since the Book is fake, so are the people. Therefore, asking them to recognize Israel as a country for Jews is tantamount to asking them to recognize the Book, the people and the God of the Jews.

life support for seven years until the rest of his body finally shut down.

There was one land-for-peace agreement that was signed in 1979 – between Israel and Egypt – that didn’t result in the death of an Israeli Prime Minister (perhaps the Kabbalists weren’t as organized back then). It did, however, result in the death of

the other side’s leader – President Anwar Sadat. He persuaded Israel to give up the entire Sinai peninsula which Israel had conquered in the Six Day War (an area more than twice the size of Israel’s remaining land mass), in return for a cold but solid peace with Egypt. He wouldn’t live to see it happen.

No one can say for certain what role, if any, the Kabbalists played in the deaths of these leaders. For sure the powers of darkness are real. On the other hand, Kabbalists have cursed many other politicians who are still alive and well today.



Practicing Kabbalah was forbidden for many years because of its ties to magic and spiritism. It is still considered a fringe practice today

Not Yours to Give

What can be said for certain is that Joel 3:2 describes the nations dividing up God’s land as a deed that angers God greatly. In fact, it bothers Him so much He ordained a special day of reckoning to those who commit this crime. Perhaps it is because anyone looking to divide the land would be someone who doesn’t recognize God nor know His plan. He has said this land is His land, and He has promised it to the children of Israel. Therefore, it is simply not anyone’s right to give it to another people. In a sense, even the descendants of Israel are merely stewards over this Holy land, having been given the right to be here.

It is worth noting that God was just as adamant when He delegated other lands to

the nations surrounding Israel. Deuteronomy 2:9 “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’”

Some Arabs and Druze not only embraced Israel's declaration of independence, but fought alongside Jews and today enjoy citizenship in the freest and most advanced nation in the Middle East



During WWI, Britain had promised the Arabs that if they fought against the Ottomans, they would be rewarded with sovereignty over their own lands – and now it was time to pay up. So when the Ottoman empire was defeated at the end of WWI, the League of Nations gathered together to divide the Middle East into sections.

As swaths of land became new Arab countries, the designations went largely unchallenged. But it was the British Mandate over Palestine that would bring the British Empire to its knees. Arabs who were ecstatic about ruling themselves once again all over the Middle East, were vehemently opposed to a Jewish population enjoying the same privilege next door.

In the end, more than two thirds of the land Lord Balfour of England had intended to go towards creating a Jewish homeland, instead went to create another Arab country called Jordan. During Israel's War of Independence, Jordan then proceeded to capture and occupy

East Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria (now known as the West Bank of the Jordan River). They would expel the Jewish majority living in East Jerusalem and grant the remaining Arab inhabitants in their occupied territory Jordanian citizenship. When Israel recaptured Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria in 1967, they allowed many of the Jordanians to remain there. Despite both retaining their homes and Jordanian citizenship, these Arabs joined the political fight against Israel and began identifying as Palestinian refugees.

Biggest Losers

It's important to know that in day-to-day life in Israel, Arabs and Jews get along just fine. Though the occasional terrorist attack can set us on edge, we work side by side on a regular basis and even attend each other's weddings and such. I often have a hard time telling if someone is Jewish or Arab when I first meet them, though I have lived here my whole life.

We regularly hear beautiful stories of Jews helping Arabs in emergency situations and vice versa (and no, it never makes international news). I, myself, lost an iPhone when visiting an Arab neighborhood and had it returned by one of the locals who

refused any compensation for his good deed - but did invite me over for tea.

However, it's hard to get their honest opinion in public because it endangers them and their families. Still, some brave Arabs have publicly argued that looking back, engaging in this long existential battle against Israel was the worst decision ever made. The more they dug in their heels (with the violent uprisings and the wall of separation that followed) the poorer and more miserable they became, and this, despite the mounds of money the world sent their leaders.

The biggest losers in all of this mess are the everyday Palestinian Arabs who, given the opportunity, would've simply wanted to earn a living and raise a family. Instead, they became the pawns of the Middle East. Their suffering would be exacerbated and used to prove to the world that Israel was evil. At the same time, Palestinians would be shunned and never be fully embraced as part of the larger Arab body. In fact, members of the Arab League forbade surrounding nations from absorbing Palestinian Arabs into their countries and granting them citizenship.

Given the opportunity, many Palestinian families would rather leave and start over elsewhere. But when some organizations offered to fund the exodus, Arab leaders screamed ethnic cleansing. To the Muslim Arab world, it was never about solving the refugee crisis, it was always about creating it.

Even for those who did once buy into the dream of their own state, the reality of the corruption of the leaders who claim to be guiding them is hard to ignore. They are stuck in a sort of purgatory – on

one side watching their kin in Jordan (whose population is 70% Palestinian Arabs) live their lives. And, on the other side of the fence, Israeli-Arabs (Arabs who accepted Israel's sovereignty over them in 1948 and received citizenship) enjoy the freedoms and benefits of a modern democratic state.

Middle East Chess

Though President Trump's Deal of the Century offers prospects for jobs and prosperity, in hopes that the Arab population will be too busy making money to want to blow themselves up, the most unique factor in this peace plan is the Arab support. No, not the Palestinian Arab support, but for the first time Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman are standing in support of a plan that recognizes Israel. Some of these countries have even engaged in talks of their own to begin to normalize relations with Israel. This development is a solid nail in the coffin of the original Palestinian Arab agenda as the hearts of surrounding Arab nations who previously desired Israel's destruction, now see the benefit of its existence, including the economic boost and social and political stability it has offered the region.

Though you can see why this topic is no laughing matter, many believe both Netanyahu and Gantz (the two top candidates running for prime minister in the elections this month) have readily embraced this



Palestinian President Abbas at UN uses visual to argue at the UN that Trump has offered much less land than other historical plans have offered. He is technically right, they should've agreed to a state a long time ago.

plan from Trump because they are convinced the Palestinians will not accept it. Yet, Israel's acceptance of the deal gives them a legitimate opportunity to annex strategic lands designated to Israel for security reasons that until now would have garnered solid international condemnation.

In agreeing to the Deal of the Century, this is the first time Israel has formally accepted the idea of a sovereign Palestinian state in Gaza and parts of Judea and Samaria. But what *can* you give to change the heart of someone who has been taught to hate you from birth. One could argue it's largely a strategic move. And I bet no one would be more shocked than Trump himself to see both sides actually agree to it. Still, it is both a significant step forward and a risky deal with the devil.

The complexity of this issue is seemingly endless, for what you

are witnessing is a conflict that is both ancient and modern, both social and political, both physical and spiritual. The greatest irony lies in the fact that the Palestinians' deliverance will only fully come when they agree not only to stop hating Jews – but to worship One. If I had one prayer, it would be for God to deliver Palestinian Arabs from the bondage of their current leaders and deliver them from the stranglehold of Islam. It may not be the Deal of the Century, but it is the plan that has been in play for at least two millennia. I hope you will join your prayers with ours, for this is the one Peace Plan guaranteed to work. ■

WHAT MARK

If someone had taken over what you felt was legally your house, but then the courts awarded it back to you, would your first action upon entering the house be to take a sledgehammer to the walls?

There is a distinct recklessness that surfaces when dealing with a supernatural level of hate. When it comes to the battle between the Kingdom of Darkness and the Kingdom of God, there is an unstoppable reckless rage manifesting that bypasses all reasoning. It is the rage of the Dragon who cannot defeat God and so rages at God's creation (Rev.12:17). It's the same madness that drove the crowds to ask for the release of a murderer named Barabbas into the streets rather than free a controversial rabbi named Yeshua. And it is this same madness that causes Muslims to destroy the historical evidence of God's wonders done in Israel.

In 1863 during Ottoman rule, the British consulate in Jerusalem recorded the majority of the population in Jerusalem to be Jewish. This would remain unchanged until 1948 when the War of Independence divided the city and Jews were forced by Jordan to flee to the western side of the city. Almost 20 years later, when the Six Day War delivered East Jerusalem back into the hands of the Jewish people, an unconscionable amount of destruction would greet them.

The Jewish Virtual Library documents how Jordan treated Jerusalem:

*"Israel's army liberated Jerusalem's Old City, finding the area **completely neglected and virtually destroyed.** ... All but **one of the 35 synagogues within the Old City were destroyed**; those not completely devastated had been used as **hen houses and stables filled with dung-heaps**, garbage and carcasses. The revered **Jewish graveyard on the Mount of Olives** was in complete disarray with **tens of thousands of tombstones broken into pieces to be used as building materials** and large areas of the cemetery leveled to provide a short-cut to a new hotel. **Hundreds of Torah scrolls** and thousands of holy books had been **plundered and burned to ashes...**"*



TWAIN SAW



Jordanians use of Jewish tombstones to tile their roads, fill in walls and build army barracks was **not only about dishonoring Jewish memory** in the land, it was also about **erasing it**. Jordan's Arabs had neither love for the history of the city, **nor in their 20 years of rule did they take any initiative to create a capital out of it**.

While desecrating cemeteries, synagogues and Torah scrolls seemed bad enough, it was Mark Twain's "**Innocents Abroad**" description of his 1867 visit to Jerusalem that made me realize just how much Jordanians systematically eradicated the most precious remnants of Israel's ancient history:

*"Everywhere about the Mosque of Omar are portions of pillars, curiously wrought altars, and fragments of **elegantly carved marble - the precious remains of [Herod's] Temple...see the costly marbles that once adorned the inner Temple...the designs wrought upon these fragments are all quaint and peculiar...one meets with these venerable scraps at every turn, specially in the neighboring mosque Al Aqsa, into whose inner walls a very large number of them are carefully built for preservation.**"*

*"These pieces of stone, stained and dusty with age, **dimly hint at a grandeur we have all been taught to regard as the princeliest ever seen on earth;** and they call up pictures of a pageant that is familiar to all imaginations - camels laden with spices and treasure...presents for Solomon's harem - a long cavalcade of richly caparisoned beasts and warriors - and Sheba's Queen in the van of this prison of Oriental Magnificence. These elegant fragments bear a richer interest than the solemn vastness of the stones the Jews kiss in the place of wailing can ever have for the heedless sinner."*

*"Down in the hollow ground, **underneath the olives and orange trees that flourish in the court***

of the great mosque, is a wilderness of pillars - remains of the ancient Temple, they supported it. There are ponderous archways down there...we never dreamed we might see portions of the actual Temple..."

With my love for our treasured history (as I presume any believer in the stories of the Bible would have) I can't describe the sadness I felt when I read these words. Like the childhood diary of your great-grandparent found just recently smoldering, Jerusalem was returned to its rightful owner with so many of its secrets simply and recently erased. Remnants of the Temple, of places Yeshua walked and the disciples with Him, survived thousands of years under so many different rulers, empires and wars. But they would not survive the Islamic rage over Israel rising from the ashes and returning home.

Sadly, even with Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem, the battle to destroy evidence of past Jewish presence (before we rediscover it) continues. Because every discovery we make, every Hebrew-etched piece of pottery, coin and jewelry - pushes back against the Islamic propaganda that Jews never inhabited this land. Even now there are piles of earth illegally dug up by Jordan from the Temple Mount (removed to build another Mosque) sitting in an open lot. They remain unexcavated due to lack of budget, and who knows what secrets remain?

Thankfully Jordanians didn't get to it all; we did return to our land and find the words that God spoke to our ancestors safely hidden and preserved in desert caves. We call them the Dead Sea scrolls. It's symbolic in a way.

The Sakhnini's concert
in Nazareth



The Sakhnini Brothers Worship Outreach in

Following the Waze GPS app through Nazareth is always an adventure. The ancient streets were designed for camels and donkeys, not cars. But we eventually make it to the concert hall (even though Waze kept insisting it was two streets down). Despite their humble beginnings, the Sakhnini's music had been spreading among the locals in Nazareth so quickly, we were having a hard time keeping their CD supply stocked. It was time to play live.

The Sakhnini Brothers had played for years in worship bands and conferences – but this was the first time the set would consist entirely of their music.

If you can imagine a worshipful blend of Middle Eastern, Jazz and Classical music you've pictured that evening.

Aside from the song lyrics which I knew, the only other part I understood from the whole evening was "Fellowship of Artists" and "Kobi and Shani" when they were thanking their sponsors.

For two hours I watched a sold-out auditorium filled with Muslims and nominal Christians listen to the message of repentance, redemption and God's love sung to them. The icing on the cake was that the rest of the musicians on the stage were believing Jews – ministering in Nazareth united in our love for God.




Nazareth

After the concert the Sakhninis didn't miss a beat. The concert was in October and by the end of December they were ready to record a second album of original songs. Beautifully lyrical with a blend of both ancient and modern melodies, they give "Israeli worship" a whole new dimension.

If you haven't read about the Sakhnini Brothers, it's worth reading their beautiful family backstory we wrote about last year (January 2019 Maoz Israel Report).



Left to right:
Adeeb, Yazeed and Elia Sakhnini



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