

Multi-perspective Pilgrimage to Israel & Palestine

January 4-13, 2021

frederickuu.org/pilgrimage

Covenant

- **Use “I” statements:** speak your truth in ways that respect the truth of others.
- **Share the airtime:** “take space or make space” depending on your relative frequency of participation compared to the rest of the group
- **Incline yourself toward “identifying *in*”:** noticing what you *agree with & appreciate* about a person, place, or idea at least as much as what you disagree with (“identifying *out*”) to help counterbalance our brain’s “negativity bias.”
- **Turn to curiosity & wonder** if the going gets rough

Covenant

- **Practice “both/and”** thinking
- **Take new ideas for a test drive** even if they don’t end up fitting you long term.
- **Ok to “agree to disagree,”** but *not* to shame another person.
- **Ok to ask a clarifying question** in the spirit of curiosity.
- **Practice consent culture:** each individual always has the right to “pass.” (Listen to your emotions and your conscience.)

Check-in: ~1 minute

- Name
- Why you signed-up for this trip/class
- Have you been to Israel/Palestine before? (If so, when?)

Focal Themes

Pilgrimage: “A *tourist* passes through a place,
a *pilgrim* allows a place to pass through them.”

Perspectives:

- Israel means at least the modern State of Israel and the historic Land of Israel.
- Palestine means both a historic region in the Middle East as well as modern state recognized by 138 of the 193 United Nations members. (The United States does not recognize the State of Palestine.)

Peace: “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all” (UU Sixth Principle).

What do you notice on this map?



Day 1 (of 10): Monday, Jan 4, 2021

Gathering

Ben Gurion Airport, 7015001, Israel

Jerusalem Hotel, Antara Ben Shadad St

Add destination

Leave now

OPTIONS

Send directions to your phone

via Route 1

42 min

Fastest route, the usual traffic

55.6 km

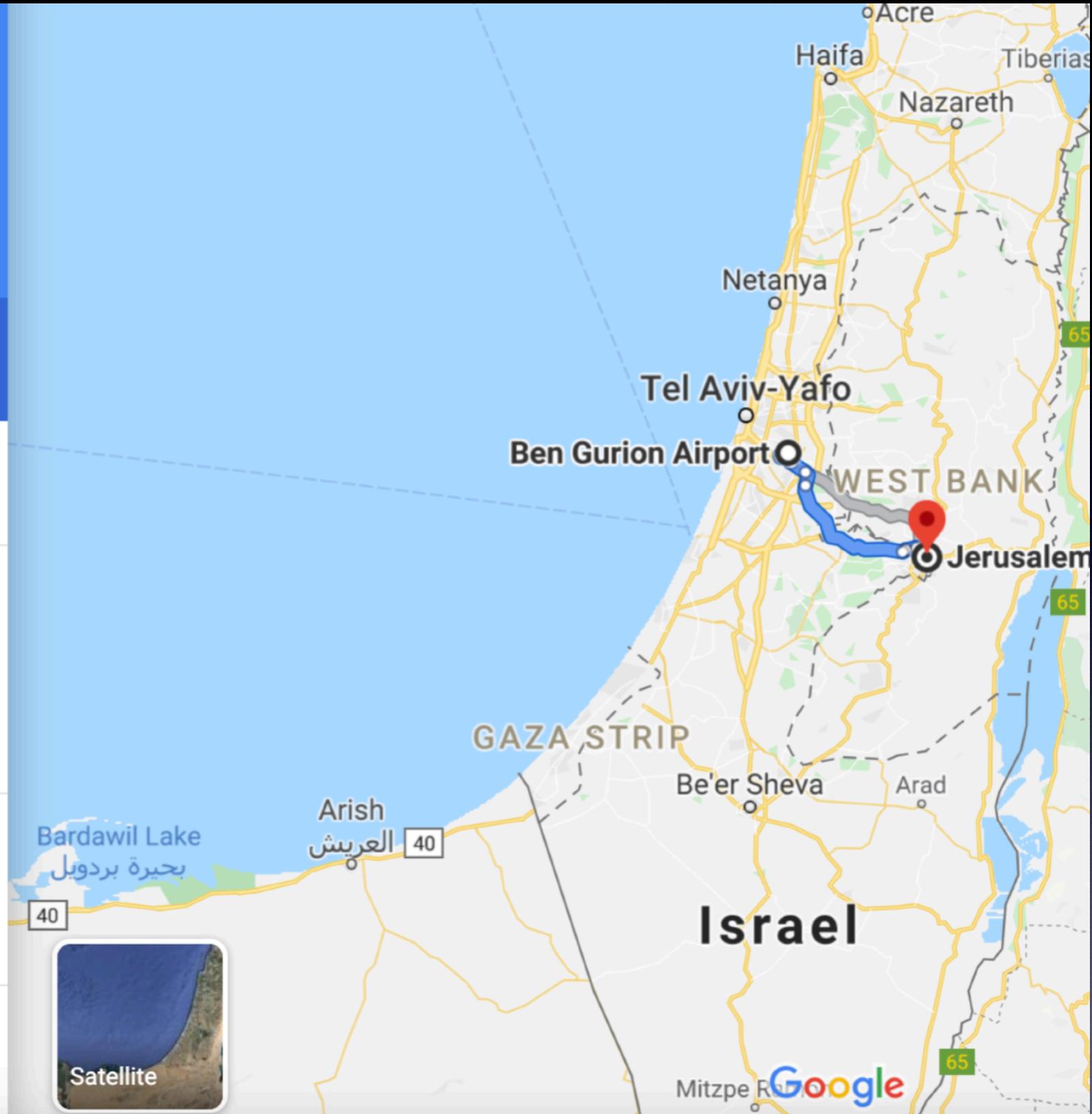
DETAILS

via Route 443

45 min

53.0 km

ore Jerusalem Hotel



What do you notice about this map?

Day 1 (of 10): Monday, Jan 4, 2021

- Gathering Dinner (No Bus, No Guide)
- Arrive at your own pace using guidance from MEJDI's travel services team.
- Gather with your group at the hotel for a welcome dinner.
- Overnight: Holy Land Hotel or similar, Jerusalem

Looking Ahead:

Optional Monthly Pre-Trip

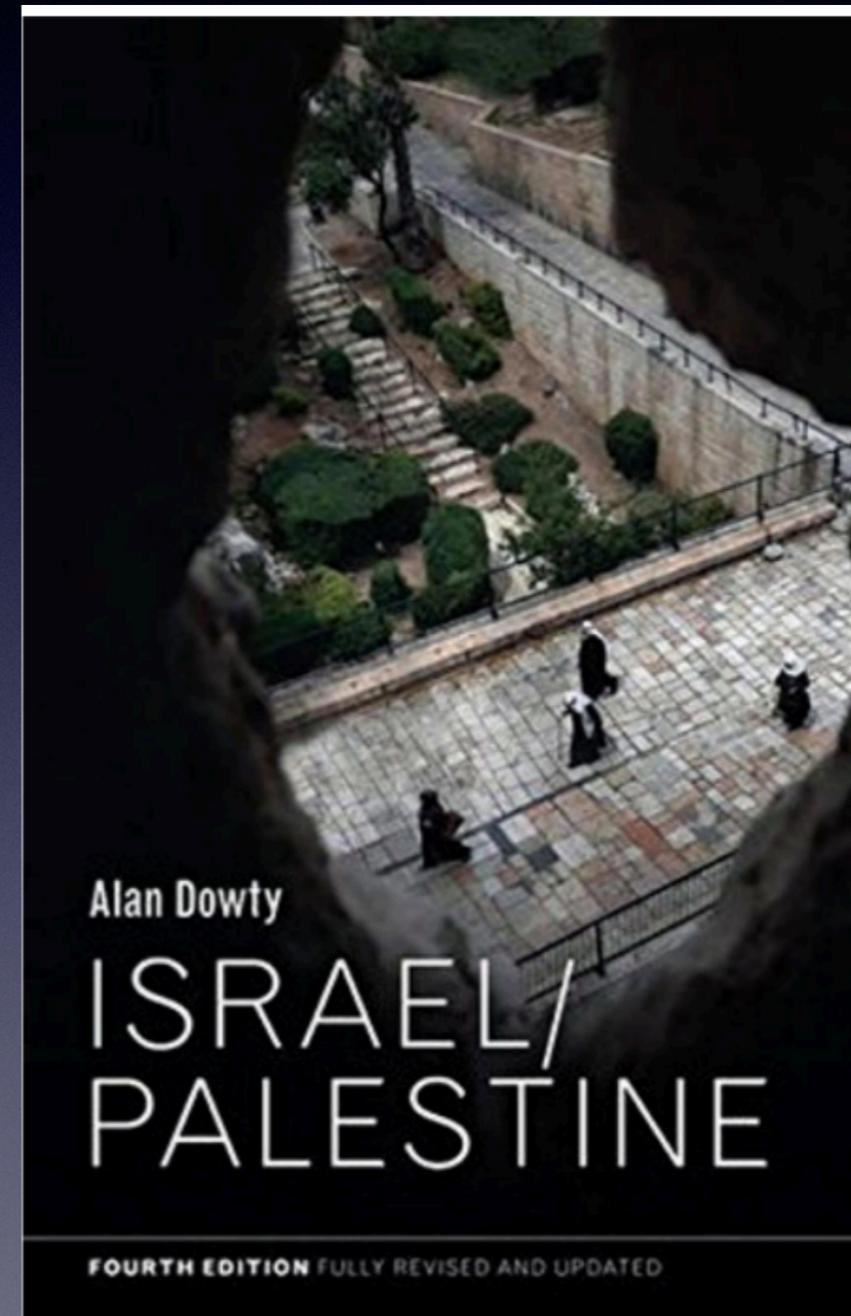
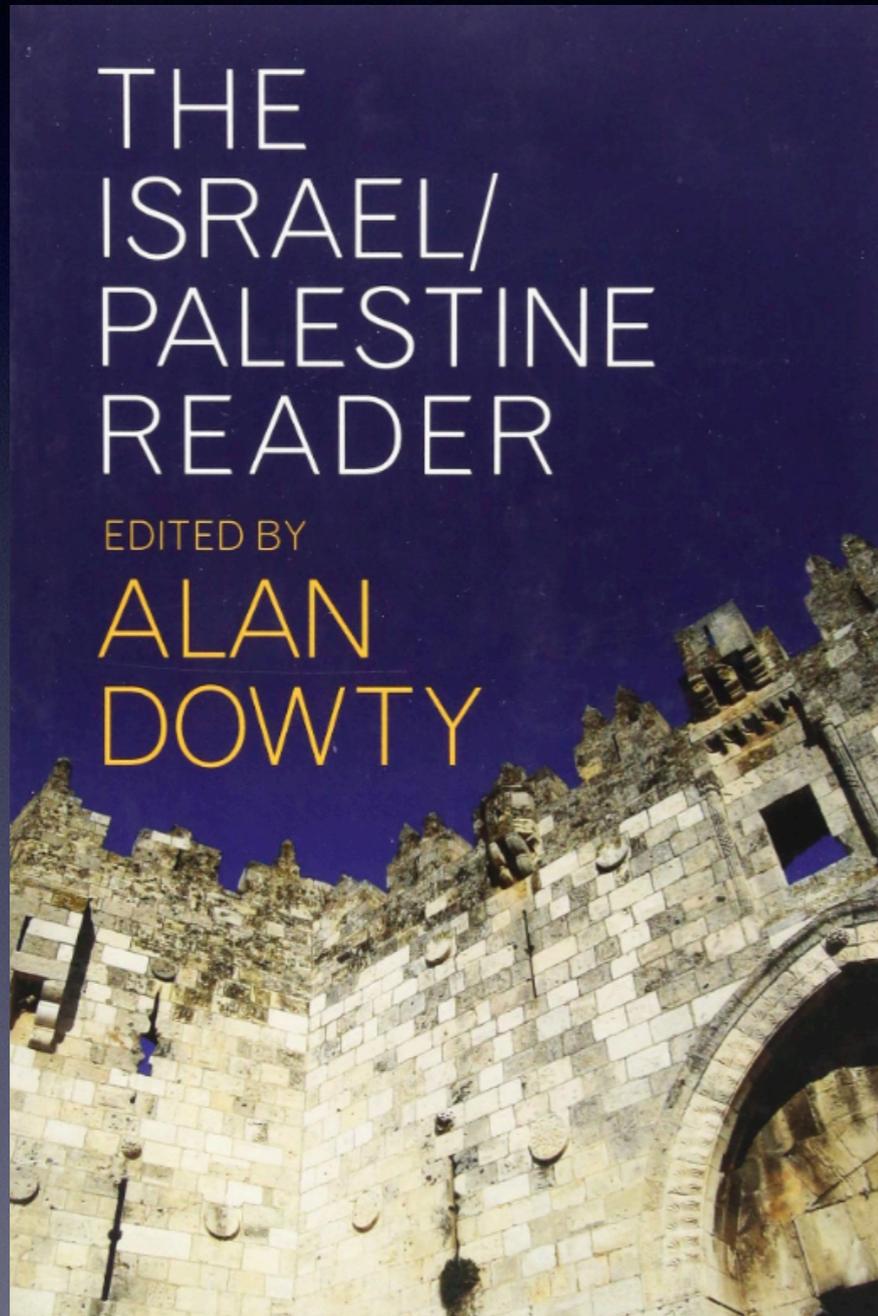
Religious Education Opportunities

Google Doc

(linked from bottom of frederickuu.org/pilgrimage)

Review “March” & “April” Materials

Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame



10 chapters = 1/month

Alan Dowty (1940-)

- Paul Scham, in *Middle East Journal*, says that Dowty's book *Israel/Palestine* "receives pride of place at the top of my list of concise, illuminating histories to recommend."
- It can be expected that this book will be a leading contender to be the textbook of choice on the conflict."



Epistemology

- Always/already: *perspectival*
- Some: particular/peculiar point of view.
- Foucault: Power/Knowledge
- No: objective/unmediated/unbiased truth.
- No: “Archimedean point”
 - hypothetical vantage point from which an observer can objectively perceive subject of inquiry, with a view of totality.
 - Ideal of "removing oneself" from the object of study so one can see it in relation to all other things, but remain independent of them.

Theme: perspectives — *plural*

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Debunking 4 Myths

1. Not an age-old conflict
2. Not a conflict caused by ethnic hatreds.
3. Not a conflict rooted in a “clash of religions.”
4. Not a conflict of unceasing violence.”

1. Not Age-old Conflict

- Origins: 1880s
- Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe began settling in the historical Land of Israel (*then part of Ottoman Empire*)
- 1881-2: 462,465 total population of three Ottoman districts corresponding to modern Palestine. (*Eve of first new wave of Jewish immigration*)
 - 87% Muslim, 10% Christian, 3% Jewish [15,011]
- Broader Arab-Israeli conflict: started with **1947-9 War**

2. Not caused by ethnic hatreds

- Ethnic identity of the existing population in *Eretz Yisrael/ Filastin* as “Palestinians” only beginning to emerge in the late 19th & early 20th century
- Galvanized out of conflict with Jewish settlers.
- Identity of Jews as ethnic group as well as religion was relatively new, and not yet universally accepted idea, among Jewish people.

3. Not rooted in “clash of religions”

- Religious dimension has become increasingly important.

Judaism:

- non-proselytizing religion
- accepts Islam as a legitimate monotheistic faith.

Islam:

- regards Jews & Christians as “People of the Book,”
- part of common tradition, given freedom to practice their religion.

4. Not unceasing violence

- Periods of dramatic & explosive violence
- Periods of relative stability & quiet
- Continued economic interaction
- Far from “bloodiest” conflict of the last century.

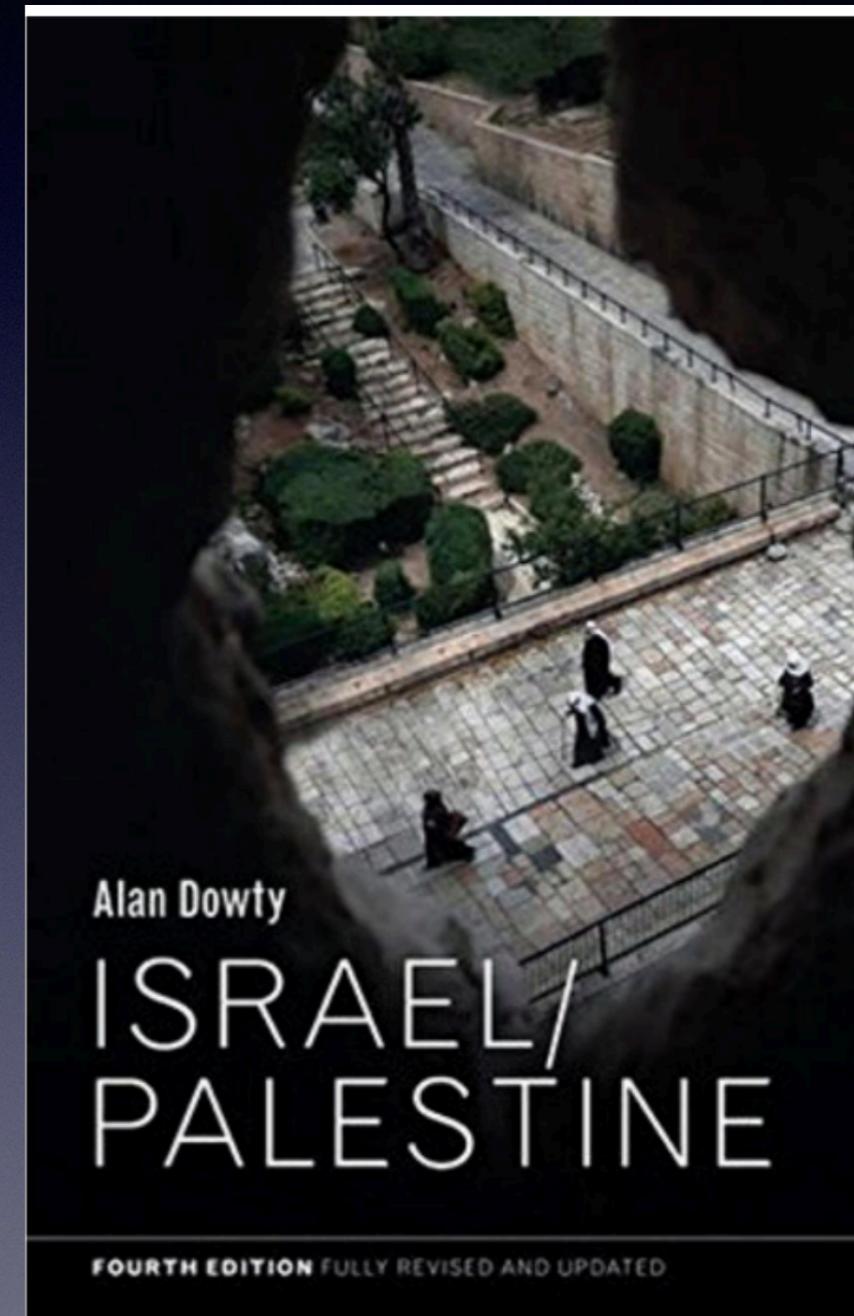
So what is the conflict?

Claim of

two peoples

to the

same piece of land



(4-5)



Israel founded: UN partition plan

The United Nations General Assembly decided in 1947 on the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem to be an international city. The plan, which was rejected by the native Arabs, was never implemented.



Six-Day War: After the war

In a pre-emptive attack on Egypt that drew Syria and Jordan into a regional war in 1967, Israel made massive territorial gains capturing the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula up to the Suez Canal. The principle of land-for-peace that has formed the basis of Arab-Israeli negotiations is based on Israel giving up land won in the 1967 war in return for peace deals recognising Israeli borders and its right to security. The Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt as part of the 1979 peace deal with Israel.

interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/palestineremix/maps_main.html

Perspectives on the conflict

- Israel: refusal of the Palestinian (and other Arabs) to acknowledge the **existence & legitimacy of the Jewish state in the *historic* Jewish homeland.**
- Arabs: violation of the natural right of the Palestinian people to **self-determination in its *ancestral* homeland.**
- Both agree: conflicting claims to same territory
- Zero-sum game: whatever one side gains comes at expense of the other (*gains/losses total zero vs. "win-win"*)
- Both fear: being left stateless

“Holy Land”

- Since 638 CE: under Muslim rule
(*except during Crusades*)
- 1516-17: Ottomans (a Turkish dynasty) conquered,
along with Syria & Egypt.

“Israeli & Palestinian families used
**virtually the same words
to describe their grief.**”

– United States Department of State (2001)

Right v. Right?: Jewish Claims

- **Unique historic tie** to the Land of Israel, extending over at least 3,200 years
 - 1300 BCE “Exodus”
 - 1280-1020 BCE “Conquest & Settlement of ‘Promised Land’”
- with a continuing (if sometimes small) physical presence throughout that time.

Right v. Right?: Jewish Claims

- Jews who returned to their ancestral homeland have built a dynamic society that will, within the next generation, be home to **over half of the world's Jews**—*fulfilling Theodor Herzl's vision of a Jewish state as the ultimate answer to anti-Semitism.*
- No recognized statute of limitations on the restoration of historical rights or the rectification of past injustices for an entire people.
- Jews were exiled from their homeland and have always prayed for the return to it.
- Qur'an 17:104: "And We said after Pharaoh to the Children of Israel, 'Dwell in the land, and when there comes the promise of the Hereafter, We will bring you forth in [one] gathering.'"

Right v. Right?: Palestinian Case

- Indigenous population of Palestine 125 years ago.
- Did not invite European Jews to enter their homeland and transform it into an alien state and society.
- Had the native citizens of Palestine possessed the right of self-determination at the time, they would have acted to block this challenge to their culture, society, and basic identity.
- Descendants of all the indigenous people who lives in Palestine over the centuries. (Since the 7th c. have been predominately **Muslim** in religion and almost completely **Arab** in language and culture.)

Vicious Cycle: vice to vice

Both sides:

- deep sense of **victimization** & **grievance**
- strong belief they are in the right.

Would be difficult to design a conflict with more self-generating power for continued confrontation & collision.

War of Independence / An-Nakba (“The Catastrophe”)

- Israel: 78% of the former Palestinian Mandate
(compared to 56% allocated to the Jewish State in the 1947 partition resolution)
- Won: despite a 50:1 disparity in population
- Coming so quickly after the greatest tragedy in their history, the re-emergence of a Jewish state after two millennia was one of the greatest in their long history.

Refugees

- Some: fled before enemy forces arrived, as often occurs in war.
- Others: expelled by Israeli forces
- Still others: murky cases with elements of both situations.
- 150,000 did not flee and were given citizenship in Israel (*disproving the claim that Israel systematically expelled all Palestinians*).
- Moreover, no Jews were allowed to remain in areas conquered by Arab armies. (98-99)

Jewish Perspective

Palestinians & Arab states:

- defied UN & initiated the war
- publicly threatened (3 years after the Holocaust) to kill all Jews.
- continued a policy of total rejection of Israel's existence
- repeated threats of a “second round” to destroy Israel.

1967

Arab Perspective

- “War of Israeli Aggression”
- every Arab move was *defensive*

Israeli Perspective

- “War for Jewish Survival”: fought against a steady drumbeat of threats to Israel’s existence
- Every Israeli move was *defensive*

1967

- Before 1967, Israeli governments regarded the 1949 lines as the maximum territorial deal obtainable.
- “Salvaged from oblivion the twin ghosts of:
 - Jewish maximalism &
 - Palestinian particularism

Nomenclature

- Doves: “West Bank” & “Gaza Strip”
- Hawks: “Judea” & “Samaria” (historic Jewish designations)

Intifada

- Literally: “shaking off”
- Connotation: political uprising

Hamas

- 1988: formed
- Initials of Islamic Resistance Movement
- Arabic: حماس Ḥamās
- Acronym of حركة المقاومة الإسلامية *Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*
- Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist militant organization.



June 1992: Yitzhak Rabin led Labor to its first election victory since 1973.
September 13, 1993: Signing ceremony for Oslo Accords with Yasir Arafat on White House lawn.

Oslo Accords

- Israeli Reading: primary emphasis on the commitment to end all violence and resolve all future conflicts peacefully
- Palestinian actions and statements contradicted PLO's acceptance of Israel's permanence and framework of 2-state solution
- Israeli's (reasonably) concluded that PLO signature on document was in bad faith.

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Oslo Accords

- 1995: *Israeli* religious extremist killed Yitzhak Rabin.
- Then: Palestinian extremists launched a series of attacks on Israeli civilian targets inside Israel.
- 1996: In elections, **Benjamin Netanyahu** defeated Shimon Peres (Rabin's successor as head of Labor Party) by 1% of vote.
- 2004: Arafat died and was succeeded by **Mahmoud Abbas**, his longtime associate (same generation & background)



Perspectives on Peace Process

Israeli: negotiating model

- each side trades less valued assets for more valued concessions from other side.
- negotiation & violent confrontations are mutually exclusive

Palestinian: implementation model — strategy to regain national rights and return of territories

- land Israelis are offering to “give up” is *Palestinian* land occupied by military force.
- Do *not* have to make a counteroffer as they have nothing left to give. Rights are definitionally neither negotiable nor exchangeable

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Israelis view themselves as *vulnerable*

- Arab world outnumbered Israelis 50:1 (Muslim world 250:1)
- Neighboring states: armed forces 8x larger w/ 3:1 advantage in airplanes & tanks
- Any agreement: Israel surrenders real military advantages for promises of future behavior.
- Killing 60 Israelis in terrorist attacks = 9/11 in U.S.
- March 2002: In one month Israel suffered ~ 2 WTC Attacks
- Demilitarized (but sovereign) Palestine: similar to status of Germany, Austria, and Japan.

General Prognosis: 2000-1, 2007-8, 2013-14

- 2 states: Palestinian state alongside Jewish state
- Borders: 1949-1967 lines w/ minor changes
- Holy Sites: status quo (*Haram ash-Sharif* under Muslim control & Western Wall under Jewish control)
- Palestine: forces to maintain law & order, but not to threaten Israel
- Refugees: Number returning to Israel will be severely limited

Two Red Lines

Israelis: must concede that *Haram ash-Sharif* (3rd holiest site in Islam) will remain under Muslim administration

- as it has since 1967 under even the most hawkish of Israeli governments—
- even though it is also the site of the ancient First and Second Jewish Temples

Palestinians: must come to terms with the reality that the vast majority of refugees will not be exercising their weight of return to homes and villages that are now a part of Israel—

- even though they believe this to be their right according to elemental justice.

Practical Solution

- Looking back: Won't be solved by arguments over historical rights or claims of victimhood.
(Too complex, actors too self-centered.)
- Looking around: Rights must be balanced against each other—and against reality.
- Looking ahead: Harm reduction—least future suffering.

Extremists & Illusions

Palestinian attitudes toward violent factions colored by stubborn notion that the option for “armed struggle” is still a viable & useful option.

Can: make Israelis live in fear of terror

Won't: defeat Israel.

Israelis: Major incentive in peace process was end to violence.

Second Intifada (2000): election of most martial Prime Minister in Israeli history (Ariel Sharon.), end of negotiations, & military incursions to West Bank.

Extremists & Illusions

- A credible campaign to make it clear that most Palestinian accept a two-state solution as an end to the conflict (and can control those among them who do not) would conceivably revolutionize opinion in Israel.
- Israel must also give up the illusion that Palestine self-determination is a bargaining chip that can be held for final negotiations.

Mirror

- Intractable feuds among your family/friends/colleagues.
(“Family can push your buttons because your family sewed on your buttons.”)
- Native Americans (indigenous population of North America)



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“The Place Where We Are Right” - Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right / Flowers will never grow
/ In the spring.

The place where we are right / Is hard and trampled / Like
a yard.

But doubts and loves / Dig up the world / Like a mole, a
plow. / And a whisper will be heard in the place / Where the
ruined / House once stood.

- Israeli poet (1924 - 2000). Born in Germany, then immigrated with his family to Palestine in 1936.
- Fought in the Israeli War of Independence, then became an advocate of peace and reconciliation working with Palestinian writers.

Check-out:

- Question, Insight, Observation, Intention, Ah-ha moment (“takeaway”)
- Any new connections with our themes?
 - **Pilgrimage:** “A *tourist* passes through a place, a *pilgrim* allows a place to pass through them.”
 - **Perspectives** plural
 - **Peace:** “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all” (UU Sixth Principle).