

# Multi-perspective Pilgrimage to Israel & Palestine

January 4-13, 2021

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# Covenant

- **Use “I” statements:** speak your truth in ways that respect the truth of others.
- **Share the airtime:** “take/make space” depending on your relative frequency of participation.
- **Incline 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 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:** you always have the right to “pass.” (Listen to your emotions & your conscience.)

# 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).

Day 3 (of 10):

## Geopolitical Jerusalem (Bus, Both Guides)

- Discuss the rise of early Zionism in the 19th century as you head toward **Yad Vashem**, the Israeli Holocaust Memorial (guided tour).
- Visit **Ein Karem** (“Spring of the Valley”) — walking tour to learn the different narratives about the **War of 1948**
  - Ancient: village southwest of historical Jerusalem
  - Now: neighborhood of modern Jerusalem
  - Palestinian town, depopulated during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War
  - Christian tradition holds that Saint John the Baptist was born in Ein Karem
- Gain an understanding of how **1967** changed Jerusalem and the development of the ABC areas and categories of residency in it as you head back.
- Then head north for an overnight on the Galilee.



### Israel founded: UN partition plan

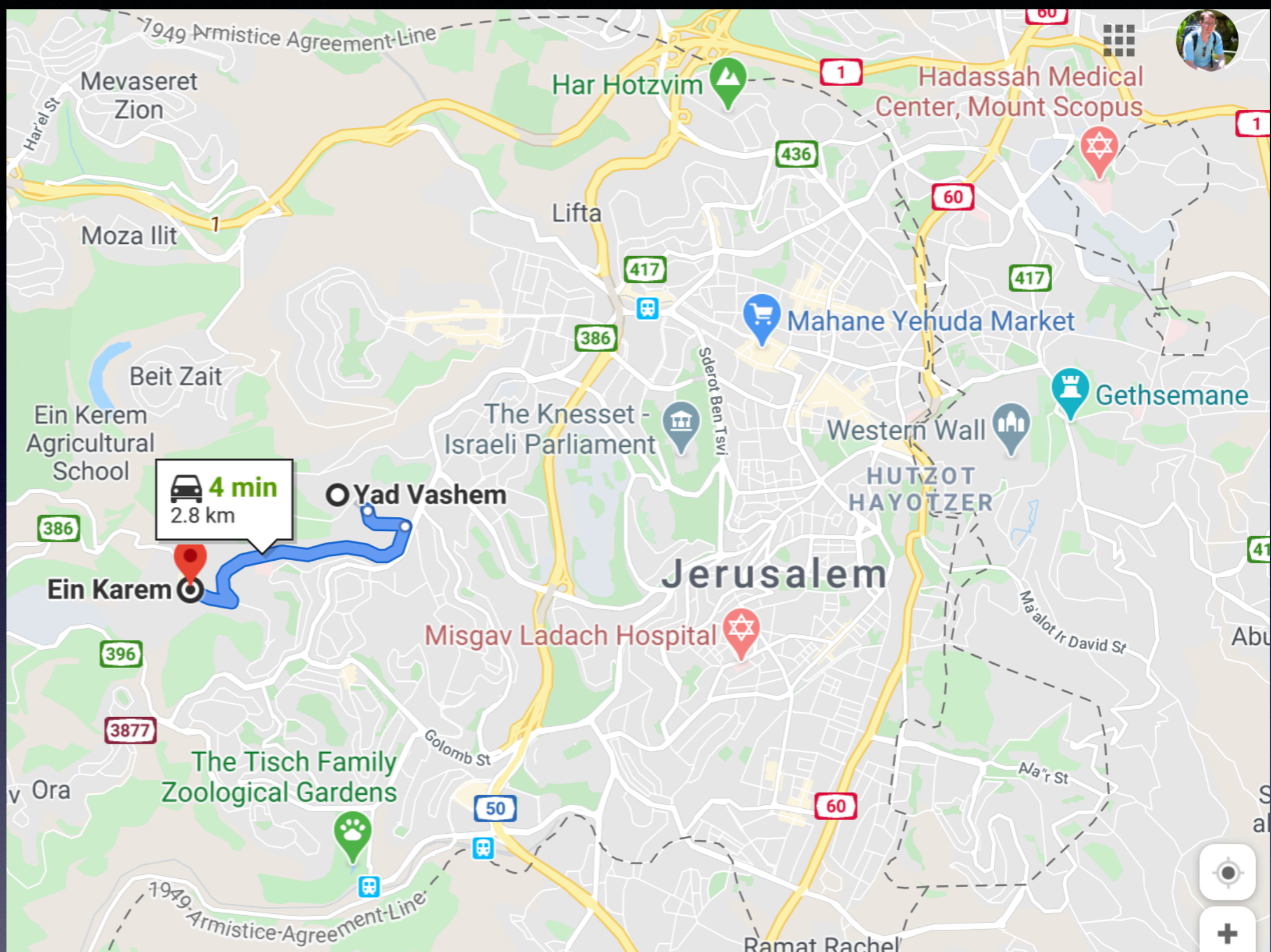
The United Nations General Assembly decided in 1947 on the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem to be an international city. The plan, which was rejected by the native Arabs, was never implemented.



### 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.

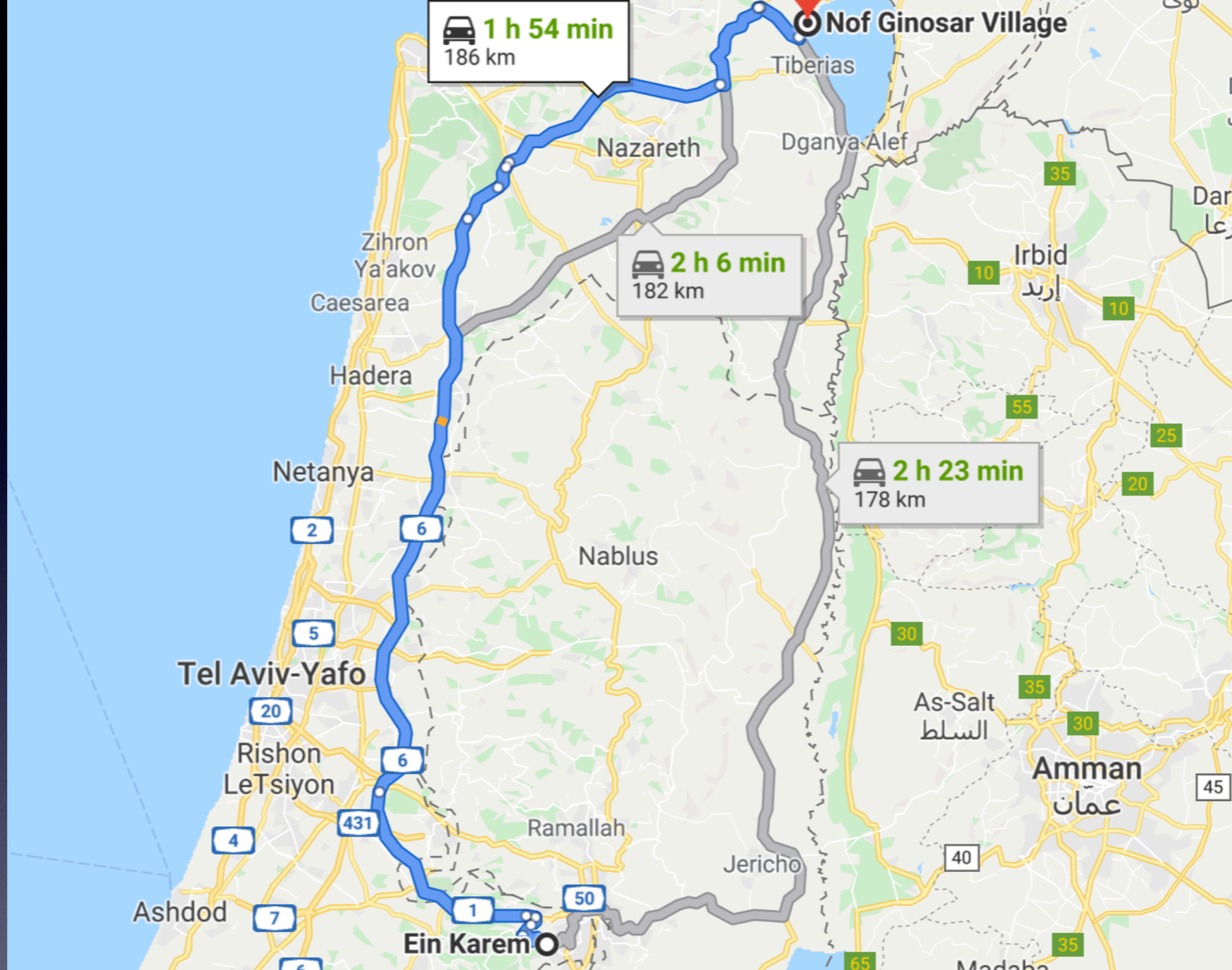
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Day 3 (of 10): Wednesday, Jan 6, 2021

# Geopolitical Jerusalem





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# Geopolitical Jerusalem

# Check-in:

Did you have **one particular insight that resonated with you from the books, films, etc. this month?**

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1. March (Arrival & Gathering): *Israel/Palestine* by Dowty
2. April (Jerusalem): *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* by Karen Armstrong
3. **May (Geopolitical Jerusalem)** : *Antisemitism: Here and Now* by D. Lipstadt

# Right v. Right?: Jewish Claims

- **Unique historic tie** to the Land of Israel, extending over at least 3,200 years [1300 BCE “Exodus”]
- with a continuing (if sometimes small) physical presence throughout that time.

# Right v. Right?: Palestinian Case

- Indigenous population of Palestine 125 years ago.
- 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.)

# Israelis view themselves as *vulnerable*

- Arab world outnumbered Israelis 50:1 (Muslim world 250:1)
- Killing 60 Israelis in terrorist attacks = 9/11 in U.S.
- 1939: 16.6 million Jewish people worldwide
- Holocaust: ~6 million Jews [1/3] ***[trauma]***
- Today: ~17 million Jews / ~1.6 billion Muslims / ~2 billion Christians
- (Had the Holocaust not taken place, the global Jewish population would have been at least 26 million & possibly as much as 32 million today.)

# antisemitism

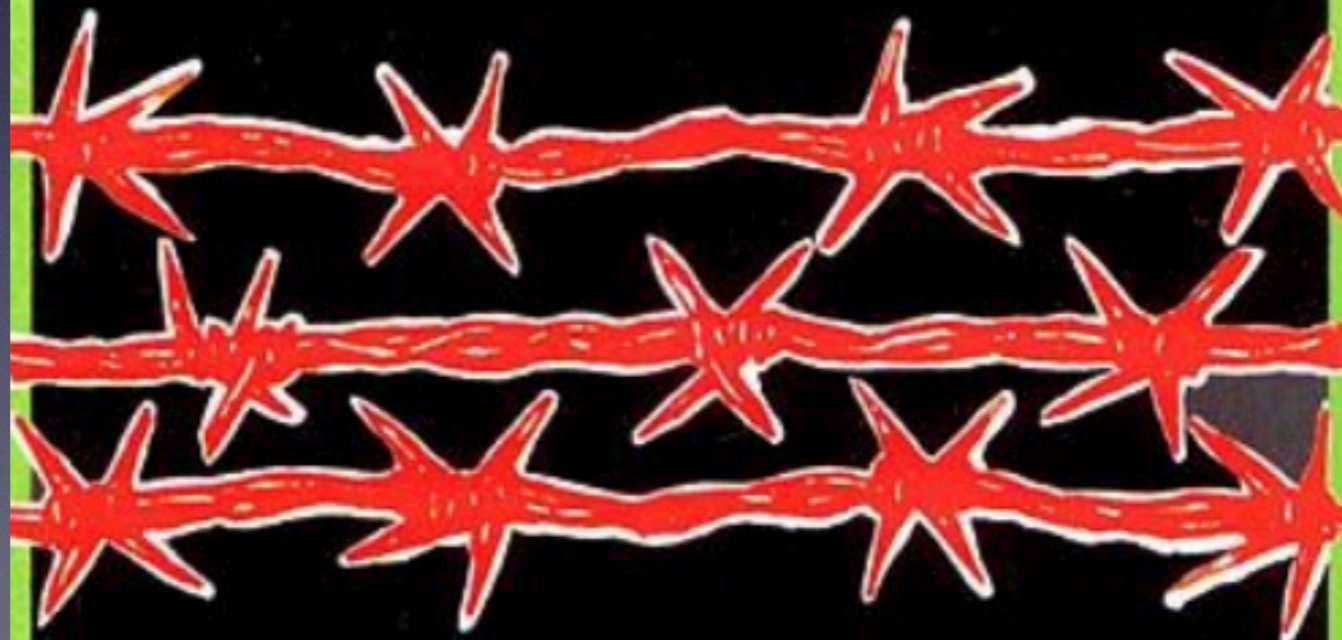
- definition: irrational hatred of Jews
- Jewish holidays: “They tried to kill us. We won. Let’s eat
- “New Testament”: more anti-Jewish over time
- Crusades: mobs murdered Jews as “Christ killers”
- blood libel: accusation that Jewish people used the blood of Christians in religious rituals, especially in the preparation of Passover bread
- Christian Supremacy / Supersessionism

'First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out –  
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists  
and I did not speak out –  
because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade  
unionists and I did not speak out –  
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me –  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.'



Pastor Niemoeller (*victim of the Nazis*)

# antisemitism

- Canary in the coalmine of society's intolerance
- Irony: Zionism was inspired by the hope that if Jews had their own country, then that would solve the problem of antisemitism.



# philosopher Karl Popper (1902 – 1994)

- Grandparents: all Jewish.
- Parents: converted to Lutheranism as part of a cultural assimilation process
- 1945 (year WWII ended), Popper wrote *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, which included a section on the “**paradox of tolerance**”
- “If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.
- In this formulation, I do not imply, for instance, that we should always suppress the utterance of intolerant philosophies; as long as we can counter them by rational argument and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be unwise.

# philosopher Karl Popper (1902 – 1994)

- But we should claim the right to suppress them if necessary even by force; for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument, but begin by denouncing all argument; they may forbid their followers to listen to rational argument, because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their fists or pistols.
- We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant.
- We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal, in the same way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal. (Vol. 1, Notes to the Chapters: Ch. 7, Note 4)

# Charlottesville (2017)

- Marching: “protect” the statue of Robert E. Lee
- Chanting: “Jews will not replace us”
- President Trump:
  - “very fine people on *both sides*”
  - “egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on *many sides*”
  - pattern of refusal to denounce David Duke, etc.



# Boycott/Divestment/Sanctions (BDS)

To what end?

- stop settlements?
- guarantee right of return? (*Jews as minority in Israel*)

# Deborah Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here & Now*

- Current situation in the West Bank and Gaza is untenable
- Most reasonable solution is two states
- Vast difference between being opposed to various policies of an Israeli government and being an antisemite.

Avraham Burg,  
*The Holocaust Is Over,  
We Must Rise from Its Ashes*

- “The Green Line (1949 Armistice lines after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War) is where Israel will come together when it regains consciousness.
- It is a cornerstone for a new language and a new Israeli imagination”

Avraham Burg,  
*The Holocaust Is Over,  
We Must Rise from Its Ashes*

- Dream of an **International Court of Crimes Against Humanity** on the campus of the national *Yad Vashem* (literally “monument and memorial”)
- Armenian wing, a Serbian wing, exhibits from Rwanda & Namibia; and a presentation honoring the U.S. Indigenous population, Native Americans...
- Teach: how intercultural competency, methods of interrupting racism and dismantling supremacy culture as a counterweight to race-based discrimination & extermination.” [*social construct*]



# Ibram Kendi, How to Be an Anti-racist

- “The opposite of ‘racist’ isn’t ‘not racist.’”
- It is ‘antiracist’
- Need more *anti*-antisemites
- Human rights are *inalienable* not inevitable

# Peter Hayes, *Why?* *Explaining the Holocaust*

“Do not assume that the future cannot help but resemble the past.”

- 1/3 chance of Trump’s election
- George Mitchell (architect of Good Friday agreement that brought peace to northern Ireland): on the eve of the deal, 83% of the people there thought a resolution of their civil war impossible.”

Stable floor for all can help  
protect against populist demagogues

# Peter Hayes, *Why?* *Explaining the Holocaust*

“Beware the beginnings” (342-343)

(MLK: “Noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good”)

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

– United States Department of State (2001)

*Trauma*

# **“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.

# Looking Ahead

**June** (Day 4: Tzfat & the Galilee): **The Quest for the Historical Jesus**  
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**July** (Day 5: Nazareth, Jericho, Ramallah):  
**Settler Colonialism & Palestinian Resistance**

**August** (Day 6: Judean Desert & Jordan Valley):  
**Qumran & the Dead Sea Scrolls**

**September** (Day 7: Masada & Hebron): **Myth & Revolt**

**October** (Day 8: Greater Bethlehem): **Zionism**

**November** (Day 9: *Neve Shalom / Wahat al Salaam*): **Paths to Peace**

**December** (Day 10: Departure): **U.S. Role in Peace Process**

**January** (Integration): **Healing/Transforming Israel/Palestine**

# 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).