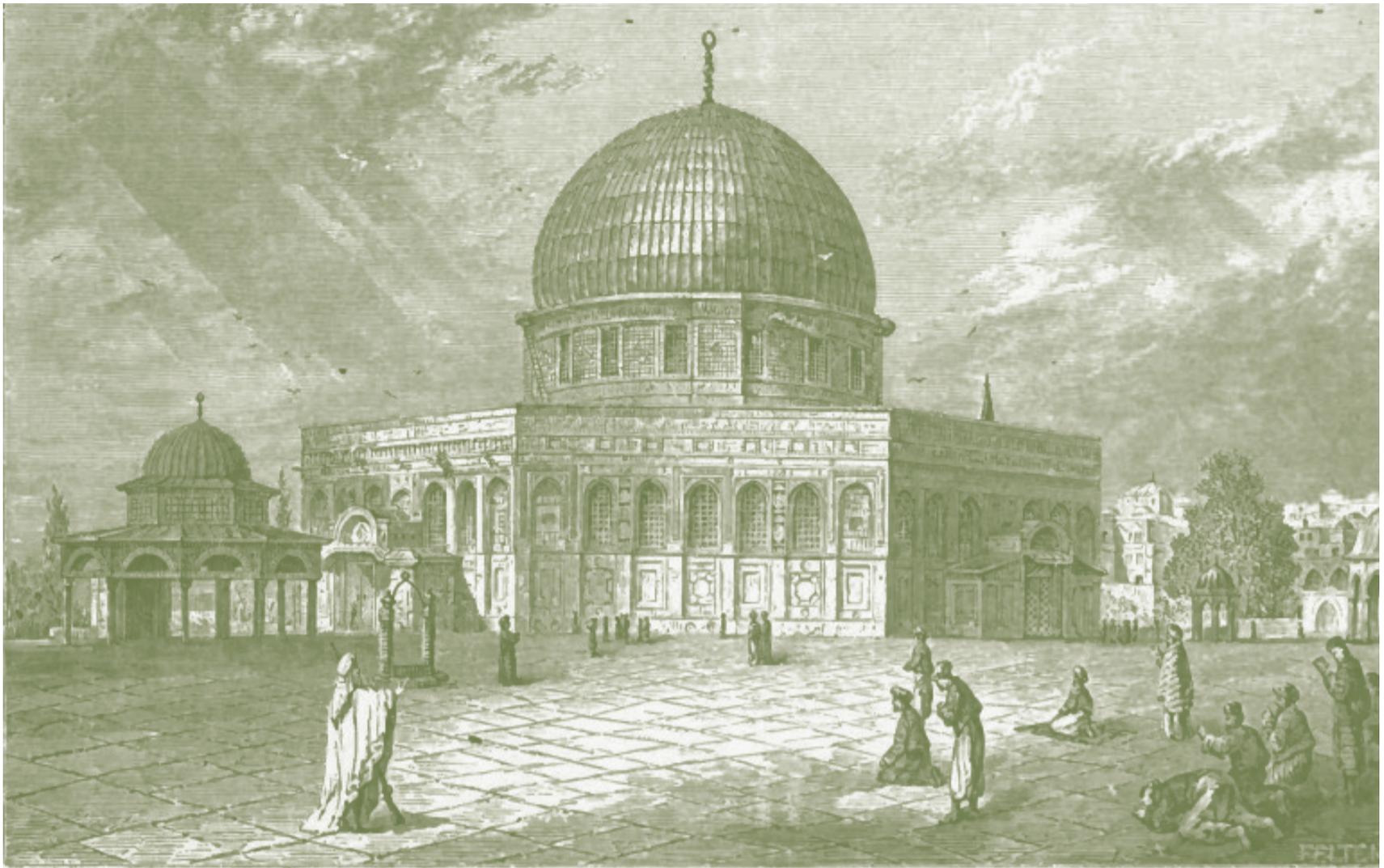


A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

BY DR. ISRAEL HANUKOGLU

Quest *Israel and The Jewish People*

“Israel is the very embodiment of Jewish continuity: It is the only nation on earth that inhabits the same land, bears the same name, speaks the same language, and worships the same God that it did 3,000 years ago. You dig the soil and you find pottery from Davidic times, coins from Bar Kokhba, and 2,000-year-old scrolls written in a script remarkably like the one that today advertises ice cream at the corner candy store.”

— Charles Krauthammer, *The Weekly Standard*, May 11, 1998

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The people of Israel (also called the “Jewish People”) trace their origin to Abraham, who established the belief that there is only one God, the creator of the universe (see Torah). Abraham, his son Yitshak (Isaac), and grandson Jacob (Israel), are referred to as the Patriarchs of the Israelites. All three patriarchs lived in the Land of Canaan, that later came to be known as the Land of Israel. They and their wives are buried in the Ma’arat HaMachpela, the Tomb of the Patriarchs, in Hebron (Genesis Chapter 23).

The name Israel derives from the name given to Jacob (Genesis 32:29). His 12 sons were the kernels of 12 tribes that later developed into the Jewish nation. The name Jew derives from Yehuda (Judah) one of the 12 sons of Jacob (Reuben, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Yisachar, Zevulun, Yosef, Binyamin) (Exodus 1:1). So, the names Israel, Israeli, or Jewish refer to people of the same origin.



The descendants of Abraham crystallized into a nation at about 1300 B.C.E. after their Exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses (Moshe in Hebrew). Soon after the Exodus, Moses transmitted to the people of this new emerging nation, the Torah and the Ten Commandments (Exodus Chapter 20). After 40 years in the Sinai desert, Moses led them to the Land of Israel, that is cited in The Bible as the land promised by God to the descendants of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 17:8).

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The people of modern day Israel share the same language and culture shaped by the Jewish heritage and religion passed through generations starting with the founding father Abraham (ca. 1800 B.C.E.). Thus, Jews have had continuous presence in the land of Israel for the past 3,300 years.

The rule of Israelites in the land of Israel starts with the conquests of Joshua (ca. 1250 B.C.E.). The period from 1000-587 B.C.E. is known as the “Period of the Kings.” The most noteworthy kings were King David (1010-970 B.C.E.), who made Jerusalem the Capital of Israel, and his son Solomon (Shlomo, 970-931 B.C.E.), who built the first Temple in Jerusalem as prescribed in the Tanach (Old Testament).

In 587 B.C.E., Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar’s army captured Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and exiled the Jews to Babylon (modern day Iraq).

The year 587 B.C.E. marks a turning point in the history of the region. From this year onwards, the region was ruled or controlled by a succession of superpower empires of the time in the following order: Babylonian, Persian, Greek Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Empires, Islamic and Christian crusaders, Ottoman Empire, and the British Empire.

After the exile by the Romans at 70 C.E., the Jewish people migrated to Europe and North Africa. In the Diaspora (scattered outside of the Land of Israel), they established rich cultural and economic lives, and contributed greatly to the societies where they lived. Yet, they continued their national culture and prayed to return to Israel through centuries. In the first half of the 20th century there were major waves of Jewish immigration back to Israel from Arab countries and from Europe. During the British rule in Palestine, the Jewish



M^t PISGAH

M^t NEBO

YE MEN OF GALLILEE WHY STAND YE
SAME JESUS WHICH IS TAKEN UP
AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO INTO

GAZING INTO HEAVEN ? THIS
INTO HEAVEN SHALL SO COME
HEAVEN. ACTS I.11.

MOUNTAINS BEYOND

RIVER JORDAN

TOMB OF THE
VIRGIN MARY

GRAVES OF THE
PROPHETS

GETHESEMANE

THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT

THE BROOK KIDRON

THE ASCENSION

THE WAY TO
DAMASCUS
DAMASCUS
GATE

BENJAMIN'S
GATE

ST STEPHENS
GATE

POOL OF BETHESDA

HEROD'S
GRAVE

AGRIPPAS
CASTLE

HOSPITAL

THE TEMPLE OF
SOLOMON

CHALDEAN'S
TENTS

SEMICURVES
OF THE KINGS

COMMON
PRISON

JUDGMENT
HALL

CASTLE OF
ANTONIA

QUEEN HELENA'S
MONUMENT

HEROD'S
PALACE

COURT OF
JUSTICE

QUEEN'S
HOUSE

TENTS OF
TITUS

PARK

QUEEN HELENA'S
PALACE

HOUSE OF
ANTIOCHUS

CASTLE OF
JUDAS MACCABEUS

POMPEY'S
TENTS

TOWERS OF
PSEPHINUS

JOSEPHUS' HOUSE

CASTLE OF
ANTIOCHUS

MOUNT
ACRA

KING JEHOSEPHAT'S
SANHEDRIM

TOWER OF
MARIAMNE

CORNER
GATE

JUDGMENT
GATE

YE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM WEEP NOT FOR ME BUT
WEEP FOR YOURSELVES & CHILDREN LU.23 32.



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people were subject to great violence and massacres directed by Arab civilians or forces of the neighboring Arab states. During World War II, the Nazi regime in Germany decimated about 6 million Jews creating the great tragedy of The Holocaust.

In 1948, the Jewish Community in Israel under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion reestablished sovereignty over their ancient homeland. The Declaration of Independence of the modern State of Israel was announced on the day that the last British forces left Israel (May 14, 1948).

For further information and resources see:

The Crux of WORLD HISTORY - First Chapter: The Birth of the Jewish People by Francisco Gil-White. This is the best revolutionary exposition of the influence of Judaism on world culture in a historical perspective.

Arab-Israeli conflict

Historical Maps and Atlases

Israel Wars and Maps

Jewish People

Time-Line for the History of Judaism

Photographs of Israel from 1800's and early 20th century

Historical highlights of the history of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Foreign Empires that ruled in Israel

587 B.C.E. — Babylonian

Major Events: Destruction of the first Temple.

538-333 B.C.E. — Persian

Major Events: Return of the exiled Jews from Babylon and construction of the second Temple (520-515 B.C.E.).

333-63 B.C.E. — Hellenistic

Major Events: Conquest of the region by the army of Alexander the Great (333 B.C.E.). The Greeks generally allowed the Jews to run their state. But, during the rule of King Antiochus IV, the Temple was desecrated. This brought about the revolt of the Maccabees, who established an independent rule. The related events are celebrated during the Hanukah holiday.

63 B.C.E.-313 C.E. — Roman

Major Events: The Roman army led by Titus conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple at 70 C.E. Jewish people were then exiled and dispersed to the Diaspora. In 132 C.E., Bar Kokhba organized a revolt against Roman rule, but was killed in a battle in Bethar in Judean Hills. Subsequently the Romans decimated the Jewish community, renamed Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina and Judea as Palaestina to obliterate Jewish identification with the Land of Israel (the word Palestine, and the Arabic word Filastin originate from this Latin name). The remaining Jewish community moved to northern towns in the Galilee. Around 200 C.E. the Sanhedrin was moved to Tzippori (Zippori, Sepphoris). The Head of Sanhedrin, Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi (Judah the Prince), compiled the Jewish oral law, Mishna.

313-636 C.E. — Byzantine

636-1099 C.E. — Arab

Major Events: Dome of the Rock was built by Caliph Abd el-Malik on the grounds of the destroyed Jewish Temple.

1099-1291 C.E. — Crusaders

Major Events: The crusaders came from Europe to capture the Holy Land following an appeal by Pope Urban II, and massacred the non-Christian population. Later Jewish community in Jerusalem expanded by immigration of Jews from Europe.

1291-1516 C.E. — Mamluk

1516-1918 C.E. — Ottoman

Major Events: During the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566 C.E.) the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem were rebuilt. Population of the Jewish community in Jerusalem increased.

1917-1948 C.E. — British

Major Events: Great Britain recognized the rights of the Jewish people to establish a "national home in Palestine." Yet they greatly curtailed entry of Jewish refugees into Israel even after World War II. They split Palestine by mandate into an Arab state which has become the modern day countries of Jordan and Israel.

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Arab-Israeli Wars

A day after the declaration of independence of the State of Israel, armies of five Arab countries, Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq, invaded Israel. This marked the beginning of the War of Independence. Arab states have jointly waged four full scale wars against Israel:

1948 War of Independence

1956 Sinai War

1967 Six Day War

1973 Yom Kippur War

Despite the numerical superiority of the Arab armies, Israel defended itself each time and won. After each war, the Israeli army withdrew from most of the areas it captured. This is unprecedented in world history and shows Israel's willingness to reach peace even at the risk of fighting for its very existence each time anew.

Ingathering of the Israelites

This drawing by Dr. Semion Natliashvili depicts the modern ingathering of the Jewish People after 2,000 years of Diaspora. The center image of the picture shows both young and old men attired in prayer shawls and reading from a Torah scroll that has united the Jewish People. The written portion shows Shema Yisrael Adonay Eloheyenu Adonay Echad (Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One).

The Star of David symbolizes the gathering of the Jewish People from all corners of the world including Georgia (country of birth of the artist), Morocco, Russia, America, China, Ethiopia, Europe, and other countries joining together in dance and celebration. Other images inside the star symbolize modern Israeli industry, agriculture and military. The images on the margins of the picture symbolize the major threats that the Jewish people faced in exile starting from the Exodus from Egypt, followed by Romans, Arabs, and culminating in the gas-chambers of the Holocaust in Europe.

