

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Israel - Palestine History

The Real History of Israel and Palestine

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



When people speak about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the conversation tends to fall into familiar tropes: Israel was a freebie given to the Jews as an apology for the Holocaust; the Jewish people's only claim to Israel is in a supposedly mythical Bible; Palestine was a state before they were colonized by the British who shipped usurping Jews in; and there was no tension between Jews and Arabs before the Balfour Declaration in 1917 or the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

All of this is incorrect, and something that requires more education and widespread knowledge to correct the record and counter the prevailing narratives dominating the discourse today.

The Jewish people are indigenous to the land of Israel. There has been a continuous Jewish presence in the Holy Land from time immemorial. The Jewish people's first association is mentioned in the Bible when God commands Abraham to go to Canaan for the first time, and Abraham proceeds to buy land from the ancient (now non-existent) people of his time. He expands his brood that will grow to be the Jewish people in places and cities that still exist today, and proves the Jewish connection to the land since their inception as a nation in 1855 B.C.E., around 2,500 years before the founding of Islam.

Throughout the Bible, as verified by the archaeological sites uncovered in Israel, the Jewish people lived there and survived various exiles and displacements to return with Joshua around 1400 B.C.E. For the next millennium, the Jews were primarily based in Israel, and served G-d first with the Tabernacle in the still existent town of Shiloh and then in the two Temples in Jerusalem on the now Temple Mount. They had many rulers and leaders in this period, including David, Solomon, Saul and Samuel, and relics of that time have been dug up to enlighten us about that era over recent decades. Jesus himself was born towards the end of this time period, about 600 years before Islam was founded.

After the destruction of the Temples in the Babylonian and then Roman times of global dominance, Jewish independent sovereignty was lost from 70 Common Era (C.E.) till 1948: just 75 years ago. Despite their right to self-determination taken from them, Jews maintained a consistent presence in their homeland despite the ensuing parade of invaders of the next centuries, beginning with the Romans. The Romans imposed a colonial state (approx. 70 CE- 324 CE) on the Jewish people and renamed the area Syria-Palaestina, and eventually many Jews were killed, sold into slavery and exiled.

While the Jewish people were forcibly dispersed across the world, many of them stayed in their land until the height of the Byzantine period (324-638), when a majority were massacred or forced to flee. However, a tenacious group hid and continued the active Jewish people's presence in Israel.

The Prophet Muhammed was born in 570 CE and established Islam, through which various factions and adherents invaded Israel and remained until 1099 CE. Then came the Crusaders who invaded and overthrew the Muslims until they themselves were unseated in 1291 by Saladin, till the Ottomans conquered the land from 1517-1917.

In 1917, the British Mandate of Palestine occupied Israel following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, and issued the Balfour Declaration supporting a Jewish homeland in the region, righting a historic wrong. That dream was fulfilled when the modern State of Israel was re-established in Israel in 1948 - a true modern-day miracle.

The history of the supposed state of Palestine is considerably shorter. In 1967, after Israel regained control over Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan in a defensive war where they beat back five invading armies, the flag and rhetoric of the just three-year-old Palestinian Liberation Organization - then a recognized terror organization - was adopted, calling for the destruction of Israel and creation of a state bearing the name which Roman and subsequent colonizers had bestowed on it - Palestine - because they had no history of their own there.

Recognizing the reality of the situation and the need to share a small country with a people who had settled there, Israel has advanced peace talks at many times throughout its history to enable the two-state solution, yet have always been rebuffed by Palestinian leaders who refuse to accept a Jewish state, and will try again and again to wish it away through violence and terrorism. Notably, Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza in 2005, which it had captured from Egypt in 1967. In exchange for its magnanimity, all it got in return was tens of thousands of missiles leading to October 7th.

Israel was not a random country handed to the Jewish people in sympathy after the Holocaust. There was never an independent nation or state of Palestine in history with its own unique identity, currency or leaders that the Jewish people usurped, until one was invented to counter Israel's establishment and historical claims to the land. The laughable claims that Jews were safe in Muslim lands until the founding of Israel is contradicted by years of Arab massacres on Jewish people for centuries beforehand. Israel doesn't exist because of the Balfour Declaration and isn't a British colony or a nation of European settlers because the Jewish people are indigenous to the land and have returned home to stay.

History, archeology and most importantly truth testify to Israel's indisputable right to their own homeland, the only Jewish state in a world with 22 Arab countries and 49 Islamic majority countries, a tiny strip of less than 11,000 kilometers while the Arab countries comprise 13 million kilometers.

It's time for the world to get educated and stand on the right side of history against the tidal wave of misinformation and antisemitism that we are witnessing today. The Jewish people have a land of their own, and it's here to stay.

Yonatan Hamburger is a rabbi with Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer currently living in Florida.

Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper.

If so, please write.

Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.



All Hat And No Horse

People separated by time and geography are likely to develop distinct characteristics including language. Even if they share a common language, these separations can produce different accents or dialects. In the United States alone, at least 15 different accents are recognizable, and separate from those produced by immigration and ethnicity.

The state of Maine, for example, is home to an accent that is different from that of the rest of New England, which itself is recognizable in its distinct vowel sounds and ties to British English. The dialect of the Southern Appalachians is unique and distinct from the broader range of Southern English, with influences from Scots-Irish, English, German, and Welsh settlers which produced singular nuances due to geographic isolation.

In addition to heterogeneity of dialect, different life experiences also produce idioms and expressions unique to their regions, and this I have found most interesting and enjoyable traveling in North America.

I'm particularly fond of the idioms of rural life, some of which transcend geographic boundaries because they grow from common experiences on the farm and the ranch. Life in the cities seems to me to produce more homogeneity in language. The faster pace calls for efficiency and expedience. On the farm, the pace is set by seasons and natural rhythms, and there is more time to consider the crafting of a truly satisfying turn of phrase. Let's enjoy a few of those before they disappear into the history books.

One of my all-time favorites comes from my boss when I worked for the Forest Service in the mountains of New Mexico. He was a self-described "Okie from Muskogee," and his ranching experience growing up helped him feel quite at home in the cattle country of the far west. When he observed a braggart, a pretender, a big talker, he would say, "He's all hat and no horse," or "Lots of manure but not a cow in sight."

Many bosses today could take a page from Jimmy's book when it came to inspiring workers to achieve their best efforts. Every morning when we were discussing the day's work, he would bring up a particular problem and say, "Now what a man could do..." and we knew not only exactly how he wanted it done but that he trusted us to do it.

"He's got a face like the south end of a north-bound mule." I've heard that expression in rural areas from the Southern Appalachians to the Southern Rockies. "Take a tater and wait," my grandfather would tell his children when they were impatient. From my great-grandfather, "That politician would lie as quick as a cat would lick its hind end."

Some of my favorite Appalachian expressions were the "punch lines" of well-known vignettes which might have been unknown outside of the community centered on the particular cove, creek, or church where they originated. From the Hightower community in Towns County, passed down from the mid-1800s, I often heard "Drive the cart on" when we exhibited the laziness particular to teenagers growing up. Here's the story behind the expression:

A man who lived on the head of the creek became too lazy to farm. Time passed and he didn't make a crop one year. He was soon out of food. "Root, hog, or die hungry," a neighbor told him. "It's no use," said the man. "I'm just going to lay down and wait to die." Winter was approaching, and the community was sad for the man, but life was hard and they had their own mouths to feed.

When the man became too weak to get out of bed, they sent for the undertaker so they could bury him before the ground froze. The man's neighbor couldn't stand the thought of letting him die, so he loaded up his wagon with corn from his crib and drove his horses hard to overtake the undertaker. "Stop the cart," he said. "I've brought you enough corn to last you through the winter."

Weak from hunger, the man raised himself up and with a feeble voice said, "Is it shelled?" "Well no," said the neighbor. "I didn't have time." The man slowly laid back down and said, "Drive the cart on boys, drive the cart on."

Sadly, the ubiquity of our communication matrix is steadily erasing the distinctive accents, idioms, and even the folk tales of our people. The influence of geographic separation began to decline with the interstate highway and has all but disappeared with a smartphone in every hand, all the time, everywhere. The influences of faith, family, and cultural heritage are replaced by the questionable choices of the bureaucratic state and a handful of corporations, news talkers, and movie producers.

Consider how few Americans (about 7%) have ever served in the military, but how many of us know what it means when I say, "I've got your six," or a number of other expressions unique to the armed forces. Consider how, through the influence of media, literacy, and grammar seek the lowest common denominator, and how in one generation the grammatically correct "I am going to" devolved to "Ima."

As easily as PFAS pollutes drinking water, the communications matrix influences the minds of millions through whatever is chosen to become popular, fashionable, or true, and there is one aspect of this phenomenon that I find particularly distasteful.

What was once considered foul language has become all but socially acceptable, while what was once considered grammar has all but become foul language. When is the last time you watched a recently made movie that was devoid of a word considered by some to be a throwback to the medieval acronym for "fornicate under consent of king?" This is not the only example by far of a trend toward language that emphasizes body parts, bodily functions, violence, misogyny, and hatefulness.

I've grown weary of the debate with those who find nothing wrong with "colorful language." They tell me, "It doesn't affect you, so why do you care? I've got a right to say whatever I want." To which I reply, "I have a right to break wind while I'm on the elevator with you. Do you think I should exercise that right?"

It does matter because thoughts are things, and a culture obsessed with pronouns should not be willfully blind to the effects of words that exist only to convey contempt. They are the verbal equivalent of throwing trash out the car window, and any argument otherwise is all hat and no horse.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Spring Peepers

As we move from winter into spring, the nighttime seems to come more alive. More and more animals will be roaming around, and insects start to show back up outside. One of the earliest heralds of spring are the spring peepers. These little guys start coming out in February to let us know that warmer temperatures are not too far away. Let's talk about who these spring peepers are and why they are peeping.

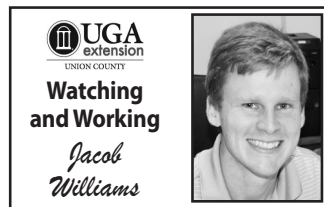
The scientific name for the spring peeper is *Pseudacris crucifer*. They are a small frog that measures from one to one and a half inches long. They weigh in at about two tenths of an ounce. These tiny guys are still able to make some pretty serious noise. Their peep is high-pitched, which means that it can be heard from a mile away. I've heard the sound described like the chirp from a baby chick. The trill is brief and repeated at about one second intervals. A large number of peepers peeping at the same time is called a chorus. Large choruses can sound like sleigh bells. The males are the ones making all the noise, as they are trying to attract a mate. Their peep can become more aggressive sounding as they compete with other males for better spots to attract the females.

These little frogs are abundant in Georgia. Their skin color ranges from tan to brown to gray. Their most distinctive feature is the dark X on their back. This is also where they get their species name, crucifer. At this time of year, they start coming down from the woodlands to find a mate near a water source. Once a mate has been found, the female will lay eggs in the water that hatch into tadpoles in one to two weeks. They prefer shallow, semi-permanent pools of water. These pools are less likely to have predatory fish in them. After about two to three months, the tadpoles will undergo metamorphosis and change into a frog. These little frogs live for about 3 years. Most of their lives are spent in the woods where they eat insects. They'll consume beetles, ants, flies, and spiders. They only come down to the water's edge during their mating season.

Before coming out for mating spring peepers are in hibernation. They like to hibernate under logs and loose bark. In the winter their body fluid will freeze.

Spring peepers are hard to spot because they are so small and like to spend their time down in the brush. They have large pads on their toes for climbing, but they rarely climb very high. Most of time they do their insect hunting at night. However, if they are living in a dense, damp forest they may hunt in the day and at night. The reason for this is that frogs must be careful to avoid their skin drying out.

If you have questions about spring peepers or other wildlife, contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



Letters To The Editor

Ask a Dinosaur

Dear Editor,

There are some who go to bed each night in a dither over global warming and its possible effects on our world. They have wonderful ideas, at least in their own minds, as to what we should do to save planet earth. Global warming may or may not be a real threat. It gets warmer and then it gets cooler. If you don't believe that, ask a dinosaur.

Warming and cooling seems to be cyclical and maybe the Earth's way of escaping boredom. According to climate change experts, the major offenders are fossil fuels, coal-fired generation of electricity, industrial manufacturing, and cows. Cows are said to be responsible for 3.7% of greenhouse gases.

If I understand this correctly, we need to reduce the use of fossil fuels by replacing our vehicles with electric vehicles that are unproven replacements at this time. We need to put restraints on manufacturing that would make their products more expensive. And last, but not least, we need to put catalytic converters on cows.

Those who are genuinely concerned about global warming and want to make a contribution toward saving our planet should seriously reduce their use of fossil fuels, radically reduce their consumption of electricity and the purchasing of unnecessary manufactured items. A novel idea for the global warming enthusiast would be to construct an outdoor privy and install a charging station next to it for their electric vehicle. The dinosaurs would love that!

Gene Vickers

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Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month:	School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday:	Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month:	Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
Second Wednesday of each month:	Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month:	Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:	Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
	Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	TC Water Authority Board Meeting	6 pm

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