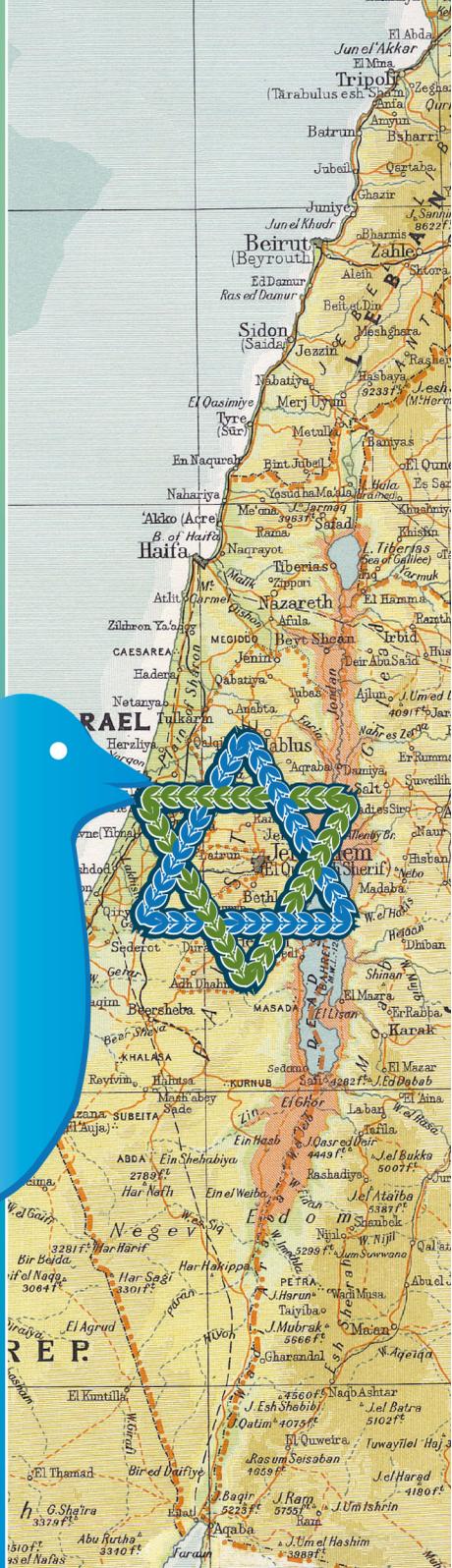


THE ENGAGEMENT

The Roots and Solution
to the Problem in the
Holy Land

Tsvi Misinai



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The roots and solution to the problem in the Holy Land

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ABSTRACT

The struggle over control of the Land of Israel has been going on now for many years and there is no end in sight. Neither side to the conflict is able to realize its goals. The methods of fighting are turning more dangerous from year to year to the point where it threatens world peace.

The main obstacle to a peaceful solution is the Palestinian's demand for the **right of return** of their refugees to the State of Israel. This demand reflects the Palestinian desire to control the entire country. The obstacle is based on focusing on rights derived from the past instead of focusing on the future. However, to effectively remove this obstacle, a comprehensive examination of the history of the country and its current inhabitants is required. As it turns out, such an examination allows for seeing the situation under a new light, one which enables resolving the conflict.

In the words of Albert Einstein, "You can't solve problems by using the same consciousness that created them." In the same spirit, this new perspective presented before us creates a new consciousness which illustrates that contrary to what is presently the accepted opinion by many, not only has the Zionist movement not finished its role, but actually a huge new challenge stands on its doorsteps.

In order to resolve the conflict once and for all, one has to keep an open mind and have room for a profound change in attitude regarding the history and identity of the parties involved:

The people of Israel are composed of two main groups. The first was exiled from the Land of Israel after the destruction of the second Jewish temple and has managed to preserve its religion and national identity throughout time, until the Zionist movement returned a major part of it to its homeland – the Land of Israel. The second group consists of those who remained within the Land of Israel, though they were forced to abandon their religion. Over the years the latter group lost its original identity. Due to the change in the name of the land by a Roman emperor from Judea to Palestina, the descendants of these forced converts, together with a small minority of others are recently called “Palestinians.”

As a result of losing its identity, this group suffered greatly and caused many others to suffer, as well. The time is now ripe for the Zionist movement to continue its historic role and enable the **real return** – this of the Palestinians to their original nation. Such a return shall take place on a national base without any religious coercion, according to the Jewish law relevant in these circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

“Every truth goes through three stages:

First it is being ridiculed at;

then, it is being blantly objected to;

At last, it is being taken for granted.”

Shoppenhauer

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is derived from two contradictory fundamental positions regarding rights for the Land of Israel. The unceasing struggle has claimed many lives and caused considerable suffering to the region’s residents, with no end in sight.

To end the ongoing cycle of violence and destruction, Jews and Palestinians must move beyond the conventions that have fashioned stale thinking. They must make creative use of old-new findings related to the Palestinian identity. Not only do these findings allow for a more effective way of communicating Israel's position, more importantly they **offer a just and lasting solution to the conflict.**

The findings described below are based on scientific research in a variety of fields. The most extensive of these are a series genetic studies and an historical-demographic research of the Land of Israel covering the past 2,000 years. These studies lead to an amazing conclusion:

Not only is the prevailing idea regarding the Arab identity of the Palestinian population in error, but rather there also exists a surprisingly solid basis for quite another Palestinian identity.

The revolutionary idea about the Jewish origin of the majority of the Palestinians was raised by **David Ben Gurion** (the first prime minister of the State of Israel) and **Yitzhak Ben-Zvi** (the second president of the State of Israel) during the period between the world wars in an attempt to provide an answer to the difficult question regarding the non-Jewish population in the Land of Israel.

As a result of the Holocaust, the Zionist enterprise engendered tremendous worldwide support, and no longer the Zionist leadership needed to grapple with the problem. More recently, the intensity of the memory of the Holocaust has dimmed. In light of the mounting terror, the Zionist leadership has again found it necessary to revisit the question of the non-Jewish population. Israel's leadership today is preoccupied with the running of the country and the complex problems created by neglecting the Palestinian issue. Subsequently it is unlikely that it would rediscover the novel approach of Ben Gurion and Ben-Zvi with its potential for finding a path to a peaceful and permanent resolution of the conflict.

The accepted historical thought is that the Jews who remained in the Land of Israel after the destruction of the Second Temple were cut off from their land in various ways. This way of thought means that the majority of the land was made up of foreigners until the time of the establishment of the State of Israel. However, this speculation does not rest on historical facts. The "disappearance" of the Jews from the Land of Israel has always remained a mystery.

The hypothesis of David Ben Gurion and Ben-Zvi on the issue of the Palestinian identity has been significantly enhanced and its validity has become even more pronounced by a series of genetic studies that have been published over the past years. These studies demonstrate that the Jews and Palestinians are genetically very close, much more so than the Jews are close to Arabs or other peoples. Following the publication of these studies, additional studies on the subject have been conducted and published, reinforcing the revolutionary claim as to Jewish-Israelite identity of the Palestinians.

The consequences of the precise evidence concerning Palestinian identity may have vast implications for the future of the region. First and foremost it can be used in a communicative effort in order to minimize the hatred between the parties. Furthermore, it would be a terrible error to ignore these findings when attempting to settle this complex conflict, even if a major paradigm shift is required.

For many years no one has succeeded in even proposing a solution acceptable to both parties of their own free will. Every previous suggested solution has been based on conventional thinking, depriving the parties from exercising their free will. Subsequently, every agreement thus far has proven temporary or a mere stratagem. Therefore, all that has been previously agreed upon, even after a great deal of effort, has only led to an exacerbation of

the conflict with grave consequences for the peace of the region, as well as for world peace.

All the proposed compromises do not deal with the roots of the hatred between the parties nor do they even remotely satisfy their just desires. Each one in turn becomes an additional stage in the history of the growing violence in the Middle East.

In order for any settlement to be freely agreed upon it must get to the roots of the problem. **There is no substitute for finding a solution based on the recognition of the deep roots of the conflict and for proposing a solution accordingly!**

ACTIVITIES AND STUDIES REGARDING PALESTINIAN IDENTITY

The first revelation concerning the identity of the Palestinians was published by German researchers in 1860, following the settlement of the German **Templars** in the Holy Land. Colonel Condor, from the Institute for Israel Research, discovered traces of Aramaic and Hebrew in the language of the Fellahin of the land. Subsequent to this revelation, **Israel Belkind** investigated the identity of the veteran residents of the Land of Israel. In 1894, he was the first Jew to preach about recognizing the Jewish-Israelite identity of the Palestinians and about entering into rapprochement with them. He published articles, collected and recorded testimonies^{5,7} and taught that "**the Arabs in the Land of Israel are the blood brothers of the Jews.**" In 1905, the Zionist thinker, **Ber Borokhov** claimed¹⁰ that "**the Fellahin (peasants) in the Land of Israel were also the descendants of the remnants of the Jewish agricultural settlements.**"

Ben Gurion and Ben-Zvi adopted the idea and found support for it. They raised the finding in a co-authored work entitled "**The Land of Israel in the Past and in the Present**" that they wrote in 1918¹. Making reference to this finding was done primarily for the purpose of justifying the Zionist enterprise. Additionally, it contained the hope that the Jewish immigration to Israel would alter

the situation and that the Palestinians would become a minority that would be absorbed among the people of Israel.

David Ben Gurion attributed great importance to the subject and believed that this was the key to a future solution! In his article, entitled “**An Inquiry into the Origins of the Fellahin,**” published in 1917, he summarizes^{4,7}:

"In the area of the Carmel and the Sharon Valley we encounter in many Fellahin villages, blonde hair and blue eyes and the outward appearance of their faces attest to their forefathers having come here many hundreds of years ago from northern Europe . . . but despite many mixed marriages, the vast majority of Fellahin and Moslems in the western Land of Israel, presents us with another race type and a complete ethnic unit and there is no doubt that in their veins flows much Jewish blood, the blood of those Jewish farmers, the masses who, in troubled times, chose to deny their faith as long as they would not be uprooted from their lands."

Few years later, Ben Gurion attempted to bring about cooperation between Jewish and Palestinian workers. Ben-Zvi invested substantial effort in researching the subject by exhaustively seeking testimonies throughout the Land of Israel on both sides of the Jordan River (during a very long period, the western part of today's Kingdom of Jordan was considered the same country as the one west of the Jordan river). In 1932, he documented his findings in a book entitled, “Populations of Our Land.” Following the publication of his book, Ben-Zvi continued with his research on this subject.

The massive Arab immigration to the Land of Israel simultaneous with the Jewish immigration, in conjunction with violent events instigated by a small number of Palestinians against the Jews, led to intense hatred between the two groups. It is reasonable to speculate that these circumstances influenced Yitzhak Ben-Zvi to abandon his work on the subject. The difficult events of the time, including the Holocaust and the 1948 war, forced Ben-Zvi to attend to more immediate issues.

In the 1948 War the Land of Israel was partitioned. The number of Palestinians who remained in the State of Israel (the part of the land that constituted the Jewish state) was small and its portion diminished even further as a result of the growing number of Jewish immigrants that flowed into the state after its establishment. At the time, the leadership of the young Jewish state was busy focusing on the integration of penniless immigrants from a variety of cultures, and therefore, the subject of the Palestinian population did not merit sufficient attention.

The numerous confrontations and wars between the Jews and the Arabs increased the mutual hatred and exacerbated the differences between the two, inhibiting the development of any thoughts regarding a rapprochement between the Jews and the Palestinians.

In addition, it must be noted that when first presented, this revolutionary approach did not rely on genetic studies that have since been conducted, adding a great deal of credibility to the methodology and analysis behind the proposal. Regardless, Ben Gurion kept in mind his original findings, and at first, attempted to put them to use with the Bedouin peoples in Israel as they were already friendly to Israel, and served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The program that Ben Gurion planned for the Bedouin peoples came to be known as **yihud** (Judaizing). The term was coined to distinguish the process from conversion, as it did not emphasize religion among a population that was secular.

In 1956, Ben Gurion appointed a task group, headed by **Moshe Dayan (who later became the chief of staff of the Israeli military) and Hai'yim Levkov** to advance the idea of Judaizing the Bedouin peoples. The group brought in religious Jews to instruct the Bedouin peoples about Jewish traditions. However, these instructors were unused to the difficult way of life in the Bedouin tents and abandoned their task at the outset. Claiming that Judaizing the Bedouin peoples would anger the world's Moslems, Dayan caused Ben Gurion to abandon the idea.

The military successes of Israel in its wars against the Arabs led to the deterioration of the problem's consequences. The Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were

added to the "Arabs from the Green Line" that Israel governed. However, it was the first *intifada* in 1987 that newly raised the problem of this population after it had been neglected for many years.

Subsequently, two important events occurred which impacted this subject. The early 1990s brought in the first publication of genetic studies, though of limited scope, pointing to the genetic closeness between Palestinians and Jews. Simultaneously, the Oslo Accords began a process of separation between the Jews and most of the "Arabs" in the Land of Israel.

The problems presented by the Oslo Accords and subsequent events led to further genetic research investigating the closeness between the Palestinians and the Jews. The new studies were published close to time of the outbreak of the second *intifada*. Following these genetic studies, two other studies were conducted. The first, published in 2003 by **Elon Yarden**, examines the identity of the Palestinian population from a geographical-historical perspective. The second research, published in 2006 by the author of this booklet, considers the demographic-historical perspective of the problem.

GENETICS AND OTHER NATURAL SCIENCE FINDINGS

A number of genetic studies were published on the subject of the closeness between Palestinians and Jews in the years 2000 and 2001. Professor **Ariella Oppenheim** of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem conducted a series of genetic research studies in cooperation with other research institutions^{12,13,14}. Though extremely important, the findings of these studies in and of themselves would not stir serious repercussions. However, in conjunction with other research results and with the irresolvable situation in the Middle East, these findings acquire great importance.

The genetic research conducted on the male Y chromosome found that **there is a great genetic kinship between the Palestinians and the Jews, similar to that which exists between the various Jewish communities. In fact, the research illustrated that 82% of Palestinians from west of the Jordan River (including those referred to as Israel's Arabs) are genetically closely related to Jews.**

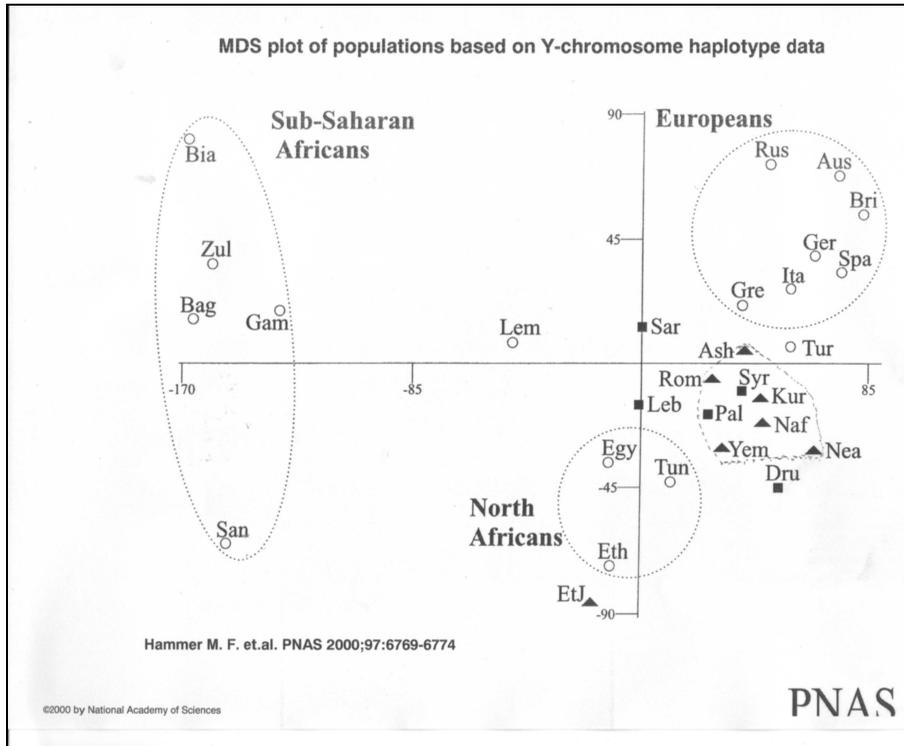
Additionally, it was found that **Palestinians are genetically much closer to Ashkenazi Jews** (Jews who came to Israel from European countries) **than they are to the Arabs.** Similarly, Ashkenazi Jews are considerably genetically close to Jews of eastern descent. These findings not only strengthen the insights of Ben Gurion and Ben-Zvi, but also dispel contradictory claims like those of Syria's late President Hafez Assad that state that Ashkenazi Jewry

is descended from the Kazars (a Caucasian nation that temporarily adopted Judaism, more than thousand years ago), and therefore they possess no historical claim over the Land of Israel. Other genetic tests showed that only 10-12% of East European Jewry carry different genes than those of the majority of the Jews; this can be attributed to Kazar genes. Furthermore, the research finds, though not in a categorical way, that the Palestinians residing in the mountains are genetically closer to the Jews than are their brothers who dwell in the plains. Similarly, a close genetic relationship was found between Jews and Kurds among whom was found a specific Cohen gene five times more frequently than among the Jews (explanation will given in the **testimonies** chapter).

The graph (on the next page) illustrates these very facts: Ashkenazi Jews (Ash) and Jews of Rome (Rom) are genetically closer to Saudi Arabians (Sar) than Palestinians (Pal) are to Saudi Arabians. Similarly, groups of Jews of different backgrounds (represented by triangles) are each closer to Palestinians than Palestinians are to Egyptians (Egy) or Lebanese (Leb). Only among Syrians, who have a closeness to Jews does a closeness to Palestinians exist.

For the purpose of ascertaining a gender balance, further research was conducted on mitochondrial DNA which is only inherited through matrilineal lineage. Results revealed a close relationship between Palestinians and Jews. Earlier studies, headed

by Prof. Bat-Sheva Tamir Boneh from the University of Tel Aviv, though less precise, illustrate a likeness in enzymes, antibodies and blood groups.



In 2001, *The Human Immunology* magazine published a genetic study and as a result received more than the usual amount of publicity. Following the publication of the article, the magazine instructed readers to destroy it due to the fact that the author had inserted political opinions into the article. The research was conducted by Professor **Antonio Arnez-Vilna**, a Spanish researcher from the **University of Complutensa** in Madrid.¹⁶ He discovered

that the immune systems of the Jews and the Palestinians are extremely close to one another in a way that almost absolutely demonstrates a similar genetic identity.

Simultaneously, a research conducted at the University of Tel Aviv¹⁵ concerning a certain type of inherited deafness widespread among certain sectors of Palestinians, also showed a clear and exclusive closeness to Jews of Ashkenazi extraction that suffer from the same problem. Moreover, only in these two groups is this genetic mutation found to exist!

In addition to the genetic studies, there is a point in mentioning additional studies, which are also based on natural sciences and whose findings are consistent with the genetic findings, even if their scope is relevant only to very limited geographical regions: In burial caves near **Kibbutz Lahav**, north of Be'er Sheba, skeletons were found and identified, using C14 tests, as belonging to people who lived from the first to the fourth century A.D.. Recorded history shows that at that period Jews lived in the area and later Jews together with Christians from the people of Israel. In the same cave additional skeletons were found and identified, by C14 tests and testimonies, as belonging to local Bedouins from the period of end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Pathological examinations performed by Professor Barookh Elsenburg, from the faculty of medicine in Tel Aviv University, showed a very high proximity between the older skeletons and the Bedouin skeletons.

There are many testimonies telling of villagers' Jewish origin from the **Khizmeh** village (located north of Jerusalem). In researching this, a comparative anthropological test was carried out, examining the heads of the villagers and of Jews. Tests revealed such a high closeness between the two proving the Jewish origin of these villagers.

EVIDENCE IN MATTERS OF CUSTOMS AND RELIGION

An additional dimension supporting the findings about the origin of the Palestinians can be found among various Palestinian customs and religious traditions. The collection of testimonials began as early as the beginning of the 20th century.

Ratson Tsdaka, a Samaritan writer, tells of an old Arab woman in the village **Kufar** in the region of Tul-Karem. The old woman told of how her grandmother had instructed her to secretly light candles in hiding on the eve of every Sabbath. The name Kufar means *infidels*. It was named as such by Muslims due to the fact that it was a village where Jews had lived in the past.

Yehuda Boorla, an Israeli writer, described in his book “**Be’ein Cokhav**,” his service as an officer in the Turkish army during WWI and his Arab attendant from the Land of Israel. One section of the book describes a moment of discovery on the part of the attendant. Upon hearing the author speak about the Islamic custom of cutting off the breasts of Jewish women in order to disable the Jews’ ability to continue to exist, the Arab attendant realized that his mother, who suffered from the same deformity, was in reality Jewish. Till today, old Palestinians in Jordan who moved there from the West, tell of this tradition. In fact, they say that this was done in cases where Muslim men married Jewish women, so that the Jewish women would not be able to breastfeed, so that their children would

not take in the milk of their Jewish mothers and they themselves would not be thought to be Jewish.

Yitzhak Ben-Zvi told of the Jewish origin of the residents of the southern Hebron Mountains, and that they observed Jewish traditions as recently as 150 years ago. Years later, they still abstain from eating camel meat (allowed in Islam) and lit candles on the eve of the Sabbath and on Hanukah, often not realizing the origin of these traditions.

Yet another cultural tradition that illustrates the Palestinian-Jewish connection can be seen through the lighting of candles on the holiday of Hanukah. It is a known fact that in the **Makhamara** clan, wine makers situated in eastern **Yatta** (in Judea, the biblical **Yutta**, located south of Hebron) and in the village of **Anza** (located near **Sanur** in Samaria) this custom continues still today. In fact, their neighbors refer to them as Jews. In the possession of one of the respected members of this Yatta town clan who originated from Yemen (which represents half of the town's residents) is a silver Hanukah candelabrum passed down throughout the generations.

Recently, two sets of ancient T'filin were discovered among residents of the north of Mount Hebron; these two are shared among a large group of people. (A T'filin set is made up of two hollow hard leather boxes, filled with scrolls, one for the head – attached to two long leather bands tied to each other for creating a ring to wrap around the head, and one for the arm – attached to a single leather

band. The act of laying the T'filin entails placing the head box upon the forehead held in place by adjusting the prebound band ring around the head, and placing the arm box upon the arm held in place by wrapping the bands around the arm and forearm).

The diminishing custom of laying the T'filin, more common in the past, was mostly practiced when praying for the wellbeing of the sick. So rarely is it practiced, that their creation its and usage became a lost art, as was the method by which the T'filin set was created. However, the custom of placing the T'filin on the head at the time of illness was remembered. As such, it evolved into a general practice used to treat headaches, one which is still practiced in this region as well as that of Jordan and Syria. The result of the physical pressure created by placing the T'filin on the head evolved into the purpose of the custom. Other than among a few people, the true meaning of the T'filin was lost. In addition, due to the fact that the T'filin was used to treat headaches and not arm aches, the traditional method of placing the T'filin upon the arm was also lost.

The act entails the man whose head hurts place the T'filin box (which houses the prayer scroll) on the middle of his forehead and wrap the connected fabric straps around his head. With the use of a key, the man then tightens the strap, thereby creating pressure around the head. The heightened pressure on the head in comparison to the head ache affects the man in a much more severe way, leading the man to believe his original pain had decreased, if not disappeared completely. The apparent use of the fabric straps, rather than of

leather, came from the wish that the real T'filin in the possession of the locals will last for a long period of time. The leather straps were wrapped in fabric for their preservation. Throughout the generations, the existence of leather within the fabric was forgotten and it was believed that the straps themselves were made of fabric, as can be observed by superficial examination.



Three typical shapes of hiding the original star of David on the arcs of entrance doors of old houses in southern Mount Hebron

An additional piece of evidence as to the Jewish background of these numerous residents of Yatta is the Star of David symbol occasionally appearing on top of stone entranceways to homes, which can still be observed in the north of Mount Hebron as well as other places in Judea and Samaria.

Recently, all but one of the old homes marked by the Star of David had been destroyed. In the later built homes which are still standing there already was a need to camouflage the markings of the Star of David. Some of the symbols used include: a six petaled flower placed next to a banana supposedly representing the Muslim crescent, (for the purpose of the confusion); the Muslim five pointed star painted light blue; and a flower-star with eight petals, the likes of which can still be seen in the old homes in southern of Mount Hebron as well as in other locations in Judah and Samaria.

Until 1996, residents of Yatta tended to mourn their dead for seven days. After 1996, the practice was shortened to three days, as is practiced in Islam. Till this day, mourning widows tend to rip their clothing at the funeral and to throw the clothing after the end of the mourning. Leaders of local Muslims tried to stop the custom, claiming that it hurts the dead. This odd claim allows them to argue against this Jewish tradition, without exposing the people to their Jewish origins.

Near the 19th century, the village of Yutta was the only village in the Land of Israel of which all its residents were Jewish. With

time, the following of Jewish customs subsided due to fear of the village's new immigrants from East Jordan whose Jewish origin was forgotten. Yitzhak Ben-Zvi describes that despite the dwindling of Judaism in Yutta, the elder women of the village gathered on the eve of every Saturday by a tree that grew out of a boulder south of the village to light the Sabbath candles. This practice ended as recently as 1989, following pressures from the younger generation after the first *Intifada*.

An additional place which was known for lighting the Sabbath candles was a stone house located in the north of Yatta, named **El Amari**, which bore a mezuzah on the frame of the stone entranceway. This home was destroyed in an attempt to destroy the remaining symbols of the residents' Jewish origin. Though the residents stopped lighting the Sabbath candles in public, as a result of pressure from neighbors unaware of their Jewish origins, some members of the Makhamara clan do so till today in the privacy of their own homes. Another Jewish tradition practiced by the women of the Makhamara clan from Yatta is that of bathing in the pool in El Amari (used as a Mikveh), mostly post-menstruation. In addition, they fulfill the tradition of circumcising boys on the eighth day after birth. As is customary of Jewish tradition, the practice is preceded by the pulling out of the foreskin before the actual circumcision is conducted; this step is not carried out in Islam.

Remnants of the biblical Yutta's large synagogue, though in shambles, strengthen the case of a Jewish presence in Yatta. The

Abu Aram branch of the Makhamara clan, resided next to this synagogue. The village grew to be a town called Yatta; most of the new construction took place east of the biblical location of Yutta. **Muhammad Ali Abu Aram** wrote a book on the origin of the clan that helped many members of the clan in verifying the stories of their grandfathers about their Jewish origin.

An additional interesting point is the history behind the name “Makhamara” which translates to “wine makers.” One has to consider the fact that the consumption of alcohol goes against Muslim law and as an extension, so is growing wine grapes and making wine. And so, it was impossible to grow wine grapes while also maintaining the façade of adherence to Muslim law. The majority of the region’s residents, Jews who were supposedly Muslims, mocked Muslim laws and wanted to enjoy drinking wine. To help satisfy their desire came the fact that not being able to make wine does not mean that one must stop enjoy drinking it as drinking wine can take considerably less time than growing grapes and can take place in hidden, closed places. This meant that hiding wine consumption from Muslim rulers was practically and easily possible where everybody around, except for the rulers, are fake Muslims. However, from where does one get wine when one is supposed to be Muslim and he cannot grow wine grapes? Luckily there were Jews living openly with their religion close by, which meant that the Muslim rulers did not prevent them from growing wine grapes or

making wine. This brings us full article to the Makhamara clan who found their living from growing and making wine and selling it secretly to the others. How did the Jews-in-hiding refer to the openly Jewish locals who made wine and sold it to them in secret? Makhamara – the wine makers.

An amazing phenomena in the context fo Yata is that in 1947 the UNSCOP committee of the UN, that recommended the partition program for the Holy Land, reported on Yata as being a Jewish village, due to the Jewish majority there in that year. Ironically, if the IDF conquered Yata in 1948, no argument would exist today about the Jewish identity of most of its residents.

Interestingly, three family members belonging to the **Makhamara** clan, residing in the neighboring **Samoa** (the biblical Eshtamoah) have managed to begin the conversion process to Judaism despite the torment and terrorist threats that have been directed at them as a result. One of the elderly women of the family meticulously lights Sabbath candles and fasts in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple. She speaks of a succession of Jewish mothers that has been preserved in the family that means that their sons too are Jewish due to the fact that according to Jewish law the religion is transferred through matrilineal succession.

The fate of the Makhamara who owned the silver Chanuki'ya (candelabra) was much worse than that of those who converted. Following the publication of his story in the “Yediot Aharonot”

newspaper in 1984, he was hung by terrorists, for six weeks at the end of which he was left crippled. As a result of this horrid ordeal, he remains resentful of the Israeli media and refuses to hear or talk about the subject. Unfortunately, this was not a solitary occurrence of its type. Palestinians who have contacted the Israeli media on the topic of their familiar background or have photographed evidence of Jewish symbols in their villages were punished by terrorists and arrested by the Palestinian police. At times, those terrorists were in fact the Palestinian Police themselves, just with their heads covered. Israeli Bedouins who serve in the IDF or those who expose their Jewish origins have also found themselves being threatened by other Israeli Bedouins who turned to fundamental Muslims.

There is a large synagogue in Samoa which still stands in good condition, testifying to the Jewish origin of at least part of the region's residents. Furthermore, until the middle of the twentieth century, perforations marking the past existence and removal of mezuzahs (scrolls in boxes) could be found on the door lintels of all of the village's homes. As the old homes deteriorated and were torn down, so too did the homes on which the mezuzah markings could be seen.

In the town of **Sa'ir**, located north of Hebron, and in the village of **Meskha**, east of **Elkanah**, it is still possible today to find similar phenomena of perforations remaining after removal of mezuzahs. In another village in the southern part of mount Hebron one man is

known to have taken down the mezuzah from his door frame only after being pressured by his peers. However, in secret, he still keeps the old mezuzah which is encased in glass.

In the Al Matur tribe, there are those who observe the Nida ritual which entails the keeping of physical distance between man and wife for the full seven days after the wife's menstrual cycle ends, as is done in Judaism, in contrast to maintaining the distance only during the time of menstruation, as is customary of Islam.

Forty percent of the residents of Samoa are members of the **Al Makharik** tribe (the Burners), a group who maintained Jewish traditions as recent as only one hundred years ago. Even years later, they continued lighting the Hanukkah and Sabbath candles and talked about their Jewish origins. In addition, they maintained the purity of the tribe and married only members within the tribe, and gave their children names traditional to Jews and not to Muslims, even though they are translatable to Arabic, such as Sara, Kaukab (Star) and Ayash (life - Khayim). One member recently returned to Judaism. Due to the Israeli government's long existing practice of discounting their Jewish identity, the Al Makharik tribe members no longer talk about their Jewish identity, and when pressed on the subject, they state that "they are now Muslims."

Many residents of villages of the southern Hebron Mountains, who were members of the Makhamara clan, lived in caves in the villages until 1983, at which point in time they completed their move

to Yatta. Though they have moved from the land, they did not relinquish the land itself, and continue to work it still today.

Visiting the ruins of the biblical **Carmel** in 1927, Ben-Zvi found a synagogue. It was located next to Al-Carmil village, which is in the southern Hebron Mountains, also then a location of the Makhamara clan. Ben-Zvi found there mezuzahs and heard of the lighting of candles. The village's Sheikh, Abu-Aram, told him: "we are descendants of Jews."

In the centre of the village of **Beit Aziz** there was an ancient neglected synagogue that through the years continuously deteriorated. With the implementation of the Oslo Accords the grounds were razed. In the biblical **Tel Maon**, next to the **Maon** village, there exists a small synagogue and a Jewish bathhouse (the mosaic floor of the synagogue is shown on the next page).

In **Khirbat Anim Al Fawka** (upper), situated just north of the green line, live descendants of Jews who were expelled by the Israel Defense Forces during the 1948 war from **Anim Al Takhta** (lower, situated just south of the green line near **Shani-Livneh**). Till this day, there is an opulent synagogue in **Anim Al Takhta**. In addition, there is an extravagant and well maintained synagogue in **Susya**. In contrast to the other synagogues of the area, according to writing found on its wall, this one was turned into a mosque in 787. Also this village reports residents living in caves as recent as 1983.



The mosaic floor from the synagogue in Moan, kept today in Yad Ben Zvi, Jerusalem

In the entire cave region in the southern Mount Hebron and in **Dura** (the biblical **Adora'yim**), burial customs are according to Jewish traditions, rather than of Islam. This can be seen through the use of burial caves, preservation of graves, and annual pilgrimages to

cemeteries. In the entire southern Mount Hebron region, residents view as sacred the seven types of agricultural species that are sacred to Judaism, refraining from uprooting them. In this region and among Bedouins from the south, as well as among many Palestinians, the Jewish law where a brother of a deceased husband need to marry the widow or else to take off his shoe, is preserved to various levels of strictness.

The **Ta'amra** tribe is centered in the old **Takua**, though its people are spread around the area south of **Beitlehem**. The tribe, numbering 37,000, tended to be nomadic (non-Bedouin) until 1967 wandering between Takua and east of the Jordan River, where today they number 70,000. In the past, the tribe made use of the cemetery in Khirbat Minya, located north east of **Ma'ale Amos**. In this old cemetery, currently partially in ruins, it is still possible to see small wedges cut out at the left side of the front of the base of gravestones, to allow for the placing of candles. The elder women tell that for generations, until the rise of the Palestinian authority, the tribe's women tended to light candles and place them in these wedges on the annual anniversaries of their relatives' deaths.

In a search conducted several years ago, ash was still found present in these wedges. The older women explained that the tradition had been practiced for generations. In addition, the elder ,men of the Bedouin Rashaidda tribe living in the Ta'amra village near Ma'ale Amos tell of a similar tradition practiced at funerals of the founders of the tribe. The Makhamara people also tell of the existence of the same tradition held in the exact same place of the tumbstone.

Till today, the slaughtering practices of the **El Huza'yel** tribe of **Rahat** are Jewish kosher practices. Similarly, the **Hashwi** tribe, from near Rahat, tends to follow the Jewish tradition of eating matzah during Passover and Jewish slaughtering of animals.

In addition, the Bedouin justice system, accepted by many Palestinians as well as by many real Arab Bedouins, is mostly based on the biblical justice system. For example, the crime of unintentional murder is punished by banishment of the accused from his place or residence.

The region surrounding Bethlehem also has a high demand for matzah during the holiday of Passover. Upon arrival in the region, trucks delivering matzah are relieved of their goods by consumers while still in the parking lot even before unloading and bringing the boxes into the store. Similarly, residents of Nazereth and **Shfar'am** make special trips to Upper Nazareth (populated mostly by Jews) to stock up on matzah in preparation for Passover.

It could be said that this phenomena stems from a love for matzah, and that the speed by which they are grabbed up is due to their lowered price during the time of Passover. However, considering all other testimonies regarding the historic identities of these people, it would be most accurate to say that, at least in origin, the demand for matzah during the start of the spring (the time of Passover) has more to do with religious custom than a recurring heightened seasonal desire for the dry cracker. Interestingly, the Bedouin **Sha'abin** tribe from Yatta tends to bake matzah Sh'mura within their homes.

The **Sawarka** tribe, located in the **Saja'eeya** neighborhood in Gaza, testifies as to the Jewish traditions they used to practice. For example: separation of milk and meat, secretly gathering for prayer, preparing challah bread for the Sabbath, lighting of candles on the eve of the Sabbath, and the women's regular use of the bathhouse. According to their neighbors, these men of this tribe were referred to by their neighbors as Khawaja (a gentleman who is not an Arab) and children of the tribe were called Yahud (Jews). This could probably be attributed to the fact that they practiced Jewish traditions. Many still perform them today. For example, some of the tribe's women, who today live close to **Ma'aleh Amos** east of Hebron, till this day practice the mitzvah of Hafrashat challah when baking their Pita. Until few years ago, mourning widows used to rip their clothing at the funeral. Some of the tribe's women, who currently live close to **Ma'aleh Amos** east of Hebron, till this day practice the mitzvah of Hafrashat challah when baking their Pita. Until a few years ago, mourning widows used to rip their clothing at the funeral. The tribe performs a baby boy's circumcision eight days after birth. In addition, the tribe's female elders tell of being raised to believe that members of the tribe were a light among the nations.

The veteran residents of **Kiryat Arba** tell of witnessing the lighting of candles on the eve of every Sabbath as well as for an entire week during every winter in **Bani Na'im**. It appears that the special week with candle lighting was meant to be Chanuka and that the ex-Jews of that area, who were forced to leave their religion, have lost their knowledge of the Jewish calendar with the passing of the years.

A similar occurrence took place in **Awarta**, located south of Nablus, there were elderly people who fasted once a year on a date approximating Yom Kippur, as per the tradition passed down from their fathers. This fast could have been based in this case on the Samaritan calendar that varies somewhat from that of the Jewish calendar (Samaritans are mostly descendants of the tribes of Ephraim, Menashe and Benjamin who remained on the land since the days of the first temple; while during the time of the second temple, only an insignificant minority of them were Kutim). Until 1912 Jews and Samaritans lived in the village. As a result of violent persecutions held in that year by their neighbours, half of them fled away for good and the other half became Muslims.

Residents of the **Funduk** village, located east of **Karnei Shomron**, tended to light candles around the time of Chanukah. The synagogue in **Shilo**, that can be seen even today, was active until the 8th century. Later, in the 11th century the village was destroyed.

Until recently in **Bid'yah**, located west of Ariel, people tended to light candles on the eve of the Sabbath at the base of the grave of a man name Ali. It is known that at least one patriarch of a family continued learning from Jewish holy books in his possession until his death. In the neighboring Sarta men tended to gather for prayers in a secret cave; it is generally accepted that the reason for secrecy was that it was for Jewish prayers that they gathered.

In an Arab-Israeli city, located in the Triangle (east of the Sharon), lives a Sheikh who claims to be a descendant of Maghreb Jews (that came from the Maghreb – western North Africa) who were forced to convert to Islam. Regardless of the conversation, till this day, he maintains a Jewish holy book and in secrecy tells Jews of his origins and of the forced conversion of his forefathers.

Similarly, it is known that some of the residents of the Triangle continue to practice the Jewish custom of *Tashlikh* (performed close to the time of the Jewish new-year). In addition, they also tend to follow Jewish traditions regarding divorce. A priest from a church in **Pki'in** told that a holy book was found in the church with an ending written in Aramaic; any more he refused to share about the book. A priest from the village of **Damun**, north of **Shfar'am**, that was destroyed, told about his finding of a handwritten prayer book written in both Arabic and the Jewish dialect of Aramaic.

Another practice that illustrates the Palestinian-Jewish connection can be seen among the clans in **Katana** (a village neighboring **Abu Ghosh**), as well as in many other places, where young boys are circumcised in the eighth day from their birth (as opposed to a later age which is the norm in Islam). As recent as 300 years ago, there were Jewish priests living in Anan (the village Hananya in Galilee) – currently a deserted village.

The last observant Jew left Shfar'am in 1920, leaving the keys to the local synagogue in the hands of his Muslim neighbors. This

synagogue, still well preserved today, the synagogue which has survived till this day in **Sakhnin**, and the Jewish cemetery in the village of **Kfar Yassif** all play a silent witness as to the relatively recent Jewish origin of at least some of the residents of these locations. In **Wadi Musa** and in **Khmaineh**, east of the Jordan River, lives the Bedouin tribe of **El-Bdool** (the different – for the difference of their customs from those of others). Their customs were found to be very close to Jewish customs.

An additional important custom undertaken by many Palestinians who are descendants of Jews is marrying within their own clans. This custom, which is not generally practiced by Jews or by non-Jews, is one which ensures purity of the Jewish bloodline. Only in the most recent generation has there been a weakening of observance of this custom.

Each of the above phenomena is evidence that would allow Israeli religious circles to recognize the Palestinians' authentic Jewish roots, thereby justifying their return to the people of Israel. At this point, it would be appropriate to quote a section from Yitzhak Ben-Zvi's book, published in 1932, entitled, "**The Peoples of our Land.**"^{2,3} His testimony from that period is crucial due to the fact that not all of the customs of his time are as intensely preserved today:

"Thirdly – the religion. It is officially Islam, but in fact, the Fellahin [peasants] know very little about the Koran and the rudiments of the Muslim religion except for the known formalities in which they are fluent. Even their mosques were

established only few hundreds of years ago, mainly by the Turkish government. Even today, there are regions where mosques are very few in number.

Similarly, it is known that the Fellahin are not careful in their observation of neither simple nor complex religious commandments. The Islamic religion, for example, forbids women from going in public with their faces uncovered. In direct contrast to Islamic conventions, the Fellahin women go about their days with uncovered faces whether they are at work in the fields, in the cities or at prayer. (In Turkey, before World War I, for example, the Turkish Fellahin women did not go out in public in the city with their faces uncovered.) It is clear that in the Land of Israel the Islamic religion was not so deeply entrenched.

Or take for example the matter of an oath: When the Fellah swears in the name of the prophet Mohammed, the oath is not taken seriously. But if he goes to the grave of a holy person of the village or of the surrounding area and swears there, we may completely rely on his oath. I know of an instance where the reconciliation of a blood feud was dependant on the accused party swearing on his innocence beyond all doubt. When asked to swear in the name of the Prophet Mohammed, the accused did not hesitate. However, when asked to swear on the grave of a holy person (Noah, the Righteous) they desisted. The Fellahin's veneration for and fear from the local saints surpasses that which they hold for the founder of their religion.

Additionally, the religious celebrations and the "musms" (the known holidays in which they come to honor admired holy men) testify to the validity of the local tradition that preceded Islam. Take, for example, "the Nabi Musa [Prophet Moses]" with its tens of thousands of pilgrims. For us, the Jews, these worshippers are combined in our minds with demonstrations against Zionism and with attacks against Musa's people [the Jews – the people of Moses]. However, we should not forget

that Nabi Musa is Moses, the Jewish lawgiver and that this ritual is an echo of the former rules of the Law of Moses in Israel, thereby this Fellah tradition was in fact inherited from their Jewish ancestors.

The same also applies to Nabi Rubin [Ruben, Jacob's son], Nabi Shueb [Yitro – the priest of Midyan – the father-in-law of Moses] as well as other celebrations of this type. These "musms" in which tens of thousands of people gather together, are a kind of continuation of the same folk celebrations that were frequently held by the Fellahin at the time of the Jews [of the second temple] and perhaps, even prior to that, at the time of the Canaanites.

All of the Jewish prophets, the forefathers of the Jewish nation and heads of the tribes (Judah, Benjamin, Joseph, Zebulon, etc.) are still living memories among the Fellahin. Jews, themselves, have already stopped visiting these graves, but the Fellahin continue to prostrate themselves over them. This is not Islam, but a continuation of the once reigning religion in the Land of Israel before Islam and these rituals were integrated into the new religion [the quasi-Islam]. These holidays and practices are in no way part of the Islamic world though they are quite customary in the Land of Israel.

The ritual does not apply to the heroes of the Jewish Bible exclusively. Whoever was at the festivity of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yokhai or Rabbi Meier Ba'al Ha-Nes by the hot springs of Tiberia, certainly saw Fellahin and Bedouin who come and dance together with the Jews and swear in the name of Rabbi Shimon [Bar Yokahi] and Rabbi Meier [Baal Hanes – the miracle maker]. In Peki'in [a town in the center of the upper Galilee], the Druze and the Muslims, together with the Jews, show admiration for the "Jewish Righteous" Rabbi Hoshaya from Tirah and Rabbi Yossi from Peki'in. This clearly illustrates the continuation of a Jewish ritual among the Fellahin, one which they continued to celebrate even after their conversion to Islam".

In discussing the claims of Yitzhak Ben-Zvi about the non-serious manner in which the Palestinians treated Islam, it is important to note that beyond the mosques of the Temple Mount, it was King **Hussein** of Jordan who initiated the building of the first mosques in the West Bank. Moreover, before the establishment of the State of Israel, in areas within the Green Line, there were considerably few mosques. It was none other than the Israeli National Religious Party, who controlled the Religion Ministry, who initiated the building of many of the mosques throughout the state.

Israel Belkind, an agronomist, was commissioned by the Turks on a mission to the east of the Jordan River. As a result, Belkind reported findings of a secluded Jewish tribe in **Wad Sirkhan**, which maintained Jewish customs. Even before the end of the 19th century, Belkind wrote in his article, entitled “**The Arabs who are in the Land of Israel:**”^{5,7}

"Throughout the land, graves of holy people are found in which the Arabs come to prostrate themselves before them and fulfill their vows. Many of these are also holy to the people of Israel. Also found in the vicinity of Nes Tsiona is a grave known by the name of **Nabi Rubin**, the prophet, that is, Reuben the eldest son of our forefather Jacob. The Arabs of all of the surrounding areas consider it to be an obligation to come and spend some time there at the end of the summer months. Close to Kfar Sava, the grave of **Nabi Benjamin** is situated and not far from it is that of **Nabi Sham'un** (Simon) and others."

LANGUAGE AND NAMES

Additional support in the direction of these findings comes from the Palestinian pronunciation of spoken Hebrew as well as the integration of sayings and maxims derived from the original Hebrew and spoken by "Arabs" from villages in the Galilee such as Sakhnin and **Arabeh**.

Names of settlements also hint at the Hebrew origins of the residents, such as the Hebrew word "kfar" for village, which in Arabic is pronounced as **kafar** or **kufur**. These words appear frequently in the names of many Arab villages within the Land of Israel yet they are not Arabic and they very rarely appear in other Arab lands. (For example, Kfar Yassif, Kfar Kana, Kfar Yatta, Kfar Manda, Kfar Samia.) In addition, the names of some of these villages like **Jaba** (Hebrew **Geva** – hill, pronounced Jaba in Classical Arabic) or **Tira** (which is the Hebrew word for castle) possess significance only in the Hebrew language.

Yitzhak Ben-Zvi found that the names of 34.5% of the Palestinian villages in 1932 still retained their earlier Hebrew form. He discovered that in the western part of Land of Israel (the part west of the Jordan River), two-thirds of the names of Palestinian villages had Hebrew/Aramaic names. Of these, there were 277 names that resemble names of Hebrew settlements from the period of the Second Temple (about 2000 years ago) or are even identical to them. Additional research relating to the 19th century revealed that

Palestinian mountain settlements retained names that resemble ancient Hebrew names and have Hebrew language sound to a much greater extent than those settlements situated in the plains. Yitzhak Ben-Zvi makes the following claim in his book:

"If in fact the Jewish settlements became inhabited by entirely different people, they would not have preserved the Hebrew names (which in fact, did occur in most of those settlements where the population did change, such as in the eastern part of the Jordan). Such is not the case in Western Land of Israel where the old Hebrew names are preserved **which proves the continuity of settlement in this place** (emphasis of the author)".

This matter of preserving names is not limited to villages. The majority of cities preserved their original names barring small changes in print or pronunciation: **Safad** (Safed), **Tabariya** (Tiberya), **Yafa** (Jaffa), **Akka** (Akko – Acre) **An-Nasirah** (Nazareth) **Beitlakhem** (Betlehem) and **Khalil** (in Arabic – friend, khaver in Hebrew – Khevron – Hebron). Nevertheless, this is a weaker proof because cities, in contrast to villages, due to their larger size, are not as likely to disappear or be entirely re-established.

It is not just the names of settlements, but also the names of the residents that help reveal the Jewish-Palestinian bond. The English researcher **Condor** was the first to find Biblical names among Palestinian Fellahin. Many of these names have no root in the Arabic lexicon. Large, distinguished families from various parts of the country carry Hebrew names or Jewish family names. The following are most of the cases that were so far found:

Abu Khatsira, which numbers approximately 3,000 people, controls the fishing industry in the Gaza Strip. This family not only holds the name of an important Jewish family but also maintains a picture of the family patriarch, Rabbi Jacob Abukhatsira in the mosque where the family prays.

K'khel, which came into the public eye due to the violence of some of its sons, descends from Yemenite Jews who immigrated to the Land of Israel in the 11th century. In B'nei B'rak one may still find Rabbis from this family.

Elbaz, a family which numbers in the thousands, descended from the Jews of Morocco who immigrated to Israel apparently at the time of the Maghreb immigration.

Abulafia descends from the family of the kabbalist Rabbi Abraham Abulafia, who lived in Spain in the 13th century. In fact, many Jewish families carry this surname. In 2007, **Naomi Reichman** wrote in the “**Maariv**” newspaper how **Khamis Abulafia**, from Jafa, traced back generations of the Abulafia family only to arrive at the conclusion that not a single member of the Abulafia family with Arab roots exists, but rather that the roots of all families named Abulafia are Jewish.

El-Razi (also pronounced El-Gazi - The Gazian) has a name identical to that of the intellectual Turkish Jew, Rabbi Ya'akov Yisrael Yom Tov Al-Gazi, who immigrated to Jerusalem in the middle of the 12th century.

Binyamina, from **Akraba** near Nablus, is a large Muslim family that recognizes their Samaritan origin.

Almog of Jenin, known for its Jewish origin, escaped in 1948 from Jaffa, where some of its Muslim and Christian sons still reside.

Dawoud (David) from Hebron, about which nothing was so far found, beside their name, to link them to Jewish roots.

S'sakhyun (Zion) from Nablus and its vicinity, again without any additional knowledge about their possible Jewish-Israelite roots.

Khaskiya (khizkiya) from Tirah and the triangle, that is not and Arab but a Hebrew name, where there is not additional supporting evidence about the family origin.

Zakoot mainly from Ramleh, that is also not and Arab but rather a Hebrew name, where again there is not additional relevant knowledge about the family.

Cohen from Jordan, known for its Jewish origin and for keeping the marriage of its sons to women within the family, resides mostly in Amman and in Irbid, numbering more than 4,000 people.

In Arabeh, near Sakhnin, there are a number of Jewish surnames, such as Ibri, from the Hebrew word for Hebrew, in addition to the name Cna'an, from the Hebrew word referring to the Canaanites. Residents of the village admitted to their Jewish origin. The common Jewish **Tsadok** and **Solomon** family names were found among the villagers of **Midya**, near **Modi'in**.

In **Batir**, located south of Jerusalem, lives a family named **Fin-Nun**, originally **Bin-Nun (like Joshua)**, which is a name that does not exist in Arabic. In fact, most of the Fin-Nun clan (numbering 2,000) resides in **Nakhalin**, west of Bethlehem, and is considered to be the oldest clan in the village; some of the members' homes are in fact the oldest in the village. Other parts of the family live in Hebron, Bethlehem and in Yatta. Those living in Yatta are considered as part of the overarching Makhamara clam, yet another fact symbolizing the entire clan's Jewish origin.

As is the case with the oddity of the name of the Fin-Nun (or Bin-Nun), there are several other families living in Batir carrying surnames that lack an Arabic meaning, while they do resemble non-Hebrew surnames of Jews. Residents of the surrounding villages claim that the residents of Batir, who have different physical features than the residents of the surrounding villlages, are of a Jewish origin, despite the fact that none of the residents themselves was found to bear witness to this. Despite this, there was the tradition of performing a circumcision to boys at the age of eight days. Only recently, with the introduction of modern medicine and birthing practices to the village, has the date of the circumcision been changed to just after a baby's release from hospital.

The Christian family of **Michael** from **Tarshikha**, located next to the Lebanon border, tells of their Jewish background. A similar

phenomenon exists with the Christian family of **Khazan** from **Abu Snan**. A Christian family from the Yasif village is named **Toma**; the name, is similar to a Jewish family name which lived in P'ki'in until as recently as the 1930s.

The following is an additional quote on the subject of language from Yitzhak Ben-Zvi's book:

“The Hebrew language was replaced at an earlier time by Aramaic as the spoken language of the people. In the Talmudic period, Aramaic was already the language of usage, more dominant than Hebrew . . . In the first generations, after the Arab conquest, the residents used Aramaic and signs of Aramaic have remained among the Fellahin until today and according to experts in the spoken Fellahin dialect in Israel, there are many Aramaic words which are not in use by the Arabs in Hijaz and neither are they used among Arabs of other places who never used Aramaic.”

Israel Belkind wrote in a similar vein in his article entitled **“The Arabs who are in the Land of Israel^{5,7}**:

"Investigators and language researchers have proven that in the Arabic language currently spoken by the residents of the land, there are many elements of Hebrew and Aramaic language which were spoken by the inhabitants at the time that it was conquered by the Arabs. These elements are not found in the written Arabic language or the spoken Arabic language in other lands. It was already proven by Major **Condor**, in his research on the Land of Israel, that the **"Arabs" had spoken Aramaic in the days of the Crusades** (emphasis of the author), **the language spoken by the Jews until the Arab conquest.**"

The Aramaic language did not fade away so quickly, since the time of Condor's research. In 1974, when the **Ofra** settlement broke

ground, the present residents of the biblical Ofra – the village of **Tybiya**, were found to be speaking Aramaic as well as they were all Christians.

Yet another matter on the topic of language that strengthens the argument and illustrates the lack of an Islamic settlement in the Land of Israel is the fact that, among all versions of spoken Arabic, the Palestinian version is the one closest to classical Arabic (to the exception of few Saudi dialects that served as the origin for classical Arabic). This proves that the language was not passed on orally by Arab immigrants, but rather mostly through the reading of Arabic literature and official documents.

Another meaningful name – Yahud el-Arab (the Jews of the Arabs) – was given to the Palestinians, as result of their origin, level of education, sophistication and suffering – where in all these aspects they resembled the Jews.

TESTIMONIES

Family traditions of Palestinians and Bedouins, from various regions in Samaria, Judea, Negev and the Galilee, reveal important support for these findings. These traditions, that were passed from generation to generation, give strong indications of a Jewish source. Even today, one may find many who will tell of their Jewish or Samaritan origins.

There are some Palestinians who will talk about their Jewish or Israelite origins; though most of them keep this a secret out of fear of negative consequences were they to openly admit to it. However, one may still hear people speak of this, as in the case of the cave dwellers just south of Hebron, Christians from the village of **Mughar**, and Bedouins from **Rahat** as well as stories from many other village people. Their Jewish origin is what motivates Bedouins to serve in the Israel Defense Forces, a collaboration dating as far back as the days of the **Palmakh** (1948), when the **Al-Haib** tribe created a special unit of the Palmakh by the name of **Palhaib**.

The earliest story of the modern era was written by **Yehudah Rav**, one of the founders of **Petakh Tiqvah**, as well as by writer **Moshe Smilanski**. The two authors told the following story: at the time of the formation of Petakh Tiqvah (1878), a Bedouin of a Jewish origin left his tribe, situated in the far south, and headed north in pursuit of thieves who took off with his female horse. Only in Damascus was he successful in reclaiming his horse. On his restful

southbound return home, he ran into Fellahin that told him of a nearby village created by Jews who became Fellahin. This same Bedouin was so excited by this story that he then went to Petakh Tiqvah and volunteered for two years as their first guard.

In his book “Memories of the Land of Israel,” **Abraham Ya’ari** talks about the writing of **Zalman David Levontin**. In 1903 Levontin wrote about Bedouin leaders, of nomadic tribes of the Sinai Desert and of the Negev, who wandered as far as Jerusalem in order to propose a union with the Jews and the creation of a treaty with Herzl, who they named as “The King of Israel.” They told about Bedouin tribes that consider themselves belonging among the people of Israel and refer to themselves as **Bani Israel** (sons of Israel). In addition, Levontin also mentioned an Emir called **Amsulam** residing near the border between Egypt and Israel, with a Jewish origin. The Bedouins’ attempts continued despite the Jews’ lack of interest. The Bedouins maintained that if the Jews were not interested in accepting their common origin, there were still positives in creating a union:

As told by Dr. Joseph Ben David, in his book “The Bedouins in Israel – a Social and Factual Study,” in 1905 Shiekh Abu-Rabi’a visited Yitzhak Levi, the Jewish Agency representative in Jaffa, and suggested they jointly build a Jewish-Bedouin state which would thrive from the combination of the money and science of the Jews and the land and military of the Bedouins. Further, Ben David wrote about the Bedouin uprising, led by followers of the **Emir Faisal**, that

persecuted Christians living in the eastern North Galilee and Hakhula valley, but did not touch the Jews. As such, until 1948, the relationship between the Jews and Bedouins was one of mutual respect and fondness.

The first edition of the Egyptian periodical “Sina” (Sinai) appeared in January of 1953 in which an Egyptian colonel, Abed Al-Khatid Ataiba, wrote an article that claimed that Bedouins of the Staff of **Ta’yaha** are originally Jewish (“the wondering” - representing half of the Negev’s Bedouins and many of the Bedouins of Jordan and Sinai; Staff being a collection of tribes). The claim was based on testimonies of Bedouins from Sinai, and was followed by some mistaken theory explaining their arrival in Sinai. In contrast, the Bedouins, due to the lack of their acceptance by Jews, tried to associate their origin with the respected **Bani Hilal** Arab tribe.

The obvious question of “How and since when have Bedouins been Jewish?” was already answered by Belkind in his article “**The Arabs who are in the Land of Israel**”^{5,7}:

“It has to me mentioned that the traveler **Rabbi Yitskhak Khilu** tells us in his book “Trails of Jerusalem”, that six hundred years ago [about the year 1300], in the south of the Land of Israel, it was possible to find nomad Jews, shepherds, Bedouin Jews. These Jews could have only been remnants of the people that lived on its land from time and memorial, and not Jews that started to come from the Diaspora in a later period, in order to settle in the Land of Israel. The new coming Jews settled only in the cities and dealt there only with crafts

and with learning Torah, and it was impossible for them to be nomad shepherds among foreigners, whose language they did not know.”

On April 29, 1929, the “Davar” newspaper published an article detailing a meeting that took place in 1925 between the article’s author and the Moukhtar (leader) of **Ein Arik**, a village near **Ramallah**. The Moukhtar, appearing to be honest and consistent, said that according to the family’s tradition, the forefathers of the members of that village, as well as of six other neighboring villages, were descendants of the tribe of Benjamin. They settled in these villages upon leaving Jerusalem before its destruction in 70 A.D.

Currently, residents from a succession of large villages located on the north-west outskirts of Jerusalem, including **Beit Surik**, **Beit Inan**, **Bidu** and **Katana**, claim that 99% of them descend from Jews (from a tribe other than Judah). They are all descendants of four brothers who individually settled in the area and established what today have become four complete villages, numbering in thousands of resident.

The residents of the village of Tybiya (next to Ofra), Christians who speak Aramaic, testified as to their being of Jewish origin. In **Ein-Sinya** (near **Shilo**) there were Jews as late as the beginning of the 20th century, explaining why the family of **Moshe Sharet** (Israel’s first Foreign Minister) settled there. The Jews of the village stated that the rest of the residents were originally Jewish.

In the village of **Abud**, located next to **Bir Zeit**, lives a group of Christians that tell of their Jewish origin. In **Jufna** (Gofna in Hebrew – is the birthplace of the Hashmonites), north of Ramallah, the local priest claimed that three out of seven of the local Christian Orthodox and Latin clans are of Jewish origin. In **Beit Likiya**, west of Ramallah, members of the **Bader** clan know of their Jewish origin. In Ramallah the **Rezek** family knows about its Jewish roots. The **S'beitani** family (translates to People of the Sabbath), dark skinned residents of Ramallah, are known as Jews who arrived from Yemen. In the **Khata** clan of **Tul Karem**, the clan's Jewish origin is well known.

Testimonies claiming Jewish origin without observance of Jewish traditions exist also in the **Lakef** village (located next to **Karney Shomron**), in **Khares** (North West of Ariel), in **Sakhnin**, in Arabbeh and in **Dir-Hannah** located next to Sakhnin. The **Al-Aliyan** clan – one of three of the large clans in **Beit Tsafafa**, a Jerusalem neighborhood, knows that they originate from a Jewish family in the Galilee of whom some descendents converted to Christianity and all were persecuted for not being Muslim. They then moved to Beit Tsafafa where they were welcomed by the local Muslims in such a friendly manner that some of the family converted to Islam. Today the clan includes Jews, Muslims and Christians. The **Shrayn** clan of Jerusalem has a similar internal religious distribution with knowledge as to their Jewish origin.

The **Tawil** family from East and West Jerusalem, as well as from Beit Tsafafa and **Abu Tur**, is also made up of a mixture of Jews, Muslims and Christians all of whom have the same last name. One of these Christian women is **Raymonda Tawil** the mother of **Suha Arafat** (the wife of the late Yasser Arafat). Despite the shared name and the fact that the existence of Muslims and Christians in the same family is a characteristic of previously Jewish clans, no specific knowledge was yet found in the Tawil family about the Jews and others being of the same origin.

The **Diba** family from east Jerusalem tells of the fact that they are descendents of a Jew who came from Iran and converted to Islam. Testimonies of Jewish origins also exist in **Lifta** and in **Abu Dis**, bordering Jerusalem. Members of the **Shwaiki** family, from **Sur Baher** and of **Beit Nabal**, numbering 3,000 people, testify as to their pure Jewish lineage.

Between Jerusalem and **Ma'aleh Edomim**, in the villages of **Sawakhra** and **Jabel Mukaber**, lives the large **Ashkarat** clan whose Jewish origin is well known. Some members of the family serve as unofficial judges who rule in accordance with Bedouin law. A family from Jerusalem, refugees from the village **Yalu**, located near **Latrun**, which was destroyed in 1967, states that all of the village's residents were Jewish until a certain point in time when the leader of that village decided that all will become Muslims.

Villagers in Samaria claim, due to the fact that Samaritans are descendant of the Efraim and Menashe tribes of Israel, that they are descendants of the **prophet Joseph** (the father of Efraim and Menashe). This phenomenon was found in the **Sinjil, Awarta, Rugib, Silat A-Dahar** and **Kalil** villages.

Sean Ireton, in his book **The Samaritans**, claims that even today certain Nabulsi families, including **Muslimani** (meaning ‘convert to Islam’) and **Ya’ish**, are associated with Samaritan ancestry. Samaritans claim that the roots of the Ya’ish family, from who descends the current mayor of Nablus, **Adali Ya’ish**, go back to the Samaritan **Mitwaya (Metukhia in Hebrew)** family, who lives today, among other places, on **mount Grizim** and who traces its lineage to the Tribe of Ephraim. Ireton also mentions the wealthy family of **Shakshir** (Shahshir), who till today deals in the sale of fabrics and is of a Jewish origin.

The head Samaritan priest told of the Jewish origin of the Samaritan **Akar** family, who lives in Nablus. The name of the **Tamimi** Nabulsi family clearly indicates their Jewish-Israelite origin. The name originates from the word *tamim*, which means ‘innocent’ in Islam and refers to a person who ceases to publicly impersonate a Muslim whilst privately practicing the Jewish-Israeli religion (for more details, see subsequent section named “The Demographic-Historical Perspective”).

In 1940, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi wrote in an article¹¹ that two thirds of the residents of Nablus and its surrounding mountain villages are originally Samaritans. He mentions the names of several Palestinian families about who there are written records maintained by elders and priests, testifying as to their Samaritan past. Among the names are the **Buwarda** family, and the **Kasem** family who protected Samaritans from Muslim persecution around the 1850s.

The article also includes the following names: the **Sharaba** clan, the House of **Tahar** (whose name literally translates to mean “purified” by those who forced them to fully convert to Islam and completely desert their Israelite religion in 1628); the House of Muselmani (mentioned earlier), of which the original family was called **Mafarge** and resided in Southern Tsrifin, whose forefather was forced into Islam in Nablus in 1855; the House of **Shiri**; the House of **Khabiba**; and the House of Ya’ish, mentioned above), who in the 14th century had scripture calligraphers who created Torah books.

In reference to the **Kadum** village, Ben-Zvi talks about the the House of **Sufan** who converted to Islam after the conquering of the land by **Salakh A-Din**, some of who currently reside in Nablus. In the **Nakura** village, the **Al-Suwara** family, originally from **Puka** located in **Dir Al-Jasum**, the **Samara** family from Tul Karem (among its descendents were gang leaders during the turbulent years of 1936-1938), and the **Danf** family from Jerusalem, whose

descendents were responsible for the **Omar** mosque. From Damascus he mentions the Houses of **Makhzan Bek**, **Al-Nakhas**, **Mu'ayed**, Sa'id, **Jafari** and **Rumeyekh** (Ramikh).

The story of the village of Bid'yah (aptly named due to it being a place of olive oil manufacturing) is among the most intriguing of all. The village, whose population counts 25,000, is known for having only a single mosque. In 1982, following the outbreak of the first war of Israel with Lebanon, the village's gentry requested to enlist in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in order to fight against the **Palestinian Liberation Organization** (PLO). The Jewish origin of many of the village's clans is a well known fact, even today.

A Jewish grandfather by the name of Jacob is known in the **Taha** clan. The largest clan in the village – **Salamah** (which consists of the **Abu Ba'ker**, **Khamad**, **Akhmad** and **Ibrahim** sub-clans) is known for its Samaritan origin. The **Rabbi**(!) family and the large **Khamid** family, who escaped the Tel Aviv area in 1948, are known to have Jewish origins. Additional families known to have a Jewish origins are the **Zahara** family from Bidiya, the **Otman** clan from Yemen (of which is the **Boolad** family, numbering more than a thousand people).

The Otman family from another village – **Jamalah**, near Modi'in, also knows about its Yemenite Jewish roots. An interesting story took place when one of the family's sons married a woman of

another family from the Ramallah region. Following the nuptials, when the bride and groom shared intimate details of their backgrounds, they were surprised to find out that both had Jewish origins.

In the village **Ein Uja**, a small tribe by the name **Al-Ansirat** claims that its members are descendants of the **priest (Cohen) Aaron**. The members of that tribe live as Bedouins and are referred to as **B'nei Nadir**. In the Triangle lives a Bedouin tribe, named **Abed Al-Khamid**, where some of its members testify about the tribe's Jewish origin.

The village **Beit Awa**, which is in the southern hills of Hebron, is the center of the **Masalma** clan whose sons claim that they are originally Jews who arrived from Yemen. As distinguished from many others who make similar claims, members of this clan do not preserve any Jewish customs today.

Ben-Zvi, who toured the southern Hebron Mountains, told of the Jewish background of the residents of **Beit Awa**, members of a clan whose other members were found in the following villages: **Al-Burge**, **Al-Majed**, **A-Sika**, **Beit A-Roosh Al Tachta** (lower), **Beit A-Roosh Al-Fawka** (upper), **Dir Al-Asal Tachta** and **Dir Al Asal Fawka**. Till this day one can hear stories regarding Yemenite Jewish origins coming from members of clans in **Daharia**. In addition, there are similar testimonies about the Jewish origins of the **Khamarna** clan from Yatta (in addition to the Makhamara clan).

In **Tawani** there is an **Abu-Aram** branch of the Makhamara clan, whose members also tell of their Jewish origin. The region of the southern Hebron Mountains is filled with cave residents of the same branch. For example, cave residents in **Khirbat A-Taben**, **Khirbat Al-Fakhot**, **Bir Al-Id**, **Khirbat Sirat Awad Ibrahim**, **Khirbat Al-Mufkara**, and past residents of **Khirbat Bani Dar** (next to **Nabi Yakin**), who left the caves in order to live in **Bani Na'im** east of Hebron. In the **Gharz** family from **Dura** there is knowledge about their Jewish roots. **Salamin**, an additional branch of the Makhamara clan, is spread around in **Khirbat Salama** (after which the clan was named), in **Khirbat Dirat** and in **Khirbat Brook**.

In the south of Yatta live 13,000 of the Sha'abin Bedouin tribe. Members of the Moor clan, part of the tribe, tell of its Jewish origin and of the fact that the tribe moved from the Arab Peninsula Arabia to **Ma'an** in Jordan and from there most of them moved to Yatta and the rest to Amman where today reside 2,000 members of the tribe. In addition to lighting the Sabbath candles, some of the tribes members tend to bake Matzah Shmura (according to Kosher rules) for Passover. Actually, the Sha'abin tribe is really called **Sha'abin El-Majali**, a part of the large El-Majali clan residing in Karak (Jordan, details to follow).

Another clan known for its Jewish origins from the Hebron area, mostly near the southern exit from the city, is called **Duweik**. One of its members, **Dr. Aziz Duweik**, was arrested by Israel in

2006, while serving as the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council. The Muslimani family is the last Jewish family to have converted to Islam in Hebron. The elders of the **El-Mukhtasebin** family (the Inspectors), from Hebron, also claimed a Jewish origin. A Hebron family with a Jewish-Maghreb origin is the **Dahan** family, numbering 250 people.

Additional cases of Jewish origins in Hebron are also known in connection to the families of **Natche** (known for their wealth), **Al-Khawaja** (meaning a non-Arab gentleman), who left the Ashdod area in 1948 and as a result of its name showing that they are not Arabs, some of their sons were forced to prove their loyalty by becoming terrorists, **Dana, Ra'oof** (of which some members reside in Jordan), **Adhami** (a branch of the **Kanafish** clan), the Bedouin **Abu Zaharan, Kaysi** (originating from Yemen), **Abu Khamsyeh, Julani** and Tamimi (the name Tamimi originates from the word *tamim*, which means 'innocent' in Islam as already explained). The union of the clans controlling the city is also called Tamimi due to the fact that in its origin, it was made up of Jewish families that completed their conversion to Islam by wholly disengaging from Judaism.

According to testimonies from the Kurds living in Hebron (numbering 6,000), they, in combination with the Kurds living in eastern Jerusalem (48,000), in Jordan (20,000) and in Syria (700), are all related to one another, originating from the **Labani** Pashtun tribe, part of who passed from Afghanistan to Kurdistan before the time of **Salakh A-Din**. Further, they tell that that arrived to the Holy Land

with their families as soldiers in the army of Salakh A-Din. According to research done by Rabbi Eliahan Avikhail, as well as others, the Labani tribe is no other than the Israelite tribe of Levi. To sustain this surprising revelation, we have to refer back to the genetic finding about the the high occurrence of the Cohen gene found among Kurds, at a rate five times higher than the rate among Jews, as presented in a previous chapter (all Cohens were originally part of the Levi tribe).

Khalkhul (north of Hebron) is home to the **Shatrit** clan (numbering 4,000); yet another clan known for their Jewish-Maghreb origin. They tell of the fact that the original clan name was **Shitrit** (a popular israeli family name). However, not all families within a single clan share the original clan name as their last name (common among large clans). In the case of the Shatrit clan family names include various distortions of the original name to disguise the original Jewish name: Shitrit, Shatrit, El-Shatrit and Shatrat. One thousand members of the clan reside in Amman, capital of Jordan, 120 members live in Yatta and 16 families in **Khussan**.

The **S'beitan** family (translates to People of the Sabbath), dark skinned residents of Khakhul, tell that they are descendants of Jews who arrived from Yemen. The family intermarries with the Shatrit clan. The **Milkhem** clan, from where came the mayor of Khalkhul that was hurt by the Jewish Underground, also testifies as to their

Jewish roots. The **Lakham** (Butchers) family from the near by **Bani Na'im** also testifies to their Jewish origin.

The **Najajara** clan, numbering 2,000 lived in **Nakhalin**, South West of Jerusalem; they too are aware of their Jewish backgrounds. Similarly, another clan from the village, the **Kanafish**, numbering 1,600, are also aware of their Jewish origin. On the ground floor of their local mosque there is a large stone engraved with the Star of David. In the past, the Israeli flag could be seen on the minaret of the mosque. However, with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the flag was taken down and attempts were made to erase the Star of David engraved in the large stone.

Interestingly, there was a book in the village where the clan's history was written including the clan's Jewish origin. Yet another loss coinciding with the entry of the PA to the village, – the book has not been seen since that time. The clan members do not feast during Ramadan and they rarely visit the mosque. None of the clan's members has ever been incarcerated in an Israeli jail. To the contrary, there are those who have spent time in a Palestinian jail for selling lands to Jews.

The Kanafish clan residing in Nakhalin, is in fact a branch of a larger Kanafish clan. The branch in Nakhalin is named **Mustafa**. Members of the Kanafish clan have stated that they originate from a Jewish family from Hebron (named Kanafish) where attempts were

made to force their conversion to Islam. When the original forefathers of the clan (four brothers) refused to convert, one was killed as a method of punishment and an attempt at intimidation. The attempt worked to a certain degree as one brother did convert along with his immediate family and remained in Hebron. This brother's descendents are still living in Hebron under the family name of Adhami. Of the remaining brothers one escaped to Iraq and the other to Nakhalin; parts of the family made it to Triangle (now within the State of Israel).

As was mentioned in the previous chapter also the Fin-Nun clan lives in the Village (2,000 people there). It is the oldest clan living in Nakhalin. And from its name one can deduce about their Jewish origin. Within the village of Nakhalin there are ruins of ancient houses called **Khibat el Yahud** (the ruins of houses of the Jews), and when land was divided between the villagers, it was known that those were the lands of the Jews who had previously resided in the village. Similarly, in **Deheyshe** there still stands an ancient and deserted house called **The Jewish House**.

In the vicinity of Khussan live few families that claim as to their Jewish origin. Both Nakhalin and Khussan are located west of Betlehem, close to the Green Line. Similar claims were heard from number of families living in the outskirts of Khares and one family from the outskirts of **Soorif**. Both villages reside in the center of an imaginary line connecting **Beit Shemesh** and Hebron. (The term

outskirts of the villages used above means the agricultural zone of the village where old stone house and caves exist and serve for living in the time when the resident work in the fields – **Mazra'ah** in Arabic).

In the town of Sa'ir, also in East Jerusalem, lives a clan of several thousand members called **El-Aramin** (originally Armon). Some members of the clan make a claim of the clan's Jewish origin. The rest of the clans living in Sa'ir are also aware of their Jewish origin through the Hebrew names of their forefathers, as they appear in the multi-generational family almanacs of the clans **El-Jaradat**, **El-Shlalda**, **El-Kawazba**, and **El-Matur**.

The **Aramin** clan was the last to convert to Islam (100 years ago), which is why it is the most famous of the region's Jews. Prior to this, members of the **Kawazba** clan converted to Islam, and the others did so even earlier than that. Members of the clan testify that the clan's original name was **Koziba** and that they are related to the Jewish hero Bar-Kokhba whose original name was Bar-Koziba. As recent as until several decades ago, the clan lived in the **Kawizba** village, north of Sa'ir, and its homes and caves are still used today, when they are working in their original fields in the village. Some families from the clan live in the Al-Miniya village that is located South of Tekoah. In the same village lives the **Amar** family that is also aware of their Maghreb Jewish origin. (Yitzhak Ben-Zvi has written about the origin of the Kawazba family as the descendants of Bar-Kokhba.)

In the **Amslam** clan from **Khalat Al Maya** (near the Zif intersection south of Hebron), numbers 11,000 people, and its members know to tell about their Jewish origin and of the fact that their village near Ramallah was burned down by the mob, forcing them to move to southern Mount Hebron. At first they tried to join the Jews of Hebron but were rejected by the latter due to a lack of knowledge in Judaism. They then continued on their journey and settled South of Hebron.

The **Jabarin** clan, numbering 8,000 who reside South of Yatta, claim their Jewish background and can be traced to Yemen. The Jabarin clan describe themselves as related to the Makhamara clan and claim that Jewish lineage is patrilineal. The **Hoshiya** clan located near by, absorbed the Jabarin upon their arrival and gave them lands. The Hoshiya clan considers themselves of the Makhamara, but the Jabarin claim that the Hoshiya are not Jews. Despite this, due to the generosity extended by the Hoshiya towards the Jabarin upon their arrival in the area, there exist intermarriages between the two clans.

One of the Bedouin leaders in **Rahat** claims that the majority of the Bedouins in Israel are descendants of Jews. Many Bedouins from Rahat, including members of the El-Huza'yel tribe, claim that 99% of the Bedouin in Israel are Jewish. The famous craftswoman **Batya Uziel**, one of the tribe's daughters, is known both for her art as well as for being a "regular" Jew.

Further evidence from Bedouins of Jewish origin was found among the **Tarabin, Ziadna, Al Azazama** and **El-Lakhza'yel** tribes

in the Negev and the Sawarka tribe, residents in the Gaza strip, near Ma'ale Amos, in Sinai and in Jordan. Additional Bedouin families, of which their Jewish origin is known, include **Nassasra**, numbering few thousands, the large **Kamat** clan, the mid-size **Abu Balal** and the small Hashwi.

The descendents of all these Bedouin tribes and families, who are loyal to the State of Israel, voluntarily enlist to serve in the IDF, despite their discrimination by the state of Israel. Unfortunately, this discrimination has caused many other Bedouins residing in Israel to turn to radical Islam and to not enlist in the IDF.

Till today, there are many testimonies which can be found in Jordan as well as elsewhere in the region which tell of the Jewish background of all of the descendents of the Ta'yaha staff (of which the El-Huza'yel tribe is a member); there are 60,000 in Jordan, mostly residing in the desert. Some live in the **Kha'u** desert, located in the south close to the Saudi border, some in the **Tribil** desert, close to the Iraqi border, and some reside east of Jericho in the region of Mount Nevo. Many of the cluster's descendents in Jordan, aside from the very young, are aware of their Jewish background. When asked as to their ethnic identity, in order to differentiate themselves from Jordan's Arab Bedouins, they state that they are Ta'yahwi – (belonging to Ta'yaha). Physically, they tend to be slim but very strong. Also members of the Swarka tribe in Jordan, numbering more than 30,000, are aware of their Jewish origin

The **Akhmad** family, of which there are tens of thousands of members, presently lives in the area between Gaza and Rafiah since 1948, upon escaping from their previous location south of **Ashkelon**. They testify as to their Jewish origin. One of its sons tells that in 1972, his grandfather told him that in 1919 his grandfather told him of the Jewish origin of the family, and that so spreads the knowledge of their family ancestry from generation to generation.

Yet another interesting story is that of a member of the Bedouin **Abu Zid** clan from **Rafah**, located close to the Egyptian border (the clan had moved there after escaping **Nes Tsiona** in 1948. This man tells that on his father's deathbed, he revealed to him, the eldest son at the tender age of nine, of the clan's Jewish origin, and that this knowledge had been passed down in secret from father to the eldest son for many generations. The father emphasized the importance of keeping this secret and foretold that the day will come when the son will be able to speak about this openly.

The **Mekhaimar** clan from **Beit Khanoon**, numbering 3,000, tells of their Jewish origin. According to the stories, the clan moved from Iraq to Sudan and from there to the **Khamama** village, which was located between Ashdod and Ashkelon, and in 1948 they escaped to Beit Khanoon, their current place of residence. The **Tanira** clan, from **Jabeliya (Al Muasker)** refugee camp, who also escaped from Khamama to the Gaza strip in 1948, is known to have Jewish forefathers and foremothers. The clan members are

characteristically known for their blue eyes. The **Basala** clan from **Nuseirat** camp, numbering 2,000, who escaped there in 1948 from Ashkelon, is known to have originally arrived from Yemen while its head had been Jewish. So too is known of the **Shafi** family from **Balata** refugee camp, one member of whom converted to Judaism

Both the **El-Jaroo** clan, who fled to Gaza in 1948, and the **Kharzallah** clan, also living in Gaza, tell of their Jewish origins. A similar situation was found in the **Siam** clan, that lives in the **Shati** refugee camp near the Gaza beach, in the **R'al-Yoon** clan, who arrived to the country from Yemen and resides today in the **Al Boorej** camp, and in the **Za'arba** clan from **Khan Yunes**, that was originally a Jewish family that arrived from Egypt and acquired large lots of land in the area, including in Sinai. The **Abu Shber** Bedouin family from Khan Yunes, numbering 300 people, is aware of its Jewish origin. Similar to Jewish families, this family is known for its love of learning.

The residents of **El-Arish**, located in the Sinai Peninsula, near the Israeli border, are called by the Arabs **Yahud Sina**, which translates to mean “the Jews of Sinai.” Additionally, they themselves recognize their Jewish origin. In the tribe **Abu Akar**, from the Gaza strip and Sinai, Bedouins make claims about their Jewish origin. An additional Bedouin tribe who knows about its Jewish origin is the tribe of **Jrai**, whose members span in the Gaza strip as well as in the El Arish area.

The **Abu-El-Ayish** is another family from the Gaza strip known for their Jewish origin. This was publicized at the start of 2009 when **Dr. Iz-El-Din Abu El-Ayish** lost three of his daughters in the **Cast Lead** Israeli military operation. Following the 1948 War, the family was exiled from the **Ooj village**, located near Kibbutz **Dorot** to the Gaza strip. According to Dr. Abu El-Ayish's father, as well as to Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, the family is part of the Makhmahara clan who moved to Ooj from Yatta in the 19th century.

Besides the large Cohen family from Jordan and the El-B'dool tribe that testify as to their Jewish origin, there are many non-Bedouin residents in Wadi Musa, east of the Jordan River, that testify about their origin from the people of Israel. In the Jordanian south city of **Karak**, the Jewish origin of the **Kharamsha** and **Awazat** clans is well known. In addition, the **Al-Majali** clan (meaning he who was exiled, probably a punishment as a result of an unintentional murder which took place far back in history) has a known Jewish origin. Till this day they follow the traditions of Bedouin judicial system. The clan, which today includes most of the residents of **Karak** (100,000), is known as Jordan's oldest clan. In fact, **Abed El Salam Majali**, the prime minister of Jordan at the time of the signing of the peace agreement with Israel, is a descendent of this clan.

In **El Baqah** of North Western Jordan, the Jewish origin is known for the **Abu Ghrab** family, originally from **Saudia**, and for

the **Masabkha-Eliyahu** family, numbering 600. Most of the **Abidiya** family, originally from Bethlehem, is located in a wealthy neighborhood in the outskirts of Amman, though many remain till today in Bethlehem. The family's elders are aware of their Jewish origin, though are hesitant to talk about or else lest they may lose their respectable status. The **Abdul Baki** (slave of eternity) family is yet another Jordanian family who knows of their Jewish origin. Also known is the Samaritan origin of the **Shamari** (meaning Samaritan) family, mostly living in Amman and numbering 18,000, was originally Samaritan.

The sons of the **Sliman** family, from the Bedouin village of **Bu'aina/Nujidat** from Galilee, also make a claim to a Jewish origin. In addition, based on a genealogy book of the villagers, the 700 members of the **Fukara** clan are all descendants of a Jewish grand-grand-grand father who lived four generations ago. A few of the residents of **Ka'abiyah**, located west of Nazareth, members of the Bedouin tribe of Ka'abin, tell of the Jewish origin of the tribe. In 1968 a female resident of the village told a visitor "our skin is a Jewish skin." The Jewish origin of residents in the **Daburiya** village, located at the base of **Mount Tavor**, is told by the village's leaders and others.

In **Kfar Yassif**, east of Akko, lives a Christian family whose Jewish origin is known. Upon his visit to the area, a Christian bishop had heard this and responded that all members of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches who live in Israel are of Jewish origin. This,

he said, is due to the fact that the Orthodox Church was the first Christian church and its members were from the Jewish people. Furthermore, due to the fact that the Greek Catholic Church was created as the separation from the Orthodox Church in 1724, the followers of this church too are of Jewish origin.

In **Ilabun**, located in the center of the Galilee, lives a Christian family of Jewish origin who arrived to the village from **Khussan**, Jordan. In addition, several of the Christian residents of the **Bassah** village, near the western point of the border with Lebanon, are aware of their Jewish origin.

The historian Dr. Rivka (Rebecca) Lisak tells of the **Hashul** clan who testify as to their Jewish origin and the fact that their original name was **Shaul** (Saul). The clan consistue the majority of the residents of **Goush Khalav**, remained Jewish at least partially, until the 18th century (the rest of the residents of the Maronite Christians village were exiled in 1948 from **Bir'am**). Recently an old mikveh was found in the village.

Italian researchers, who visited the country in the beginning of the 20th century, wrote that among others, the Christians from **Be'ene** are of a Jewish origin. A similar finding can be inferred regarding the Christians of **Khurfesh**. In **Kfar Manda** village there are those who remember that there were Jews living in the area, though it is unclear whether, if any, became Muslims and remained in the village. Among the **Nasaar** family from Jaffa, of whom some became

Muslims and some Christian, it is known among the Christians members that their background is Judaism. Several Palestinian families from **Lod**, Haifa and the **Atiya** family from Nazareth also testified as to their Jewish origins.

The Emir Faisal of the Hashemite dynasty went even further, when in 1917 he wrote to **Dr. Felix Frankfurter**, "**We are of the same race and blood and cooperation will bring great prosperity to the land.**" Faisal's grandfather's (king **On**) mother descended from a family of forced Jewish converts to Islam that immigrated to the east of the Jordan, later returning to one of the villages west of the Jordan. In contrast to the prevalent behavior today, when Faisal was growing up, his grandfather's mother Jewish origin was known and no great effort was made to conceal it.

After the 1967 war, **Anton Atallah** (a Christian Palestinian leader from Jerusalem) said to **Nathan Yellin Mor** (an Israeli right wing leader): "**We are fundamentally one people.** I am a resident of Jerusalem for many generations. We undoubtedly became Christian after the destruction of the Temple during a period of Christian persecution. In any event, we, the Jews, and the Moslems fought for the defense of Jerusalem at the time of the Crusades." A chairman of the Jordanian parliament was quoted in a newspaper, "If we dug deeply in the ground, we would find that the bones of our grandfathers are common to us all." The son of a well known Muslim leader from East Jerusalem (the identity of whom shall not

be revealed due to security reasons) have stated that **“short of a very few true Arabs, all the other “Arabs” in the Holy Land are of a Jewish origin”**.

Yasser Arafat, in an attempt to float a trial balloon, was quoted by **Smadar Perry** in the “Yediot Akharonot“ newspaper after the beginning of the second *intifada*: **“We, the Palestinians and the Jews, are all the sons of the Prophet Samuel.”** However, due to Arafat's limited knowledge of history, it did not merit much attention. Some Palestinians claim that Jesus was Palestinian and that the first Christians were Palestinians. Arafat even called Jesus “the first Palestinian”.

Khanan Ashrawi, a Christian Palestinian leader, argues that the Palestinians are the descendants of the first Christians. As Jesus and the first Christians were all Jewish, and as the name “Palestine” surfaced only about 100 years after Jesus’ death, one may justly dismiss this Palestinian claims as propaganda. However, this Palestinian tradition is only of an inexact nature. The original permanent residents of the land, including the Christians among them, were the People of Israel. The Palestinians today rightfully view the small Christian minority among them as descendents of the first Christians despite the fact that their ancestors neither were Palestinian nor were they ever called that.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL–HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In his book “**Zion in Justice Shall be Redeemed**”⁸ the attorney and researcher Elon Yarden arrives at very clear conclusions regarding the descent of the Palestinians and their closeness to the Jews. The book is based on a thoroughly examined principle that claims that in the mountainous areas in the Land of Israel, that is, the Galilee, Samaria and Judea, the vast majority of the population did not abandon their places of residence for thousands of years.

In contrast, the various migrants who arrived to the country mainly settled in the lowlands, plains and valleys of Israel. Sometimes these migrants drove out residents of areas they arrived at, while at other times they cohabitated with present residents of the places in which they chose to settle. The migrants tended to reside in any given place for a limited period of time and would ultimately continue their migration to other lands.

According to Yarden, the Palestinian residents of the Triangle are a mixture of migrants and original residents of the mountainous area, who sought their livelihood in a place close to the centers of the new Jewish settlements.

In principle, the permanent settlements of mountainous areas, in contrast to the more transient settlement in the lower lying areas, is a known occurrence in the history of other lands. This is due to the fact that mountains have always made the movement of armies more

difficult and hazardous, thereby requiring more effort to conquer than those of the plains and the valleys.

Furthermore, the mountainous areas were also substantially less conducive to agricultural cultivation. As a result of the harsh work environment, the residents of the mountains were often hardier; it was more difficult to defeat them and remove them from the lands to which they had devoted their hearts and souls for generations.

Even when a new deadly conqueror arrived in the region, he bothered the residents of the mountainous region less than the residents of other areas. Due to the ruggedness of the mountainous residents and because of their relative poverty in comparison with others, they were not a good source for tax collection.

The tradition that developed in the mountainous region toward every conqueror, even in the most difficult periods, contained the belief in the local residents' ability to survive based on a faith that these times would pass.

Upon examination of movement of nations in the Holy Land throughout history, it appears that only the Canaanites and Palestinians, residents of lower regions, were nations who settled in the country. Comparatively, there were the people of Israel that Settled in the mountains west of the Jordan River during the time of Joshua Ben Nun.

The other nations who have ruled the Land of Israel throughout history include: Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans,

Arabs, Turks, British, as well as several others. All these nations conquered the country solely for the purpose of expanding their empires (imperialism) and never actually settled its land. From this analysis, it can be seen that residents of the western mountains of Jordan are mostly all descendents of the people of Israel.

A detailed survey of the communities residing east of Jordan in 1860 illustrates that 75% of the country residents were residents of the mountains. A large majority of the immigrants of later years from Arab countries settled in the lowlands, neighboring Jewish communities, in order to be close to where work was demanded (due to the developed infrastructure and need for cheap labor in Jewish regions). Most of these immigrants escaped in the 1948 war. Since then, most of the Palestinians who remained west of the Jordan River are descendants of the original residents of 1860.

From this research, if it is accepted that 70% of the 75% of the mountain residents of 1860 were descendents of Israel, and that 10% of the 25% of the residents of the lower regions of 1860 were also descendents of Jews, it can be assumed that 80% of the Palestinians from the west of Jordan are descendents of the people of Israel. In conclusion, following the above calculations, it can reasonably be deduced in the very least 65% and at the most 85% of those identifying as Palestinians west of the Jordan today are in fact of Jewish-Israelite descent.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC–HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

My books, entitled “**The Road Map to the Third Intifada**”⁶ summarizes a research that was conducted from the demographic-historic perspective. Another book of mine, entitled “**Brother Shall not Lift His Sword against Brother**”⁹ is a popular shortened version. The following key historical events that caused the current error regarding Palestinian identity are discussed in the books, together with many other events that shaped the demographic landscape of the country. Readers interested in more details and bibliography, are referred to these books

The Jews' rebellions against the Romans (70 and 135 A.D.) caused a depletion of the Jewish settlement in Israel turning the people of Israel into a minority within their land. Not less severely, it also led to a change of the name of this Roman province in 135 A.D. from “Judea” to “Palestina.” **It was this name change that caused the Jews, returning to Zion in the 19th and 20th centuries, and others, to refer to the old-time residents of the land as Palestinians and not as Jews.**

The conquest of the Land of Israel by the Arabs was completed in 640, however, it did not bring with it Arab settlers to the country. Arab settlers were brought to other captured lands in order to secure the loyalty of the residents who had Islam forced upon them. Since in the Land of Israel, there were hardly any idol worshippers and Islam was not forced upon Jews or Christians, there was no need for

Arabs to settle the land. What, in fact, did bring about Arab rule in the land was a serious economic discrimination toward non-Moslems (mainly heavy taxes from which Moslems were exempt), which caused only a very few to convert to Islam, mainly in the 8th century.

The situation changed appreciably in 1012, the period of the Shi'ite caliph **El-Khakem (Al-Hakim)**, who ruled the Fatimid Caliphate (named after Fatma –Mohamed's daughter) from its center in Cairo. The Shi'ite regime decreed that all of the residents of the Land of Israel who were not Muslim must convert to Islam or leave.

As a result of this decree, the majority of Christians left and the People of Israel once again constituted the vast majority of the people in its land. However, the people of Israel, all of whom clung to their land were forced to adopt Islam.

The forced conversion to Islam led to the Islamicization of over 90% of the population. For the majority of these converts, Islam was only outwardly manifested. In their homes they practiced their Jewish religious customs. The name given to these forced converts was **Musta'arhim** (hidden as Arabs). In 1044, another Fatimid caliph cancelled the decree. Since the decree had violated Islamic principles (not permitting forced conversion), the caliph permitted those who had been coercively converted to Islam to readopt their former religions. This was a most unique occasion due to the fact that, under normal circumstances, abandoning Islam is against the law and is punishable by death.

About a quarter of the Jewish Musta'arbim used the opportunity to return to Judaism. The remainder continued to practice Islam outwardly as a result of their difficult economic situation and the taxes imposed on non-Muslims. In this manner they benefited from their outward Islamicization without their having betrayed their original religion, (in most cases Jewish), the ritual observance of which was kept within their homes. The idea of anyone relinquishing and exchanging his national identity was at the time, unthinkable. The confusion was only about religion.

Until the time of the Crusader conquest, the rise of the rate of Musta'arbim returned to 90%. As a result of the discriminatory economic situation, young full Jews (from both religious and national-ethnic perspective), envying the economic advantages of their Musta'arbim friends and relatives, also became Musta'arbim.

Following the murders by the Crusaders, the decline in the economic situation in the land and the plagues in the Mameluke period, there was a further decrease in the number of non-Jews by origin in the country and in the rate of those who outwardly maintained their original religion. In general, the country's total population went into a steep decline.

Beginning in 1840, the descendents of the Musta'arbim were joined by various other migrants to the country. The migrants were concentrated in regions that had been settled by Jews who were

returning to Zion (synonymous with both the Land of Israel and Jerusalem). Due to many reasons detailed above, the Zionist settlers, being confronted with Arabic speaking foreigners, ignored the fact that many of the descendants of Musta'arbim knew about their original identity and a portion of them even managed to preserve various Jewish customs.

Due to the influence of foreigners and terror (that started in 1921 and continued until 1948, before there was any Israeli occupation of anything), the descendants of the people of Israel, especially those who had lost the memory of their true forebears, have today become the bitter enemies of the Jews.

In the historic upheavals that occurred in the midst of the fleeing of refugees, most of the foreign migrants left. As a result, **the present conflict is a tragic civil war whose only justification is based on the widespread ignorance about the origins of the Palestinians. At the same time, the majority of Palestinian refugees was settlers, foreign to the western land of Israel, and possesses no authentic claim to a right of return.**

The demographic research exposes the current mistakes that prevail today in the accepted demography of the Palestinians. It explains and details how, as opposed to Palestinian claims about the existence at the present time of close to 5 million Palestinians in the land west of the Jordan river, the correct number is about 3.25

million, of which 89.5% are descendants of the people of Israel. The following chart summarizes the results of the demographic-historical research of the Land of Israel over the past 2,000 years.

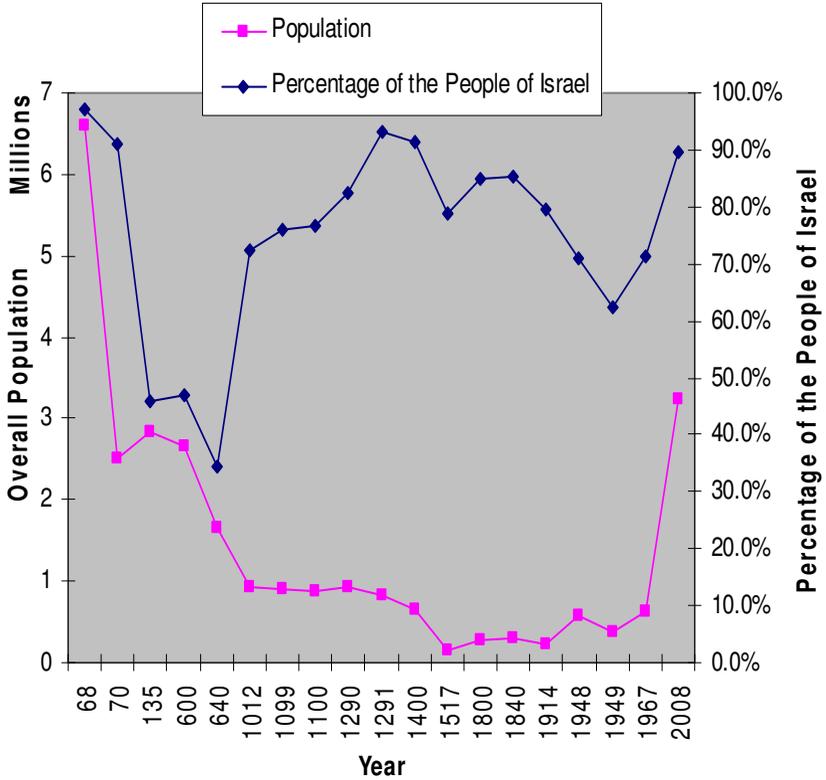


Chart: The size of population in the Holy Land and percentage of the people of Israel among the entire population (from 1914, not including Jews by religion and only west of the Jordan).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESULT OVERLAPPING

The demographic-historic research, based on Palestinian dynasties over very long periods of time, dynasties recorded by many throughout many years, demonstrates that, at the end of 2008, 89.5% of Palestinians from west of the Jordan river are of Jewish-Israelite descent. The genetic study, based on a considerably large Y chromosome sample group, reveals that 82% of the Palestinians west of the Jordan are of the descent close to the Jews, similar to the results of the demographic research.

On a parallel level, the geographic-historical research shows a range of 65%-85%. Due to the fact that this particular research is the least exact out of the three studies discussed, it is reasonable to narrow the results of this study to 82%-89.5% rate of Jewish-Israelite ancestry among the Palestinians in the Holy Land. **The combined significance of these studies, in addition to the extensive commonalities in traditions, testimonies, language and names,** as described in the above chapters and reflect about half of the relevant population, **allow us to conclude, without a shadow of a doubt, that the vast majority of Palestinians who today reside west of Jordan River are descendents of the people of Israel!!**

In addition, it is not only impossible to ignore the results of the three studies, rather, we should rely on their findings – numbers and conclusions, in order to arrive at the solution for the conflict, as described in the forthcoming chapter.

THE NECESSARY SOLUTION – THE ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing the closeness between the majority of Palestinians and the Jews is crucial for the sake of minimizing mutual hatred. Moreover, the findings also point in the direction of a solution. A significant part of the book, **“The Road Map to the Third Intifada,”** is devoted to this inferred solution.

The current Israeli leadership, hard-pressed by day-to-day matters, is suffering from a dwindling supply of the creative spirit that characterized the Zionist movement in its early days. The Zionist movement took the initiative to create an historic process of realizing an idea that had originally appeared as unrealistic. Within 50 years this movement succeeded to establish the State of Israel and to bring to it the major part of the world’s Jewry. **Today, the movement needs to shake off static and stagnation in order to continue on with its historic mission.** As stated in the book of Ezekiel:

“And say unto them: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore at all; . . . Moreover, I shall make a covenant of peace with them – it shall be an everlasting covenant with them;” (Ezekiel 37, verses 21, 22, 26)

Despite the fact that Ezekiel's prophecy appears appropriate enough for describing the first return to Zion, the occurrence of the destruction of the Second Temple illustrates that it cannot be considered as an everlasting covenant of peace.

The following quote is from a book entitled, **Wholeness and the Implicate Order**¹⁷ by the well-known physicist, **David Bohm**. Bohm writes about humanity in general, but is especially significant to the residents of the Land of Israel. He states (emphases are those of the author):

"The notion that all of these fragments [groups of men] are separately existent is an illusion, and this illusion cannot do other than lead to endless conflict and confusion. Indeed, the attempt to live according the notion that all the fragments are really separate is, in essence what has led to the growing series of extremely urgent crises that is confronting us today."

It is fitting that the words of this distinguished scientist would serve as a beacon for the residents of the Land of Israel in light of the wars, terrorist attacks, anti-terrorist operations, suffering of innocent victims, confusion which has enveloped Israel's leadership and the chaos which prevails in the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, confusion and crisis have become a permanent fixture of many other states whose citizens have personally suffered from the internationally mounting terror.

The tangled situation in which the region finds itself necessitates an innovative perspective on the situation. The powerful and negative energies invested in the conflict need to be funneled in a positive direction. This will allow the people of Israel to not only live in peace and with security but also to execute a quantum leap on the way to enlarging its scope and prosperity.

Mark Twain had already identified, in the beginning of the Zionist movement, the great potential concealed in the Jewish state. This can be seen through his words in "About the Jews":

"Dr. Herzl intends to gather the Jews from around the world into the Land of Israel ruled by a government of their own . . . In my opinion, an immediate stop should be put to this prank. It is totally undesirable that the race with the most brilliant minds in the world will suddenly discover its power. If horses knew their strength, we would not be able to continue to ride upon them."

Both the visions of Theodore Herzl and Mark Twain were only partially realized. We may easily mark the principal reason that prevented the complete realization of Mr. Twain's vision, or perhaps fear. Undoubtedly, this reason may be attributed to the Jewish-Palestinian rift that occurred in the midst of the realization of Dr. Herzl's vision.

The solution directly derived from the true identity of the Palestinians is **the reunification of the two factions into one united state in the western part of the Land of Israel!**

This concept is close to the original goals of the PLO prior to the Oslo Accords and to the goals of many Palestinians today - the creation of one secular state over the entire territory of the western Land of Israel. However, since this must be a lasting agreement, and moreover, one which is acceptable to the Jews, it can only be accomplished with the essential and vital stipulation that this accord **would not be allowed to create a bi-national state (of Jews and Arabs where neither side is a small minority).**

Moreover, this approach dovetails with the original political aspirations of the Right Wing in Israel, by providing the Jewish people sovereignty over the entire western Land of Israel. This approach would enable a compromise to be reached between the **extremists** of both sides. **A compromise of this sort would allow for stable peace**, as distinguished from the tenuous peace that results from the compromise between the moderates of both sides. The most just and practical way to achieve this ultimate goal of peace is by a **willing return of the majority of Palestinians to being members of the people of Israel. In response to the doubt and thoughts of the impossibility as to his suggested solution, David Ben Gurion said the following:**

“To live in the Land of Israel without believing in miracles is impractical!”

The preferred solution is called the **Engagement Plan**. It contains many components dealing primarily with the recreation of

the Palestinian educational system, uprooting their hatred toward the Jews and the Zionist enterprise, teaching them their complete history, Hebrew culture and Jewish tradition, thus allowing them to integrate into the State of Israel as first-class citizens and partners. The process needs to be quite thorough and span a long period of time, thereby enabling both sides to accept each other as the blood brothers that they truly are. The process would only apply to Palestinians who currently live in the western part of the historic Land of Israel.

No religious coercion would be involved, as the reunification would occur primarily at the national level. After obtaining information regarding the Jewish traditions, one may choose to be secular or follow the religion of his choice. This approach follows the Jewish religious law that was practiced in the Land of Israel at the time of the First and Second Temples; Jews who were idol worshippers were not forced to convert back in order to be considered part of the people of Israel.

The religious Jewish law that was practiced during the time of exile, whereby a lenient conversion was a condition for the reunification of a descendant of forced converts of Israel, is not relevant in this instance. This is due to the fact that the probability of aliens being claiming a right of membership among the people of Israel is very low. This is stated because since from the time of the forced conversion in the Land of Israel (1012), the percentage of the

people of Israel in their land has been at its highest level (see the above chart) and the probability of intermarriage with aliens was extremely low, also taking into account the geographical separation between Jews and others. In contrast, among descendants of the forced converts in exile, there exists a strong concern regarding the high rate of intermarriage that has occurred over the generations since the time of the forced conversion.

Additional details regarding the solution may be found in the book “**The Road Map to the Third Intifada**” and in Elon Yarden’s book, “**A Common Homeland – Not a Disputed Territory**”⁷ both of which deliberate on the required revolution of the Palestinian identity and its implications.

Despite the fact that the aforementioned change in perspective may seem to be impractical, the plan is attainable due to the following reasons:

1. The majority of Palestinian families (over 50%) is aware of their Jewish origins and would be happy to return whence welcomed by the nation of their origins.
2. Many Palestinians prefer to be citizens of the State of Israel to living under the rule of terrorist organizations. Obviously, they would prefer to be first class citizens, and therefore, they would want to join the people of the State of Israel.

3. Most Palestinians are loyal above all to their families, then to their clans, to those in position of power and only at the end to their religion and people. A strong State of Israel, confident in its direction and its just cause, can successfully execute the engagement plan.
4. The stages of the joining of the Palestinians to the State of Israel, as well as the other measures taken for such goals, will prevent the categorizing of the joiners as the fifth column.
5. It is not vital that all Palestinians join the people of Israel. Due to the real numbers of Palestinians, even if half of the Palestinians in the western Land of Israel would not join, the percentage of those who will remain “Arabs” in the entire country will be still lower than the current percentage of the so called “Israeli Arabs” within the borders of the Green Line. This will be true even without any further immigration of the world’s Jews to the State of Israel.

The following quotation best summarizes the importance of the consciousness change required by both parties: “I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be” – **Dr. Martin Luther King**.

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TSVI MISINAI – Born in Jerusalem 1946. Graduated in Physics from the Haifa Technion in 1968. Misinai, the pioneer of the Israeli software industry, was the first to receive the Rothschild Award for industrial development in the field of software (1992). Misinai founded Sapiens International Corporation. He embedded the principal of Positive Thinking in computers and invented the Rule Based Object Oriented technology for developing data processing applications, the development of which he started in the Weizmann Institute of Science in 1972.

On the book **BROTHER SHALL NOT LIFT SWORD AGAINST BROTHER**:

After two thousand years of exile, the two parts of the Jewish nation meet in the land of Israel, the part that was expelled but kept its religion and identity and the part that remained in the country but its religion and identity were converted. The two parts-brothers become bitter enemies. This thrilling thesis is presented in this book by Tsvi Misinai, a result of years of historic-demographic research and supported by DNA findings. That many ways were tried to reach understanding with the Palestinians. Maybe this approach will help stop the bloodshed between the blood brothers-enemies.

– **General** (ret.) **Uri Simkhoni**

Here in our hands is a remarkable and challenging book – both in its contents and in its research methods. This historic-demographic document presents a revolutionary and daring idea about the continuity of the Jewish (and other) presence in the land of Israel for the last two millennia. Based, inter alia, on methods that are not yet accepted by normative science, Tsvi Misinai determines that the majority of the Palestinian population living in the country consists of forced converts to Islam, that really belong to the Jewish nation. Far reaching political and national implications will be clarified from the redemption of their identity – up to the return of these descendents of the historic Jewish people to their original people. Days will show to what extent his plan for peace will materialize.

– **Dr. Mordekhai Nissan**, lecturer in Middle East studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem

This book of Tsvi Misinai, a first row thinker, a businessman and writer, is a breakthrough in the variety of proposals that saw light in the search for peace in our region. The proposal that emphasizes the unifying rather than differentiating between the Israelis and the Palestinians, in order to see them as one nation living in peace, should be taken seriously, with full respect to its good ideas. As one that is active over a long period in seeking peace in our region, I see this book as an important tool in the way towards achieving peace in our region and in the entire world.

– **Binyamim Tsdaka**, head of the A.B. Institute for Samaritan studies.