



## What Are You Reading?

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

I have a secret. Some might say an embarrassing one. If you guessed those “some” are my daughters? Then ding ding ding. You win a prize! You see, I have a guilty pleasure. I love “Hallmark” type movies and books. You know the ones they make fun of on social media? The memes that say, “What has 15 actors, 4 settings, 2 writers and 1 plot?” You can say the same about the mind-candy books I typically choose. I use them as escapes from reality. I have a good life and love my family but sometimes I just need to crawl into a fictional world where the challenge gets wrapped up, happily in two hours, minus commercials or within 350 pages or less!

So when a mom at the J handed me “Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth”, it was not my typical choice for literature. I love learning new things, don’t get me wrong, but my time to sit down and engulf myself in a book is not when I typically do it. I read an article here or there or listen to a podcast. But let me tell you, I am so glad I broke out of my comfort zone and started reading this book. The quote on the front, from Bill Maher, encapsulates the experience perfectly: “This is not your Bubbie’s history book.”

Noa Tishby, the author of this book, weaves back and forth between her personal and family history and the history of Israel. And if the book was just about her history, her story, it would still be fascinating! While it doesn’t read like a history book, it is chock full of information that is both surprising and disturbing all at the same time; mainly because it is all true!

There are so many key pieces in the book that make you want to go, “huh?!” And make you want to shout the **facts** from the rooftop. What facts do you ask? And where would you shout them? Join me on this journey. Maybe you will feel the need to shout as well!

### **What Facts?**

“*Israel*” lists all of the details one needs to know about Israel, her history, how things began, who started what, where the lines have been drawn, etc. All quotes in my W.O.W. are from this book.

### **Where Would You Shout Them?**

These facts should be shouted at every pro Palestinian rally, at all BDS meetings and on college campuses. There are other places too, but you should read the book to find those out.



## **How It All Began**

One thing that people don't always get is that Israel is steeped in history. Archaeologists and historians view Israel as a treasure trove everywhere you look. And Israel's history began so very long ago. There is often talk about the rights of Indigenous people. The Jewish people are the only ones that can follow history, both secular and religious, back 2,500 years in Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel. The Canaanites also could, but they are no longer around. Thousands of years.

Noa Tishby details all of it but offers a nice recap. "Before the modern-day establishment of the State of Israel, the land passed from the Kingdom of Israel to the Persians, the Greeks, the House of Hasmoneans [hello, Hanukkah!] the Romans, the Byzantines, the Crusaders, the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and the Brits." Read Chapter 2, *A Brief History of the Land of Israel* for a more detailed read. However, for our purposes, well mine, I will begin in the late 1940s when Israel became a state. According to History.com, on Nov. 29, 1947, "Despite strong Arab opposition, the United Nations votes for the partition of [Palestine](#) into two sections: an independent Jewish state and an independent Arab state."

## **The Original Two State Solution**

"Acknowledging the horrors of the Holocaust and the need for the Jews to have a safe place, the UN created the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine - a plan for who to divide the land between the Jews and the Arabs." While the Jewish state received 55 % of the land and the Arabs received 45%, the Arab piece provided much greater access to water and it was of much better quality in terms of resources and the land itself. When you read the plan that was laid out by the UN, and see it on paper, it looks like Swiss cheese. The council created these two states, within the less than 9,000 square miles that is now Israel, one as the Jewish state and one as an Arab state. The Jewish state was accepted right away. The entire Arab world rejected this plan immediately. They threatened to attack the Jews if the Jewish state was created. And on the next day, that is exactly what happened.

As I continued to read the book, it's the facts that hit me. On May 15, 1948, "as the newly minted 'Israelis' were sleeping off their Independence Day hangovers, all those Arab armies...(Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq, with the help of Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Lebanon) invaded the new state in order to destroy it." These countries joined forces with the Arab Liberation Army and the Muslim Brotherhood, already in Israel. They were so sure that they would be victorious, they called for the Arab residents of Israel "to vacate their towns and villages until the fighting had finished and every Jew had been killed."



Ten months later, in July 1949, all of the Arab nations that had invaded, “signed *temporary* truces with Israel.” And because of the Arab nations’ invasion, and Israel’s victory, Israel now controlled not only the land given to them by the UN but also “an additional one-third of the former British mandate’s land, including West Jerusalem, the Galilee, and the bigger parts of the Negev desert.” Noa goes on to point out that “(t)he local Arabs did not use this opportunity to go back to the UN Partition Plan to ask to establish their own state, and so an Arab-Palestinian state was never established.”

Furthermore, Egypt and Jordan took the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, respectively, “even though these territories were allocated for the local Arabs for a state of their own.”

So while I look at the current state of affairs in Israel and in Gaza, the facts are what continue to shock me; the facts that aren’t known by the pro Palestinian marchers. Hamas doesn’t care about the facts, of course. And the others, the protestors, well, you just have to believe that they are ignorant. I guess, maybe, they too are reading the “Hallmark” books. And just haven’t branched out yet.

Shabbat Shalom.