



The Last Word

No Question Regarding Identity

A priest from Beit Sahour, clearly with a sense of humor, once said: “I don’t understand why Jesus left the beautiful Galilee and came to our area. The Galilee is a much nicer place!” He was right, northern Palestine is gorgeous.

Given that Jerusalem and Bethlehem are top priorities for pilgrims, the Galilee can be a bit overshadowed, although it does have its share of pilgrims and tourists. There is much beauty, history, culture, and certainly adventure that await visitors to the Galilee. For pilgrims, Nazareth – Galilee’s capital and its largest city – is a must. It’s where Jesus spent his childhood and contains the Grotto of the Annunciation where it is believed the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced that she would conceive and bear Jesus. Everyone should visit the stunning city of Haifa which occupies a beautiful position on the slopes of Mount Carmel and boasts the amazing Baha’i Gardens, the German Colony, and many museums and other attractions. And how can one not go to the sea on a visit to Galilee? As one of the lowest lakes in the world, Lake Tiberias, also called the Sea of Galilee, and its surroundings are flooded with religion and history. It’s also where cool Jesus walked on water! I wouldn’t recommend trying that, but a boat trip on the lake would be nice. One can even engage in some watersports. Alternatively, biking around the lake or taking a hike in the hills above would thrill adventurers and provide amazing panoramas. Furthermore, in order to enjoy a magical panoramic view of the lake and beyond, climb or drive to the peak of Mount Arbel, located in the Lower Galilee, which stands sharply and prominently over the Sea of Galilee. From there, one can see the Horns of Hittin, where Saladin defeated the Crusaders in 1187 AD. Content on plenty more sites and shrines is included in this issue of *This Week in Palestine*.

I hate to spoil the mood, but since their forced subjugation to the state of Israel post 1948, the indigenous Palestinian population of northern Palestine initially faced attempts at ethnic cleansing and had to work very hard to survive unfair conditions. *Al-Nakba* forced thousands to flee to adjacent countries for safety. Some eventually immigrated to countries around the globe, but most remained in the countries they initially fled to and became refugees, remaining so even to this very day. Obvious attempts have been made to tamper with their identity. Do read the article in this issue by Adalah, a respected human rights organization, about the discriminatory laws faced by Palestinians in northern Palestine. Seven decades after the *Nakba*, however, the identity of the people living in northern Palestine is clear: they are 100% Palestinian. Seventy-plus years later, the Palestinians of northern Palestine are a proud, successful, and simply beautiful people.

Politics aside, northern Palestine is a must-see.

Long live Palestine!

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Publisher

