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MaozNews is a monthly publication. Our goal is to provide readers with an overview of realities in and with regard to Israel, with particular but not exclusive reference to the Gospel. Readers will view those portions of MaozNews in which they have interest. To that end, we seek to diversify.

Between Jewish and Democratic

An indication of how **Israel is torn between its desire to be a Jewish State and a modern democracy** was illustrated by a statement by the nation's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. With his Government facing a difficult moral issue regarding the legal status of children born in Israel to foreigner with a temporary work permit, he inadvertently defined the tension under which Israel lives. Netanyahu stated that the Government was "torn between humanitarian and Zionist considerations". That such a conflict could be imagined is but an indication of Israel's painful and ongoing conundrum, seeking to be true to both consideration, yet unclear which of the two should be primary and how that primacy should be expressed in the course of daily life.

Some believe that the contradiction between the two aspirations is irresolvable. Prominent columnist, Gideon Levy, stated in Ha'Aretz on Aug. 9 that "**defining Israel as a Jewish state condemns us to live in a racist state**". Referring to the fate of migrant workers' children and to Israel's recent razing of unauthorized Bedouin villages in the Negev he says, "We will continue to move from one injustice to another, until we recognize the racist nature of the state". Presumably, such recognition would bring about a change in direction.

The fact is that Israel does prefer merely theoretical adherents of one religion over those of any other. It accords or withholds civic privileges according to ethnic identity opening the State to the painful charge expressed by Levy in his article. Individuals born in the land, who spoke the native language, were educated in Israeli schools, served in the army and died in its defense, are buried on the extremities of Israel's graveyards, **alongside suicides, bastards and prostitutes**. Their parents' right to remain in the land was revoked shortly after the funeral and the mourning parents forced to leave. On the other hand, individuals with nothing to contribute to the country

but can boast of a mere inkling of Jewish blood are welcomed with open arms and granted citizenship upon entry.

Israelis are generally agreed that they want Israel to remain a Jewish state, but they are at loggerheads as to the nature of the Jewishness they wish to State to exemplify. Most of them are also anxious to ensure the country preserve its present democratic values. They **aspire to a pluralistic, humane society based on universal moral and social values modified and motivated by traditional Jewish values**. They want the Sabbath to be honored, while preserving the right to conduct business, watch a soccer game and have access to public transportation on that day. They prefer non-kosher restaurants to those supervised by the rabbis, although they would insist that kosher restaurants should continue to exist.

They wish to **accord the Rabbinate special privileges**, which should not include the right to determine whom they may marry, how they are to conduct their daily life, and where or how they should be buried. In other words, they prefer to pay lip service to rabbinical priority, without according the rabbis the right to interfere with the course of their daily lives. They want all Israeli citizens to bear an equal part in the burden of Israel's defense and its' scientific, educational, industrial, and commercial efforts.

A small but increasingly influential section of Israeli society strives to achieve **control over the character of the State's Jewishness**. Their aspirations are very different. They would tolerate the practice of religions other than Judaism, but only under severe restrictions. They would insist upon the State preferring Orthodox Judaism above all other religious options, including Conservative and Reformed, and insist on the funding of Orthodox Jewish institutions. They decry western values and would have the State governed by Rabbis, much as Iran is presently run by Muslim clerics.

They would insist on the Sabbath closure of all commercial, industrial, and service industries except those necessary to sustain life. They would forbid all sport activities on the holy day and on all other Jewish holidays. None but kosher foods would be marketed. **Jewish citizens could marry, divorce and be buried only according to Orthodox Jewish law**. Rabbis and students of rabbinical schools would be exempt from military service and receive life-long stipends that would free them from all other activities except the study of Jewish lore. Separate schools run by the Orthodox would be excused from the requirement to study English, science, literature, world history, computer literacy, and all but the very basics of mathematics, while surviving secular schools would be required to teach Jewish lore.

Gideon Levy states, "The time has come to reexamine the long-obsolete concepts. **Does anyone actually know the meaning of the term "Jewish state"** that we bandy about so much? Does it mean a state for Jews only? Is it not a new kind of "racial purity"? Is the 'demographic threat' greater than the danger of the state's becoming a religious ethnocracy or an apartheid state? Wouldn't it be better to live in a just democracy? And how is it even possible to speak about a state being both Jewish and democratic?"

Israel continues to undergo what may well result in a continental shift in terms of its societal, cultural and moral make-up. **Religious radicalism is eroding secular liberalism**, with no other life-view to challenge or moderate the process. The church, engrossed in issues of self identity, discovery of the implications of a Christian faith and to-ing and fro-ing of a developing

community, is ill equipped to meet the challenges of the day. A truly prophetic message is yet to be raised in Israel, one that will address the nation, point to the awful holiness of God, and call it to repentance.

The religious **Orthodox are gaining in strength, confidence, political clout and social confidence.** But for a brief spell, religious political parties, headed by a prominent rabbi or a council of rabbinical sages, have been in government ever since the State of Israel was founded. Pundits describe Israeli elections as an effort to determine who will be the next to form a Government with the Orthodox. To achieve such a Government, one must concede to rabbinical demands regarding civil liberties (Jews are not allowed to wed except by authorized rabbis) and special privileges (Jewish religious institutions are recognized and extensively funded by the State, Jewish religious students of rabbinic law are exempt from military service).

Over 52% of the children commencing school at first grade attended ultra-Orthodox and religious schools, where gender, racial, economic and religious status segregation is practiced. The head of the Pedagogic Office has censored non-religious textbooks, replacing civics lessons with lessons on Judaism while the core curriculum is refused in Orthodox schools and is increasingly downplayed in non-religious schools. What will the government-funded schools teach their pupils? The Judaism replacing civics lessons teaches, according to Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, that there are four levels in nature: inanimate, vegetable, animal, speaker. A speaker is a talking animal, the gentile. Above the realm of nature is the fifth and highest level, the Jew. This is what the children learn, as the Talmud puts it: "You are called man and the nations of the world are not called man."

The historical background to these things is clear. The long, harsh persecutions experienced by the Jews provoked reaction, some of which translated into a desire for revenge. The founding of Israel was to do away with such a sense of frustrated shame and angry inferiority. It has not, and Israel is not the only one to blame for this. **European anti-Semitism, coupled with Islamic anti-Semitism and cynical preference of oil over justice have left Israel to fend for itself.** The double standards by which the world chooses to measure Israel on the one hand and its avowed enemies on the other, has contributed to Israeli Jewish frustration.

As a result, the absolute majority of established Jewish Orthodoxy is angry. Rabbis who have **called for the death of all who oppose Israel** have not been strenuously dealt with by the Israeli authorities. Shas, the largest of the religious political parties and owner of the largest chain of religious school, is led by Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. At the end of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's weekly lesson came the customary closing "blessings". He wished his listeners and their families spiritual and physical health and happiness. Then he expressed his sincere wishes to Israel's neighbors: "May our enemies and haters come to an end," he intoned. "May Abu Mazen [Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas] and all those wicked men be lost from the earth. May God smite them with the plague of pestilence, including all those Palestinians."

The Chief Rabbi, Yona Metzger, wrote to all 120 members of the Knesset this week proposing new legislation that would "institutionalize rabbinical freedom, ... so that, in democratic Israel, the law will allow a rabbi to give public expression to his views, which are the views of Torah, **without fear of repercussions.**" Metzger's letter came in the wake of an half-hearted police investigation into alleged incitement by Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira, who stated in a recent book that

killing non-Jews who do not observe the seven Noahide commandments is not only permissible, but sometimes desirable.

Sooner or later, Israel will have to face these searching questions. The time may well draw near.

Bible Times Fragment Found

Israeli researchers claim that, in an area south of the walls of the old city of east Jerusalem, archaeologists have uncovered an ancient clay fragment dating back some 3,400 years, the oldest-ever sample of writing ever found in Jerusalem. The clay chip indicates the importance of the city as early as the Bronze Age, around 1400 BC, just before the earliest estimated time of the Israelite invasion of the land under Joshua. The tiny fragment measures two centimeters by 2.8 cm (about a square inch) and is covered with cuneiform script, the earliest known form of writing. The fragment was found by researchers sifting through debris removed from beneath a tower dating from the 10th century BC. (Between the reigns of Rehoboam and Ahaz of Judah).

This important find indicates the prominence of the city in the Bronze Age. It is believed to have been part of royal archives maintained in the city. It debunks the view those scholars who date the composition of the Bible to a much later time, assuming that writing was introduced to the ancient Middle East much later than the Bible infers.

According to an expert from the Jerusalem University's Institute of Archaeology, the script on the fragment, contains snippets of words such as "you were" and "them," and appears to have been very carefully formed. "It was written by a highly skilled scribe," said Professor Wayne Horowitz, an expert in Assyriology who deciphered the script.

Researchers believe the tablet may be part of a "royal missive" sent from the Canaanite

ruler of Jerusalem to the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (known as Akhenaten), who lived in the 15th century BC.



Baruch's Biography

Having been called up in October 1973, after fighting on the Golan, Baruch's unit was moved to Sinai, where it encircled the Second Egyptian Army and awaited orders. Here we pick up the story.

In Sinai

The men would come to us for moral support and I sought to relieve their problems as well as I could. Being a Christian, it seemed to me that one of my best contributions within the framework of what was expected of me would be to assist the men in coping with the realities

their enlistment imposed upon them. There were social needs, urgent need to be home to save a family or a business. When I was convinced that real needs were presented, I worked with Effi to obtain from the Division Commander limited leave for the men to go home and deal with whatever required their urgent attention. On other occasions the men would come to us for help in contacting their families. There was only one telephone line available to the whole division for this purpose, available at our "clinic". We would whirr the handle until an operator replied and then request a number.

Sometimes I needed to use clout to help a soldier contact his family. On one occasion, a soldier had tried in vain to get the operator to ring his number. Finally, I took the telephone and, in a gruff, commanding voice announced to the operator, "I am calling from Dr. Effi Gazit's office. Get me such and such a number at once!" It worked. We had a good laugh, and the deeply worried soldier had his concerns relieved..

While in the field, my employer at Maxtronics informed me by letter that my employment was terminated. I was an enlisted man and the law forbade terminating the employment of men in uniform, but I was not going to contest his decision. I was too far away to do so, and the man was obviously struggling economically, like so many whose employees had been in uniform for four or five months. Still, it was an ugly thing to do, I did express my feelings to Uzzi. It was the one and only time Uzzi ever heard me use language I later deeply regretted. It was not the best kind of witness I could give to my Faith, or to my trust in God.

We had commandeered a small old Egyptian base which had a series of metal arches stretched over sand enclosed with a cement frames. From various sources we collected tiles for the floor and stretched a net over one of these frames. Later, when it became cold, as it does in the desert, we used a canvas. This assisted us in keeping the clinic clean and shady, and accorded us some privacy. Once, when the clinic was moved a few miles away and returned, I found that our tiles had all been "borrowed" by other men. Upon my demand, they were returned and we returned to our relatively comfortable life.

I had plenty of time to read and pray, and was grateful for the opportunity to do so – we had been extremely busy up to that time, with little space for devotions.

The Israeli army had been caught off guard and was poorly equipped for an extended enlistment. So much so, that the US flew in uniforms and warm clothing. Thus American uniforms were introduced into the Israeli army. American military woolen gloves, a black knitted sailor's hat and olive fatigues were the order of the day. Somewhere, I still have the knitted cap, to which the men of my unit sewed a bright red, woolen ball. We were plied with large quantities of food and, since my men and I generally cooked for ourselves, we had large quantities of eggs, hard cheeses, brandy and other goodies that did not need to be chilled. I taught Uzzi to eat avocados by making an egg and avocado salad, or soft white cheese and avocado, with plenty of garlic, chopped onion, salt and a good squeeze of lemon juice.

The men were horrified to discover I had confiscated all the brandy. I did not want drinking problems in the division, so I used the brandy to sterilize my medical equipment. The men's protests got them nowhere. On one occasion, Effi took the initiative (he never cooked or helped wash the dishes, although he always helped keep our quarters clean) and prepared a cheese fondue, which we ate with great pleasure.

He and I would visit the troops, scattered over a rather wide area, and sometimes care for units that did not belong to our division. We were concerned for the medical teams, doctors included, as we were for the health of the men. Months had passed since mobilization. Situations at home were not getting any better. The end was not in sight, nor was there sufficient action to keep the men busy and support morale. I initiated a series of refresher courses, got the doctors involved in organizing special courses and lectures for the medics and for the men in general, and otherwise sought to alleviate the boredom that is so corruptive to any army, let alone an army of reservists.

One day we a new man arrived at our Division – the Division Samal Dat (the Israeli version of a military chaplain). Our Command had resisted the appointment of such, but now that High Command was scrambling for ways to keep the men occupied, resistance was no longer effective. The new appointee had heard of our activity, so he looked me up, pulled out his Chaplain's ID and announced, “You and I have a lot in common”.

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“If we are taken prisoner, you and I have a privileged status because I am a Samal Dat and you are a medic”.

I suppose he was trying to forge a friendship, but neither I nor any of the men warmed to such airs.

In the course of our visits (some of which included what we called “Africa” - that is to say, Egypt) we were shocked by the devastation we saw of the city of Suez. Egypt had been shelling our troops for years across the Suez Canal, and Israel responded with barrages against Suez City.

One of the nearby units was a platoon of parachuted light artillery, commanded by Ran Cohen, later to become a well-known Knesset member. Ran's unit was isolated from its original command, so we adopted it and sought to care of the men and their needs. I don't recall that we included them, however, in the rota of vacations that Effi and I had worked out for the doctors and medics.

To be continued

Family and Ministry News

Baruch and Bracha spent the last few months visiting family and friends in the US. In the course of the trip Baruch was able to complete editing five of the remaining books of the Hagiographa, which will comprise the final volume of the **Hebrew Bible for Youth** and to continue his work on **Romans** while fine-tuning his **commentary on Matthew**. Both of the latter projects continue. He was also able to take the first steps toward a commentary on **Malachi** and to pursue his studies for a Masters degree in Biblical Studies. His thesis will be on the Christian use of the Old Testament. Agreements on the republication of his books in English, **JUDAISM IS NOT JEWISH** and **JONAH – PROPHET ON THE RUN** are also in the making.

In the course of the trip, Baruch and Bracha drove 8,700 miles, from Detroit to Cleveland, down to southern Florida and across the continent to southern and northern California. They visited churches on the way and visited their three daughters and their families. They met with some

success in shoring up the gap created by the drop in value of the US Dollar and the Euro compared to the Israel Shekel and to the cost of living in Israel.

Avital and family are hoping for a change in direction. Eran is considering a career in Real estate that would enable him to spend more time with the family. One of the many reasons we love and respect him so much is the high value he puts on family life. Noam (now 11) and Maya (8) are enrolled in an excellent local charter school and doing well. Noam has joined the basket ball team and Maya is learning to sing. Nadav (4) will soon be attending pre-school and is beginning to discover that he is a boy, not a girl like his sisters.

Keith and Shlomit are exhausted, as are any new parents, being especially challenged by a small new-born who needed special care and extra suckling until he gained enough strength to suckle normally. Yonatan's early birth created some complications for her and Keith, leaving them without medical insurance for the further treatment Shlomit had to undergo for the removal of her gall bladder and another medical problem that arose later. Keith continues to hold down three jobs as he awaits the final decision of the church whether or not to call him to the post of Associate Pastor. Meanwhile, they remain without medical insurance. Please pray for their health.

Tamar and family have had a busy time. Marcus was invited to return to Boeing, where had had worked before moving to Irvine (California). He felt he had reached a glass ceiling at Boeing and sought to broaden his engineering experience while opening the door for future advancement by removing to another company. Little did he expect that such a move would lead him to further advancement at Boeing, where he did so well. Consequently, he, Tamar and Yotam are moving back to the Seattle area. They intend to rent an apartment while renting out the small house they own and seek ways to sell the house at minimal loss. They are expecting their second child in March of 2011.

In the course of the trip, Bracha and Baruch spent two days with his **brothers in Dallas** Texas, Stuart and Daniel. This was the first such visit that was not fraught with tension. The two brothers are prominent in the Jewish community of their city as well as on a national level. They felt greatly discomfited by Baruch's Christian faith. As time went on, they have discovered that his Jewish identity has not at been disaffected by his faith, and have become more open to him. Some opportunity was available for witness, especially to the older of Baruch's brothers, Stuart, and his wife.

Rose completed the course for Dental Assistances with distinction and was posted to an air force base in the south of the country. She has requested and been promised a transfer closer to home, which will enable her to be home every day. She has since undergone a second course, training her to be the senior dental assistant in the clinic. Her training and experience will provide her with a source of income once she completes the army.

Katya and Felix have rented a two-room flat on the hospital grounds where Katya works. Little **Maya** is doing very well, and they are both active at Grace and Truth.

In Christ by wonderful grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

We are seeking ways to improve our website, including the Breaking News column, and to improve our use of *FaceBook* and *Twitter*. Suggestions are **very** welcome. Readers willing to respond to the short questionnaire given below are invited to do so. Please fill in your answers, then cut and paste the survey, with your answers to bmaoz@GMX.com with MaozNews questionnaire on the subject line

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Would you prefer to join, or prefer not to join Soli Deo Gloria's FaceBook page and receive notice of a new issue by that means (with a link for you to download, or in the present format)?

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What kind of articles interests you most in MaozNews? _____

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How may we improve our website? _____

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