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**ARTICLE
FOR SPIRITUAL
LEADERS**

Maoz Israel



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Sivan-Tamuz 5765

R E P O R T

"Disengagement" Q&A (From the Bible and Facts on the Ground)

By Asher Intrater

Today some of my dearest friends think that the disengagement from Gaza is a betrayal of God's mandate for the Jewish people to repossess the land of Israel. It is always painful and difficult when brothers in the Lord do not see eye to eye on a given subject. All one can do is to continue to pray, search the scriptures, humble ourselves, and seek "His will, not ours."

Here are some responses to what may be troubling questions concerning Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan:

1. **SETTLERS' CRISIS** - We are sympathetic to the protests of the settlers in Gaza and Samaria [West Bank] about their being uprooted from their homes. Their situation is heart breaking. As long as their protests are peaceful, we will be supportive of them. The world needs to see the price Israel is paying. However, to my brothers among Messianic Jews, Christian Zionists and Charismatic Prophetic circles, we need to consider some other dimensions of the current crisis that are not on the agenda of the settlers.

2. **SHARON'S STEADFASTNESS** - Prime Minister Sharon has stood bravely and with integrity. He stood against a group within Sharon's own Likud party that staged a rebellion against his leadership. He stood against competitors who were trying to win political gain by calling for a national referendum after the Knesset had approved the disengagement plan, against the ultra-Orthodox who were trying to get money for their swing votes, against the Labor members who were with him on the disengagement but against his annual budget, against the Shinui party which was with him both on the budget and on the disengagement but against him because of having been dropped from the government. He has also stood firm against demands from European and American liberals, from Arabs and Palestinians, and from Israeli leftists, that he make many



500 QASAM ROCKET ATTACKS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY GAZA-BASED PALESTINIAN TERRORIST GROUPS AGAINST ISRAEL AND THOUSANDS OF MORTAR ROUNDS HAVE BEEN FIRED AT CIVILIAN ISRAELI TARGETS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

more concessions.

3. **NO HOLOCAUST COMPARISON** - The comparison of moving 8,000 Gaza settlers 20 kilometers up the coast to new homes, according to the decision of the Israeli people and the Knesset, for reasons of strategic interest to our country, to the Holocaust (in which a large number of my family was murdered by the Nazis) is grotesque.

4. **PUBLIC SUPPORT** - Most polls show that a majority of the Israeli public and 60 percent of the Knesset members are in favor of withdrawal from Gaza. In Israeli politics with 11 political parties, that is an overwhelming figure.

5. **BALANCED POLITICS** - In modern Israeli history, left wing prime minister candidates tend to move to the right when they are elected, and right wing prime ministers tend to move to the left when elected. The reason is that the realities of the situation demand moral responsibility when one is faced with the actual decision on a practical level. Anyone can shout extremist slogans while not in office. When faced with the issue of what actually to do, a responsible person has to moderate the slogans.

6. **UNLIKELY OUTCOME** - Not only have the PM's moved to more of a moderate stance, often the more right wing PM's have been the ones to make land concessions for peace, whereas the left wing PM's often end up directing a war, and even conquering territory. God's invisible guiding hand can often be surprising to us. It is God who determines whether the borders will be expanded or reduced, and *His reasons are based on spiritual and moral issues, not political and military ones* (Deuteronomy 19:8).

7. **GAZA STATISTICS** - The population of the area has changed in the last 30 years. The problem with Gaza is that there are about 8,000 settlers in the midst of 1,000,000 plus Arabs. We are not giving Gaza back, but withdrawing an enclave within the midst of Arab controlled and densely populated territory.

8. **MILITARY STRATEGY** - If you think that it is right for us to conquer Gaza by force, - that is an option. However, in order to do that - i.e. to drive out a million Arabs from the tiny Gaza strip - the way to do it would not be to put a few thousand settlers in a militarily untenable position, but to remove them

immediately and launch a full scale attack. To support settlements in surrounded enclaves is strategically illogical and biblically unreasonable. It is like the call of the devil to Yeshua to jump off the Temple to see if the angels would hold Him up (Luke 4).

9. **SHAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST** - Both Bush and Sharon, by their strong leadership, have done much to bring about a shaking in the Moslem dictatorships of the Middle East. The media ridicules both of them, but that is reflective of the spirit of rebellion in the media (Psalm 2). Bush's actions in Iraq and Afghanistan have caused all Middle Eastern tyrants to reconsider their positions. The current Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon is an example. Sharon's firmness against terrorism and for the Gaza disengagement is also changing Israeli-Arab relations.

10. **REBELLION AND EXTREMISM** - Rebellion in the Middle East is demonstrated by extremism (in contrast to the West where it is demonstrated by liberal secular humanism). The greatest extremism in the Middle East is Islam and terrorism, which needs to be fought militarily, spiritually (prayer and evangelism and prophecy) and educationally.

11. **ISRAELI EXTREMISM** - However that rebellious extremism is also manifested in the extremism within Israeli society. That extremism has three basic forms: leftist



**JEWISH RESIDENTS OF GAZA
VOW THEY WILL NOT LEAVE
THEIR HOMES**

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extremism, right wing extremism, and religious extremism. Those three forces have caused division after division in Israeli society and government. In my opinion they represent a demonic spirit attempting to cause the "kingdom" of Israel to fall (according to Luke 11).

12. **STRATEGY NOT IDEALISM** - Sharon's decision for disengagement was not a self-deluded belief in a utopian "New Middle East". It was just the opposite. He came to the conclusion, with the majority of the Israeli public in the wake of the 2000-2005 intifada, that there is no hope for real peace under the current situation for the foreseeable future. Therefore we had to take unilateral action to do what is correct strategically, to be able to continue to fight for our existence and security for many years yet to come.

13. **DEFENSIBLE BORDERS** - The correct strategy for long-term struggle is what Netanyahu used to call "defensible borders". We are not going to get real defensible borders because of the European and Arabic hatred of Israel. However, Sharon, along with most Israelis, saw two areas where we could unilaterally move to a more defensible line: The larger one in Gaza and the smaller one in a few isolated settlements in northern Samaria. (The right wing, the left wing and the mainstream all see this. The extreme left says we need to give back more. The extreme right says we can't withdraw from any settlement.)

14. **SOURCES OF INFORMATION** - One challenge for English speakers is to get direct and correct information. For example, in this week's Yediot (the largest Israeli newspaper) there was an interview with Sharon, where he answered many of the questions concerning his feelings about the disengagement. There was also a panel discussion with some of the rabbis from Gaza and Samaria, and another interview with the general who is assigned to execute the disengagement. All the material is gripping. The discussions within the Israeli society are deep and soul searching. (Some sincere believers are just reading Arutz 7 [extreme right wing Orthodox media] and thinking they are getting a truthful news report that's quite unbalanced.)

15. **RESTORATION METHODOLOGY** - In Acts 1:6-8, Yeshua's disciples ask Him if He is about to restore David's kingdom to Israel. He replies that they need to be patient. That David's kingdom will be restored to Israel. However that restoration is part of a wider plan that includes

all the nations of the world. The primary method will be two fold: have the community of faith receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and then have the world community receive the gospel. This gives us a simple paradigm: 1. Power of the Holy Spirit (to the believers), 2. World evangelism (to unbelievers), and 3. Restoration of the kingdom (to all nations with Israel at the center).

16. **MODERATE CONSERVATIVES** - As believers,

we are extremists on moral issues, on the presence of the Holy Spirit, on the preaching of the gospel, and on helping the poor. However we are somewhat moderate on political issues. We are not Marxist revolutionaries, nor reactionary libertarians, nor political zealots. We are conservative in worldview, working for world change primarily through changing the hearts of people. Moderate conservative is how we generally see ourselves here in Israel. (In the context of humanist liberal Western society, that bibli-

cal moderation usually seems like ultra right wing conservatism. However in the context of Islamic or Middle Eastern repression, it often seems like ultra left wing liberation theology.)

17. **AUTHORITY IN GOVERNMENT** - A determining factor is how we understand God's authority in this world. Romans 13 and I Timothy 2 describe God's working through governments. Here I am referring to the US government and the Israeli government, which both have certain "covenantal" foundations. In the attacks from some Christians and Messianic Jews today against Bush and Sharon, there is a lack of respect and even a vilifying of the office of God's government (Jude 8). This may be reflective of a deeper problem of relating to spiritual authority on all levels - in home, in congregation, in workplace, in government, etc.

18. **PROPHETIC DISOBEDIENCE** - There is a time to respectfully disobey government authority (Acts 4:19), but that is generally associated with the right to preach the gospel. In fact, that is the primary issue we deal with in the Middle East, where the religious authorities of Islam, Greek Orthodoxy and Rabbinic Judaism act aggressively against the preaching of the gospel. Moving settlers out of Gaza is not even close to the type of situation that would warrant prophetic disobedience. (The other kind of biblical civil disobedience has to do with saving innocent lives.)

Modern Israeli society is in desperate need of healing in areas such as unemployment, poverty, educational breakdown, sexual abuse and perversion, drug use, immigration problems, religious hypocrisy, political corruption, racism, occult groups, etc.

19. **EVANGELISM CHALLENGE** - Evangelism can be quite difficult here in Israel and the Middle East. If one has spiritual zeal but finds himself frustrated at the inability to share the gospel effectively, there is a tendency to over-emphasize either the Jewish cultural traditions or the land conquest issues. I am for both Jewish tradition and for the restoration of the land, but I see them as part of the overall picture, which includes a strong emphasis on evangelism, discipleship, holiness and reconciliation.

ishment for our sin and for the rejection of Messiah. God's restoration is taking place in stages. So we need discernment about how to take part in that restoration.

22. **CONDITIONAL POSSESSION** - Consider Jeremiah 25:5 - "Repent now everyone of your evil ways, and you will dwell on the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever." God tells us that if we repent (shuvu), then we will dwell (ushvu) in the land. This biblical word-play (if we "shuvu", we can "ushvu")

Muslim and Arab claims to ownership of the Holy Land are morally reprehensible, historically inaccurate, and biblically incorrect. The great apocalyptic battles of the end times will be a direct confrontation on who owns this land.



20. **ACTS 1 PARADIGM** - Acts 1 gives us the priorities: 1) Holy Spirit power, 2) world evangelism, and 3) the restoration of Israel. To skip either one of the first two leads to an ungodly zealotry. To skip the third leads to an ungodly "replacement" Christianity that has been separated from the Israelite foundations of the kingdom of God. To have someone settle in a home in Israel but miss eternal salvation would be pointless. On the other hand, to preach salvation all over the world and never arrive at God's kingdom here on earth is also futile. That is why there is a dual spiritual battle in the Middle East - first concerning the sharing of the gospel and secondly concerning Israel's right to live in the land.

21. **EXILE AND LAND OWNERSHIP** - All the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people by divine covenant (Genesis 12, 13, 15, etc.). Muslim and Arab claims to ownership of the Holy Land are morally reprehensible, historically inaccurate, and biblically incorrect. The great apocalyptic battles of the end times will be a direct confrontation on who owns this land (Joel 2-3, Zechariah 12-14, Ezekiel 38-39). *However, for most of the past 2,000 years, our people have been exiled from this land by God's decree as pun-*

contains a deep truth that the promises of God's blessings are dependent on our obedience. However, this same verse states that God has already given us this land forever and ever. There is a difference between the covenant rights to the land - which are eternally, irrevocably and unconditionally given to the Jewish people, and the covenant occupation of the land - which does have spiritual and moral conditions.

23. **GOVERNMENTAL DECISION** - So, who determines how and when we fight? Simply enough, it is the government of the State of Israel. That includes the people, the Knesset and the Prime Minister. In this particular case, all three are in favor of disengagement from Gaza. Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews need to recognize God's mandate on the Israeli government to direct the army and to determine its borders. They should be wary of attacking Israel for not making enough concessions, or attacking Israel for making too many concessions. Either side of those "attacks" against Israel could have an element of replacement theology or spiritual pride (i.e. for a Christian to try to be more Zionist than Ariel Sharon serves no positive purpose in Israel's current crisis.)

Want to know how to effectively pray for Israel? Request our weekly prayer letter via e-mail. Please e-mail us at maozisrael@maozisrael.org

24. **SPHERES OF AUTHORITY** - I respect the Israeli government within reasonable boundaries to make decisions. I am not so much "for" the disengagement, as I am "for" my people and my country. If the government and the Prime Minister say we need to stay in Gaza, I will support that decision. Soldiers and citizens have to respect lines of authority. (By comparison, if I speak in a pastor's church, I respect his leadership in that church. I respect a parent's authority with his own children.) To understand God's kingdom in these end times, we need to discern where spheres of spiritual authority lie.

25. **PROPHETIC VOICE** - One of the roles of the prophets in ancient Israel was to bring criticism to the government and religious leaders. Most of their criticism was that the government was not dealing with moral issues and social justice (Amos 5:24), and that the religious establishment was corrupt and hypocritical (Isaiah 1:13-17). Rarely did the prophets accuse the government of not being more zealous to conquer more land (with the clear exception of Joshua and the early Judges). [I believe God will raise up a new generation of prophets among the young Israeli believers who will speak with revelation knowledge concerning events in the Middle East.]

26. **RESTORATION OF ISRAELI SOCIETY** - Among the soul-searching discussions within Israel is how to deal with current socio-economic problems in the country. Modern Israeli society is in desperate need of healing in areas such as unemployment, poverty, educational breakdown, sexual abuse and perversion, drug use, immigration problems, religious hypocrisy, political corruption, racism, occult groups, etc. The police are overworked. The doctors and nurses are overworked. There are psychological and emotional wounds from years of terror and war. This country needs restoration and revival, not religious zealotry. Those who say they love Israel need to have basic compassion for the needs of this people and this society.

27. **RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN SOCIETY** - This has all been without mentioning issues of suffering on the Palestinian side. The root of their suffering is the blind hatred of Islam against everything Israeli or Jewish, that has brought their people to an insane and self-destructive policy of terrorism. However that is not to overlook their tremendous poverty and suffering. Educational, economic and legislative institutions need to be built. One of the most difficult issues is how to provide voting privileges and citizenship rights to the more than 3 million Arabs living west of the Jordan River.

28. **ONE IN MESSIAH** - A beautiful testimony in the midst of all this hatred has been the love between Israeli Messianic Jews and Palestinian Christians (Ephesians 2). That love has overcome the harsh political situation around us even when we don't have political answers to those prob-

lems. Part of the demonstration of the power of the cross is that it can bring reconciliation to the worst of enemies and to the worst of racial differences. Reconciliation between Arab and Jew is part of the overall restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

29. **THE HORMAH SYNDROME** - The biblical story of Hormah (Numbers 14) shows that the same spirit of stubbornness can one day cause people to hold back from what God is telling them to do, and then on the next day insist on rushing forward against the instruction of the leadership. In the early 1900's there was opposition by the ultra Orthodox Rabbis in Eastern Europe and the liberal Jewish leaders in Western Europe to the message of the Zionists to get out of Europe. Then there was opposition in the 40's and 50's to the new Israeli state, and the refusal of some to serve in the army during the wars in which Israel was fighting for her survival. In recent years there has been a resistance to diplomatic efforts with the Palestinians and now to the Gaza disengagement. We need to know how to follow right leadership - to know when to fight and when to hold back.

30. **SPIRITUAL PATRIOTISM** - Today we need to pull out of Gaza. Tomorrow we may need to fight against the whole world. We will continue to protect our nation - both militarily and spiritually - right through the great battles of the end times until the coming of Yeshua (Revelation 19, Zechariah 14). All the nations of the world may oppose us, but we must stand firm. (In 2005, we have had three of our children in the Israeli Army.) In the meantime, we will continue to be a force sharing the love of Yeshua and the righteousness of the kingdom of God. In addition, we will pray for the Israeli government leaders to make the right decisions on correct military and diplomatic strategies of how to defend our country.

Asher Intrater, founder of revive Israel Ministries, lives with his wife, Betty, in Mevasseret Tsion near Jerusalem. They have four children. Asher also serves on the U.S.A. Maoz Ministries board. (www.revive-israel.org)

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Project: Audio New Testament recording in Hebrew with original Middle Eastern background music.

Purpose: To make available the Hebrew language New Testament on CD for distribution throughout Israel. It will be used for outreach wherever Israelis are found!

Status: Over 50% recorded.

Goal: \$60,000

Received: \$36,000

Project: Full page ad in leading Israeli newspapers for world best-seller, *Purpose Driven Life*, in Hebrew

Purpose: An outstanding way to reach virtually all of Israel and give those searching for truth a chance to find it!

Status: Ready for the press by August.

Goal: Approximately \$2,000 to \$10,000 depending on newspaper circulation.

Project: Water pump for believers in Burkina Faso to irrigate their land.

Purpose: To give Burkina Faso believers who love, pray for and support Israel the opportunity to irrigate land for the purpose of sustaining their community. The impact of this project will be great because Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world with hunger rampant throughout the country.

Status: Installing pump

Goal: \$25,000

Received: Paid in Full



Project: Hebrew translations and publishing of two of John Maxwell's classics:

Developing the Leader in You

Developing the Leaders Around You

Purpose: To give Israelis believers tools to become strong spiritual leaders.

Status: In process of translation.

Goal: \$20,000

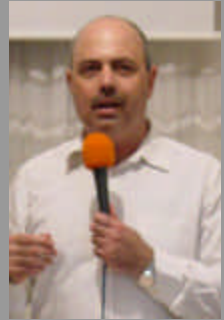
Received: Paid in Full!

Project: Joseph Hadad, an Arab Christian pastor pioneering a church in Galilee, primarily reaching out to Lebanese Arabs (of nominal Christian background) who fled Lebanon when Israel pulled out of southern Lebanon.

Status:

Goal: \$1,000 per month.

Received: Enough regular contribu-



tions have been received from our partners so that Maoz has never missed a month of sending a check for \$1,000 since we began four years ago. 100% of funds designated to Haddad will go to this pastor and his Lebanese Congregation.

Project: Monthly pledges for future rental facility (including taxes and utilities) for Congregation Tiferet Yeshua in Tel Aviv.

Purpose: We've outgrown our building and in order to continue growing, we need a larger facility.

Status: Looking for an auditorium seating approximately 500 people.

Goal: Will need \$25,000 per month.

Received: New project just beginning.

Project: A benevolent fund to help widows, orphans and the needy among the Messianic

Jewish community of Israel. The istandwithisrael.com fund helps build the Kingdom of God in Israel by helping Israelis receive medical aid, dental attention and emergency aid for basic survival. But more than that, we send new immigrants to learn the Hebrew language so they can get employment in their professions. istandwithisrael.com helps with university education and career courses so Israeli believers may become successful citizens who can pay tithes and offerings and turn their attention to winning and discipling the Israeli people to their Messiah. istandwithisrael.com also distributes funds to Arab believers and victims of terror.

Status: Contributions received from Maoz partners are almost always distributed within the month.

Distributed: \$750,000 since September 2002

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July 2005

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Ari & Shira Sorko-Ram

Dear Maoz Partner,

There is not about to be peace in Israel.
Perhaps a few more months of relative quiet, but not peace.

The Old Testament so clearly reveals God's dealings with His people, and therefore gives us insight into what is happening today. God is always in control and never surprised. He influences events according to whether His people follow Him or turn away from Him. Look at these verses:

"In those days the Lord began to cut off portions from Israel." I Kg 10:32

And again: "So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel. Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon. . .he was an adversary of Israel . . .and he hated Israel. I Kg. 11:9,14

Israel's outgoing military chief of General Staff, Moshe Ya'alon, has warned that leaving Gaza and parts of Samaria will so encourage terrorists that they may soon initiate a yet greater round of terror directed at the major population centers - including Tel Aviv - which could be inundated by suicide bombers and Kassam rockets.

Can we really comprehend - we who believe that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation (body, soul and spirit) - that bringing the Good News to Israelis and to Palestinians is the one and only answer to Israel's woes?

We all have ideas of what Prime Minister Sharon could do better or differently. We all see how the world has so unjustly nailed Israel as the aggressor and the terrorists as the victims.

But when we realize that God Himself reduces or increases the size of Israel, we will not look to the Israeli government (or, God forbid, to the U.N.) for solutions. We will look to God!

And so we at Maoz, together with the rest of the Messianic Jews of Israel, are bringing the Gospel to our people in every way we know. And as always, we invite you to work along side us in the two most significant ways possible - prayer and financial support.

Please look at some of the various projects in which Maoz is currently engaged, on page eight - all with one goal in mind - to evangelize, to disciple and to raise up a new generation of Israeli spiritual leaders.

As you support Maoz, we will continue to expand our outreaches. Of course, the foundational, ongoing outreaches of Maoz continue. They are:

- (1) supporting (beyond what our members are able to give) the growth of Congregation Tiferet Yeshua in Tel Aviv, of which we continue to pastor,
- (2) translating and publishing books in Hebrew, especially for discipleship,
- (3) producing and distributing Biblical foundations on CD's and DVD's in Hebrew,
- (4) and helping to raise the standard of living of the poor among the believers so that they can in turn bless the Kingdom of God in Israel by their witness and their own generosity.

Invest in the salvation of Israel, including both Jew and Arab, and you will be a part of God's solution to the Middle East conflict! For all eternity, both Jews and Arabs will bless you for it!

May the blessing of Abraham be upon you,

Ari & Shira Sorko-Ram,

P.S. If you do not receive our weekly prayer letter with current prayer needs (both of Maoz activities and of national concern) that can come to you each Wednesday by email, send us your email address at maozisrael@maozisrael.org.