

December 14, 2011

### Open Letter to Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu

My name is Amnon Zohar and I belong to the tiny segment of Israeli citizenship, one that has no political significance what so ever, and rightly so – the Israeli expatriate or in Hebrew: “Yordim” For the past forty years I have lived in Canada, My three children were all born in Israel and my seven grandchildren were educated on core Israeli, let alone Zionist, Jewish values. For the past forty years I have been under a self-imposed code of silence. I refrained from criticizing, most definitely in public, Israeli policies, Israeli society and generally all that was happening in Israel. It is my belief that in as much as I do not have the right to vote in Israeli elections unless I am a resident or travel to Israel for that purpose, I do not have the right to levy criticism or to complain about things that are happening in Israel.

In the past two or three years when I began the process of disengaging from the day-to-day running of the business I drafted myself to a personal mission to defend and protect Israel’s reputation in the minds of Canadians. I signed up to this mission as I became alarmed and disgusted in the face of an unending war waged on the Canadian “street” that is designed to de-legitimize the State of Israel as a democratic, Jewish state. This libelous war is intensive, well organized and funded and persistent above and below the surface. This is a war in which Israel not only did not participate but in my opinion was unaware or oblivious to it taking place. As part of my personal and voluntary mission I register at a Hornet’s Nest known as the University where Anti –Israeli elements, mostly Muslims, are waging this war. In fact they do so with the tacit if not outright co-operation with Israeli academics whose “research” they cite as proof of their accusations against Israel. It is there that I learned from first-hand experience how this war is being conducted through tight co-operation between academics, students, labor unions and pro-Palestinians (or more so, anti-Israeli) NGOs. Amongst other things they do it through a deliberate and sophisticated mass media campaign utilizing social networks. As part of my mission I made some significant contacts within the Israeli and Jewish community in Canada with the view towards recruiting a small “army” to fight against the anti-Israeli movement who is bent on de-legitimizing Israel and its policies. It is true that the Canadian Government headed by Mr. Stephen Harper, probably more so than any other nation stands unequivocally behind Israel but this is not the case with the Canadian “street”, or with significant segments of the Jewish community (the one you do not get to meet on your visits to Canada) for that matter. I may agree that the de-legitimization campaign does not pose an immediate threat to Israel but ignoring or neglecting to address it is at the very least worrisome.

As part of my personal and perhaps somewhat naïve and almost impossible mission I registered as a “foreign student” at Tel-Aviv University and my wife and I now live in Israel for a little over two months. This morning I was just about ready to abandon my mission and it is for this reason that I write this open letter to you seeing that you are in charge of everything that is happening in Israel. I have a very pointed question to ask you: “What in hell is going on here in Israel?”

Fundamental core values on which I was brought up such as tolerance, inclusiveness, free speech, open society and love of country that as mentioned me and my children insisted on instilling in my grandchildren for the ages. Where are they and what happened to them? I fail to believe that you can have a restful sleep at night without breaking into cold sweat in the face of the atrocious treatment of women in Israel, the return to extremism and fundamentalism within the Orthodox sector, the social injustice in the Israeli society and as of yesterday the most shocking of all violations and desecrations of a the most sacred of Israeli institutions – the IDF. A heinous crime perpetrated by a criminal anti – Israeli mob with this term of endearment “The Youth of the Hills” or in Hebrew: “Noar Hagvaot”.

I arrived in Israel for my studies at Tel-Aviv University more as an excuse for my real motivation, which is to be inspired to pursue my mission which I have set as a personal challenge: to fight for and stand by if not from within, Israel . At the end of the academic year this summer I will be going back to Canada to rejoin my family. They have begun to worry that on the basis of our enthusiastic reports about living in “Israel the Beautiful” that we may actually return to Israel permanently. This morning I informed them that there is no need to worry.

The truth Mr. Netanyahu is that unless you do something tangible and decisive to stop this crazy radicalization trend, which in my opinion foreshadows the fall of the Third Temple, I may have to defect from my army of one and join in the mostly disinterested attitude of my fellow expatriates.

I beg you – for God’s sake – Do something!!!

אמנון זהר

בן יהודה 182

תל-אביב

050 243 6394