

The Goodman's Blog

Chapter 105

October 2021

ALIYAH IN OUR 60's FROM ARLINGTON HTS, IL TO CAESEREA, ISRAEL (Part 105)

SUZANNE & HOWIE GOODMAN



Howie and Suzanne Goodman were valued members at Beth Judea until they decided to make aliyah in 2009. The Goodmans have agreed to provide us with a blog on their experiences as new olim in Israel. Though we continue to miss the Goodmans, we can all look forward to reading about their adventures in Israel through their blog.

Aliyah in Our 60's –November 2021 - Part 105

The capture of six prisoners from the Gilboa prison continues to be important in Israeli news. There were a number of faults in the prison system that allowed the escape to happen. In our last news article, four of the six escaped prisoners had been captured. On 19 September, the other two escapees were captured in the city of Jenin in the West Bank.

The capture showed the significance of Israeli intelligence capabilities. They discovered where the two escapees were located and captured them without a major incident in the West Bank. Initially, they were able to obtain intelligence as to the exact location of the last two escaped prisoners. Then, at night, the Israeli unit took some of their specially trained soldiers and had them go to various parts of Jenin. They made car noises and other situations that made residents of Jenin believe that the Israeli Special Forces were after the escapees in a different neighborhood of Jenin than they actually were hiding. They then surrounded the home that the two escapees were in and asked them to leave without any incidents, and that's what happened. Some Arab individuals on motorcycles with guns did follow the troops as they left firing some shots. However there were no injuries. The escaped prisoners were not hiding in the Jenin refugee camp which could have been more problematic. The coordination of the IDF shin bet and police was almost perfect.

There was an article in The Jerusalem Post the 15th of September written by Gil Troy immediately after the capture of the first four members of the escaped group. He used the Arabic word "Shukran" or thank you to our Arab neighbors for their help in capturing the escapees. These prison escapees were not robbers or minor criminals. They were killers. Troy noted that in a poll, 51% of the minorities in Israel identified themselves as "Arab-Israelis." Only 7% identify themselves as Palestinian and 23% call themselves "Israeli." Troy also thanked the Arab-Israelis from the Ra'am party who voted to help bring a change to the Israeli government. Without this party, there would have been a new coalition. Gil Troy, in his article, continued to thank the Arab-Israelis for assisting in the Abraham Accords.

Gil Troy identified another group of Arab-Israelis as coronavirus heroes. He was referring to the fact that 17% of Israel's doctors, 24% of Israel's nurses and 47% of Israel's pharmacists are Arab Israelis. During recent health problems, we have been treated by Arab-Israeli doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. It was interesting to watch Shabbat rituals being observed in Howie's hospital room while down the hall in a lobby, Arab-Israelis were having their evening meal together. It is not uncommon in our Arab-Israeli's pharmacy to see tzedakah boxes for various Jewish organizations. During the last four elections we had lively discussions about the candidates with our Arab-Israeli pharmacist.

Are we perfect? Not at all. The Israeli-Arab villages complain about the Arab-Israeli violence. They want stronger policing and more assistance from the newly formed government. One of our friends wrote a letter to the editor asking what the leaders in the Arab-Israeli villages are doing to reduce the violence. Since the beginning of 2021, some 100 Arab-Israelis have been deliberately murdered or accidentally killed other Arab-Israelis. Arab crime families demand money to protect businesses, farms, and other premises all across the country from crime. Most of the crime is perpetuated by the crime families. It is believed that perhaps hundreds of thousands of illegal weapons are held in the Arab sector. Many of these are weapons taken from poorly guarded IDF locations. The Israeli government is talking about investing in additional police and fire stations in the Arab-Israeli villages.

Israel has tens of thousands of soldiers serving in the Israeli Army and 7,000 are "Lone Soldiers" from all over the world. A lone soldier is one who has no family in Israel to support them. They may be new immigrants, volunteers from abroad, or individuals from broken homes. Forty-five percent are new immigrants and fifty percent are orphans or are from low socio-economic status. We have a relative who was a "Lone Soldier" because her father was a professor on sabbatical out of the country while she was serving. Some are from ultra-orthodox families that have disowned them for serving in the military.

These soldiers are very motivated, and a high percentage are in combat units. Their compensation includes a very small allowance for housing along with salaries of between eight hundred to a thousand dollars a month. All their medical expenses are covered.

Traditionally, soldiers return to their families every weekend and holidays where they are hugged, get their laundry done, and experience family support. While "Lone Soldiers" are supplied with apartments and food away from the post, they may be lonely. The Lone Soldier Center has special volunteers to help soldiers through the military protocols and to supply them with information. They organize social events and arrange Shabbat meals. Lone Soldiers are provided a 30 day break and a trip home to visit parents. If their parents come to visit Israel, they get eight days off to spend with them. Twice a year (Rosh Hashanah and Passover), the lone soldiers are given gift cards to a grocery chain. They are respected and appreciated for their dedication and service.

When our daughter was eighteen she arranged to immigrate to Israel on her own. However, she decided at the very last minute that she didn't think she could handle the loneliness and the expense of being a "Lone Soldier." Since that time (1996), there have been many improvements in support for these soldiers, but it is still a challenge for young people to navigate the culture and the military. Instead of making aliyah as a teenager, Beverly became an Israeli after she had her doctorate and when she had more to contribute to the country. Recently, she was asked to join the IDF doing research in her field, and she is a lieutenant in the IDF Reserves. It was very thrilling for her after twenty-five years to be an IDF soldier.

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There were an estimated 18 million cancer cases around the world in 2018 according to the World Cancer Research Fund International. Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among Israeli women. Similar to other parts of the Western world, 1 of 8 women are diagnosed throughout their lives with breast cancer. The Israel Cancer Associations statistics show that the number of women recovering is on the rise thanks to early detection, better treatment, and heightened awareness.

Initiated by the ICA, Israel runs a National Mammography Screening Program for women between the ages of 50-74 in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and all health care funds. As part of the program, an invitation is sent to all women in this age group to undergo screening.

Mammography screening compliance rates in Israel are some of the highest out of the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development- ed] countries, reaching 70.5% as of 2017. The ICA also invites the female public to contact a 24 hour hotline service for answering any cancer questions. They have a mobile mammogram unit that is run by Assuta Medical Services and has been in operation since 2001. Their objective is to reach women who reside in remote areas, and they do over 30,000 tests a year in 140 locations.

October is Cancer Awareness month around the world and there are some special ways it is being observed in Israel. Maccabi basketball had a special pink shirt night promotion. Timna Park in the south of Israel was part of a program sponsored by Estee Lauder. The main sites at the popular and scenic park, Solomon's Pillars, the Mushroom and the Sandstone Screw were lit with pink lights for the pink ribbon campaign of Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

Another big thank you is to the 466,000 citizens in Israel who are really non-Jews or who aren't Arab. This includes the Bedouins, the Druze, and the Sarkisians who serve in Israel's army. This includes the Druze officer who commanded Gill Troy's son. There are 1.98 million Arabs who are loyal citizens, law-abiding people seeking good middle-class lives instead of crime. Shukran!

A situation that perhaps explains Israeli-Arabs occurred when an Al Jazeera reporter asked one of the Knesset members, Ahmad Tibi, if he would want to join the new Palestinian state that he champions. Tibi stated that he wants a Palestinian state for others but resented that he abandon his Israeliness.

Increased diversity in kosher certification is getting government backing. In July, Religious Affairs Minister Matan Kahana announced a plan to reform Israel's kosher certification system, effectively turning the Chief Rabbinate into a regulatory agency for private kosher certifiers like Tzohar, a role it hasn't played before.

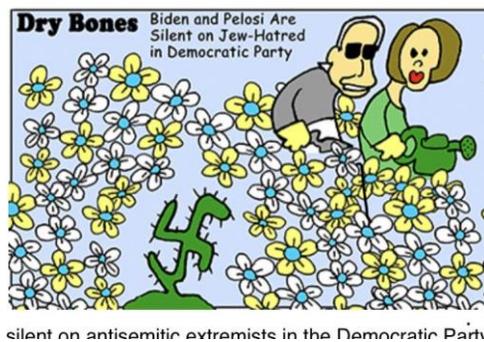
Israel has religious Jews, the secular Jews, the ultra-orthodox Jews and Arab-Israelis. Everyone is well aware that a curriculum-based education is necessary for the fundamental objective of learning in any system. However, Israel is very mindful of the various cultural differences within the country. Our two Israeli born grandchildren attend what would be called a secular school. However, there is a requirement in the curriculum that they study the religious history of Israel and of course the holidays are understood and talked about. Their school is on a kibbutz next to the Mediterranean. Part of their fifth grade curriculum, unlike any other school, is sailing.

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The first 100 days of Prime Minister Bennett's government occurred around the end of Yom Kippur. There is a lot of thinking regarding what he has or has not really accomplished. There were even some discussions about similarities or differences between President Biden's first 100 days and those of Prime Minister Bennett. Both are replacing someone who many strongly disliked. Bennett has been more of a transitional change than a transformational change. This is not surprising, since it's a very tenuous coalition of parties to have a majority. It would not take much for a call for new elections that could collapse this particular government. There is also talk that if former Prime Minister Netanyahu chose to retire that there would be less negativism about the Likud party and possibly Likud could take over a new government. We also must remember that Lapid will become prime minister in the summer of 2023. Whether this coalition can last that long is a real question.

There has been real concern about the Biden government and its interest in Israel. It is believed by many English writing newspaper writers and letters to the editor that the United States' interest in the Middle East has been reduced. The USA Democrats are showing some breaks in the support of Israel. Recently, a bill with the Iron Dome appropriations in it failed to pass, and the "Squad" with others made it happen. Then a stand-alone bill in the House of Representatives passed with only 9 nay votes. Ocasio-Cortez voted "present" in that vote without any explanation. This is the district of former representative Bella Abzug. She fought for Women's Equal Rights. It is hard to believe Ocasio-Cortez has that district. The Iron Dome is a totally defensive and protects Israel including Arab-Israeli villages and Palestinian areas from rockets and missiles. If Israel did not have the Iron Dome, we would have to enter Gaza to eliminate the threat.

Then there was a situation with Vice-President Kamala Harris who at John Mason University appeared to support an Iranian-Yemenese student who charged Israel with genocide. Harris seemed to support the student's comments or right to state those ideas.



silent on antisemitic extremists in the Democratic Party



Bottom row- Beverly, Professor of Geological Archeology top row- Major Tom-Parrot, Amit IDF soldier in West Bank, Tomer- was in Navy now employed, Dani, Professor Marine Biology Haifa, Alon student, and Erez Student

Our grandson Erez had a birthday party in September. He has three other brothers. Two are from Dani's first marriage. Tomer is 25, Amit is 21, Erez is 13, and Alon is 9.



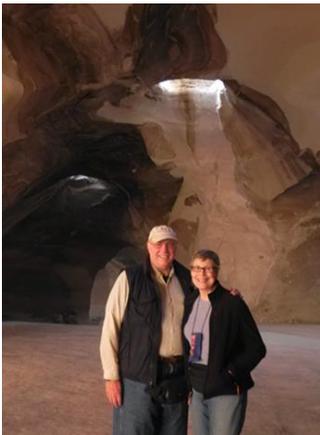
Amit is a Sergeant in IDF stationed in West Bank

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The main change that we are still noticing from the corona pandemic is that there are very few tourist buses. Hopefully the flight requirements are loosening along with allowances for tourists coming into the country. Hotels, restaurants, and museums are open and recovering. Schools are back functioning after the holiday breaks. The number of new cases is dropping, and some hospitals are closing their special corona units. The new cases are predominantly in the ultra-orthodox areas, Israeli-Arabs, and those that are not vaccinated. We are trying to avoid large group gatherings and still wearing masks in public.

It has been two years since we traveled to the States and we are hoping to make the trip soon. If we come in December you may need to arrange warmer weather or help us get some warm winter clothes. Our trips to the US are usually in the summer, and we seldom need anything warmer than a sweat shirt here in the winter months.

Suzanne and Howie



-The opinions expressed are those of the authors and may not represent those Congregation Beth Judea- ed.

We hope you enjoy this installment from the Goodmans, who have graciously agreed to blog for our congregation their experiences as Olim in Israel. If there are specific topics that you are interested in hearing about or if you just want to stay in touch with Howie and Suzanne, you can reach them at: HOWIEG@aol.com