

# Promised Land

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## Netanyahu's father discusses the peace process: excerpts from the exclusive Maariv interview (part I)

**Posted:** April 3rd, 2009 | **Author:** [noam](#) | **Filed under:** [In the News](#), [The Right](#) | **Tags:** [ben zion netanyahu](#), [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), [maariv](#), [ofer nimrodi](#), [ottoman empire](#), [the peace process](#), [war](#), [yoni netanyahu](#) | [2 Comments »](#)

My paper, [Maariv](#), published an eight pages interview Sari Makover-Belikov did with professor Ben Zion Netanyahu, Benjamin Netanyahu's 99 year old father. Netanyahu often refers to his father as the person who inspired him the most. When he resigned from the government just before the disengagement from Gaza, Netanyahu mentioned his father as one of the reasons for his move (Prof. Netanyahu opposed the disengagement plan). "From you I've learned, father," said Netanyahu that day.

In this interview, Prof. Ben Zion (who's mind and thinking are clear as ever – in fact, he is about to go on a work tour to the US) explains his political views in length, discusses the dangers from the Left in Israel, and even passes judgment on his son's character. He also discusses personal issues, such as his relations with Netanyahu's wife, their kids and how he misses his son, Yoni, who was killed leading Operation Entebbe in 1976.

Prof. Netanyahu gave the interview without informing the PM's office. As [walla.co.il](#) [reported](#), Benjamin Netanyahu tried to prevent the publishing of this interview, and even called Maariv's publisher, Ofer Nimrodi, on the matter. Finally it was agreed that because of the father's age, the PM's brother, Ido, will have the right to go over his answers. I believe this makes this interview even more valid, since Ido wouldn't have let Maariv publish a text which doesn't reflect the father's personality and views.

In today's political world, Prof. Netanyahu will be considered an extreme right wing man. In fact, Prof. Netanyahu says that because of his views, he was never offered a teaching job in one of Israel's universities (he is a world expert on medieval Jewish history). I tend to believe him. He was also one of the leaders of the US Zionist movement, and personal secretary to the founder of the Revisionist movement, Zeev Jabotinsky.

Over the weekend I will post here the most interesting excerpts from the interview. Here is the first part, regarding the peace process (the fun parts are at the end):

Prof. Netanyahu: "The Jews and the Arabs are like two goats facing each other on a narrow bridge. One must jump to the river – but that involves a danger of death. The strong goat will make the weaker one jump... and I believe the Jewish power will prevail."

Q: What does the Arab's jump mean?

A: “That they won’t be able to face [anymore] the war with us, which will include withholding food from Arab cities, preventing education, terminating electrical power and more. They won’t be able to exist, and they will run away from here. But it all depends on the war, and whether we will win the battles with them.”

Q: I suppose you don’t believe in the peace process.

A: “I don’t see any signs that the Arabs want peace... we will face fierce attacks from the Arabs, and we must react firmly. If we don’t, they will go on and Jews will start leaving the country... we just handed them a strong blow in Gaza, and they still bargain with us over one hostage... if we gave them a blow that would really hurt them, they would have given us Gilad Shalit back.”

Q: Operation “cast Lead” was one of the worst blows we handed on a civilian population.

A: “That’s not enough. It’s possible that we should have hit harder.”

Q: You don’t like the Arabs, to say the least.

A: “The bible finds no worse image than this of the man from the desert. And why? Because he has no respect for any law. Because in the desert he can do as he pleases. The tendency towards conflict is in the essence of the Arab. He is an enemy by essence. His personality won’t allow him any compromise or agreement. It doesn’t matter what kind of resistance he will meet, what price he will pay. His existence is one of perpetuate war.”

Q: Is there any hope of peace?

A: “Out of agreement? No. the other side might stay in peace if it understands that doing anything [else] will cause it enormous pain.

The two states solution doesn’t exist. There are no two people here. There is a Jewish people and an Arab population... there is no Palestinian people, so you don’t create a state for an imaginary nation... they only call themselves a people in order to fight the Jews.”

Q: So what’s the solution?


A: “No solution but force... strong military rule. Any outbreak will bring upon the Arabs enormous suffering. We shouldn’t wait for a big mutiny to start, but rather act immediately with great force to prevent them from going on...

If it’s possible, we should conquer any disputed territory in the land of Israel. Conquer and hold it, even if it brings us years of war. We should conquer Gaza, and parts of the Galil, and the Golan. This will bring upon us a bloody war, since war is difficult for us – we don’t have a lot of territory, while the Arabs have lots of space to retreat to. But that’s the only way to survive here.”

There is valuable experience [on this matter] we don’t pay notice to. I mean the Ottoman rule over the Arabs. The Turks ruled over the Arabs for 400 years, and there was peace and quiet everywhere. The Arabs hated the Ottomans, but every little thing they did brought mass killings and hanging in towns squares. They were hanging people in Damascus, and Izmir... every town had hanging posts in its center...the Arabs were so badly beaten, they didn’t dare revolt. Naturally, I don’t recommend the use of hangings as a show of force like the Turks did, I just want to show that the only thing that might move the Arabs from the rejectionist position is force.”

[Part 2](#) of Ben Zion Netanyahu's interview

[Part 3](#)

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## 2 Comments on “Netanyahu’s father discusses the peace process: excerpts from the exclusive Maariv interview (part I)”

1. 1 [Ira Glunts](#) said at 2:10 pm on April 5th, 2009:

Benjamin Netanyahu Pledges That His Government Will Not Evacuate Any Settlement

This weekend the Israeli daily, Ma'ariv, published an interview with Professor Ben Zion Netanyahu, the 99-year-old father of the new Israeli prime minister. In the interview, the elder Netanyahu who is known for his outspokenness and extreme right-wing views did nothing to contradict his reputation. He decreed that the only solution to the conflict with the Palestinians is the use of military force. Professor Netanyahu also proclaimed both Ehud Barak and Tzipi Livni are unsuited to the position of prime minister.

When I learned of the interview, I searched Google hoping to learn more about the father. In doing so, I stumbled across a February television interview \* with both father and son. In this dual appearance, Benjamin Netanyahu proclaims that there will not be any evacuations of settlements during his administration. This position places him on a direct collision course with the Obama administration which claims to want to work toward a negotiated peace in the region.

What follows is a translation of his statements”

Netanyahu: I think that anyone who has eyes in his head understands that today any settlement that will be evacuated will be grabbed by the bitter enemies of the State of Israel.

Question: So you can say that the Likud [Netanyahu's party] will not evacuate settlements during its term of office?

Netanyahu: Yes.

Question: Will not evacuate?

Netanyahu: Indeed.

As the interviewer said, Benjamin Netanyahu has been greatly influenced by the views of his father. Under his father's watchful eye and possibly effected by what some say has been an overbearing parental manner that influence is very painfully apparent.

\* Interview of Benjamin and Ben Zion Netanyahu, Ben Zion Netanyahu, rare interview on channel 2, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-y1xUfxCUc>

Quote starts at 3:55.

2. *2 noam said at 12:23 am on April 7th, 2009:*

Ira,

I am not sure that the son holds the father's views (though he never denounced them). This interview is important to understand where Bibi comes from, and what attitude shaped his thinking. I think that when the time comes, Bibi might compromise (under pressure). In all political situations he never showed a real backbone.

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