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Rabbis for Religious Freedom & Equality in Israel



“The State of Israel... will guarantee
freedom of religion and conscience...”
Israel's Declaration of Independence (May 1948)

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Introduction

Nov. 9, 2017
20 Cheshvan 5777

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Dear Friends,

You might notice that we have changed our format. Instead of summarizing the articles we send in this column, we will be summarizing them adjacent to the link in which you can find the entire article. Please let us know if the summaries are helpful, by writing to us at: organizers@rrfei.org

At least for the time being, I will use this column for a few brief remarks relating to the articles.

The attacks on Liberal Judaism by M"K Maklev, Rabbi Aviner and Assistant Foreign Minister Hotovely all demonstrate the power of politicized theology. The same is true of the article regarding granting immigration status and citizenship to

This week's RRFEI articles

Summaries & Links



Left to Right:

MK Hotovely, Rabbi Aviner, MK Rabbi Maklev

- Ysrael HaYom: Knesset Member Maklev (United Torah Judaism): "Reform [Jews] cause the greatest damage to Judaism."** [\[LINK\]](#) (Heb.)

In a wide-ranging interview with Knesset Member Maklev in Yisrael Hayom, Maklev discusses several religious issues regarding the

people coming from the FSU to marry or form a loving partnership. Not only is politicized theology disastrous for the Jewish state, it is disastrous for Judaism.

Judaism has thrived amidst free scholarly debate. Whether the wars between the Rationalists and the Mystics, the Hasidim against the Mitnagdim, or even The School of Rabbi Akiva against the School of Rabbi Ishmael, Jews chose what to believe for themselves with the guidance of rabbis. But by and large, without the heavy thumb of governmental authority on the scales. שוא את הרבנות the Mishnah tells us.

To think that the Hatam Sofer's statement, "החדש" "אסור מן תורה" would somehow overshadow the logical thought of the other nineteenth century movements: Modern Orthodoxy, Conservative and Reform Judaism boggles the mind. But only if we care about the logic and free debate of ideas without government intervention.

I assume that whether followers of Herzl or Ahad Ha'am, we are all Zionists in one way or another. I believe building the Jewish State to be holy work, as

liberal Jewish movements and their actions, including military conscription and opening markets on shabbat. Maklev blames the Reform Movement for intermarriage in the U.S. and destroying the unity of the Jewish people, saying they caused the greatest damage to the Jewish people.

He commented that they changed their policy regarding threatening the coalition over opening markets on Shabbat because of the popular reaction against them, an interesting admission. To influence and change the High Court decision they will make it necessary for all municipal aid to be routed and certified through the Interior Ministry.

In response to a Knesset Member calling Reform women "dogs" M"K Maklev says he is not responsible for what other M"Ks say, but that the Reform Movement has certainly acted outrageously and opposes the Hasidim. M"K Maklev does not support opposition in the Hasidic community to conscription.

2. **Srugim: Rabbi Aviner: "*The Reform movement - Traitors to the People*"** [\[LINK\]](#) (Heb.)

Rabbi Aviner, in a teshuvah answering a politician's welcoming of the Reform Movement, which turned him to Judaism from secularism while the politician lived in the U.S., called the Reform Movement traitorous to Judaism past, present and future. Just because the politician owes a debt to the Reform Movement, that does not make the Reform Movement different than its traitorous character. It just means that the Movement accomplished one good thing, and even Nebuchadnezzar could do one good thing. Interestingly, Rabbi Aviner does credit the

did Rav Abraham Isaac Kook. Only Hiddush, among all the international Jewish NGOs, has as its sole mission uniting all the Jewish movements pluralistically to fulfill the dream of a Jewish State for the entire Jewish people. Following the logic of Hotovely, Aviner and Maklev I believe will truncate עמך and destroy Zionism and possibly ultimately Israel. The State is destroying Israel's *raison d'etre*.

At the moment the strife is political. But I believe ultimately it must revert to whose ideas will triumph. Our work enables the development of an indigenous Israeli Judaism. Whether the question is opening markets on shabbat in Tel Aviv, or public transportation, or marriage, ultimately in a democracy the people will insist on living their lives free of religious coercion. We will win. But how long and with what damage to Judaism and the Jewish people in the interim?

We'd love to get your reactions, and the reasons you pursue this work. Just a few sentences would be nice. Please send your thoughts to:
organizers@RRFEI.org

Reform movement with certain modern, natural and pluralistic values, but not with being Jewish.

3. **Jerusalem Post: MKs claim discrimination against Soviet immigrants who want to marry** [\[LINK\]](#)

It seems that the Interior Ministry is discriminating against giving citizenship to non-Jews from the FSU who seek to marry Jews or live together as a couple with citizenship in Israel. There are implications of also removing citizenship from long-standing FSU residents of Israel who seek a long-term relationship with non-Jews from the FSU.

In addition, there appears to be either a slow-up or discrimination against those coming from the FSU at Ben Gurion Airport.

4. **Haaretz: Hillel Abruptly Cancels Princeton Speech by Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister** [\[LINK\]](#)

Maariv: MK Hotovely against Reform and Conservatives: "Emptying Judaism of [its] Content" [\[LINK\]](#) (Heb.)

While the crisis of canceling the speech of Assistant Foreign Minister Tsipi Hotovely received wide-spread coverage in several newspapers, making it appear that Hotovely's speech was cancelled because of student opposition from the left (Haaretz), Ma'ariv had a very different take on the cause of the cancellation.

Hotovely gave a prior speech at the convention of the ICA, in which she attacked Reform and Conservative Jews, saying, *"בחרו לקחת את הקליפה והשם של היהדות, את כל המנהגים והמסורת ולרוקן את התוכן מבפנים. ליצוק ערכים ליברליים שאין להם קשר ליהדות"* *"They chose the shell and the name of Judaism, all of its customs and tradition, and to empty them of content from within. To*

We also look forward to hearing from you in our [FB group](#).

כל טוב חברים,

Mark

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cast liberal values that have no connection to Judaism."

(Aviner spoke much the same criticism: see above)

The majority of those present are Reform or Conservative Jews, who reacted angrily. In the second to last paragraph, the article claims that it was this speech, not the right wing content of her expected message, that led to canceling her speech at Princeton, under pressure from the liberal movements.

5. Haaretz: Divorcing the Diaspora: How Netanyahu is finally writing off U.S. Jews [\[LINK\]](#)

Last minute addition. Bibi vs. liberal North American Jewry.

Resources

- [Vision of Hiddush and Rabbis for Religious Freedom](#)
- [Hiddush resources](#)
- [Courts - religious & secular](#)
- [Conversion](#)
- [Death & burial - ancient & now](#)
- [Diaspora-Israel](#)
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Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel represents a broad spectrum of Jewish belief and practice, and champions the values of religious freedom and equality fundamental to World Jewry, in partnership with Hiddush for the realization of these principles in Israel and the Diaspora.

Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel

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