

ARAFAT, Pg. 13-18

OBJECTIVITY:

What positive traits did Esau possess, and what was his downfall? The Torah does not make blanket condemnations of evil personalities, if they also possess praiseworthy traits.



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the Personality of

ESAU



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Weekly Parsha

Toldot

RABBI BERNARD FOX

“And Yitzchak prayed for his wife because she was barren and Hashem answered him and Rivka his wife conceived.” (Beresheit 25:21)

This passage is the first instance in which the Torah explicitly makes reference to prayer. Rivka

(continued on page 6)

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Transcribed by student

Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife who was barren. God listened to Isaac's prayer, and Rebecca became pregnant. Rebecca noticed that her pregnancy was unusual. She was pregnant with twins and there seemed to be an internal struggle within her. When she passed the Beth Midrash (study hall) Jacob sought to get out. Upon passing a place of idol worship, Esau wanted to go forth. God thereby informed Rebecca that the children she was carrying would be the forbearers of two great nations. These two children were going to be two great warriors. One child would devote his energies to the conquest of the external world. The second child would concentrate his abilities on the conquest of the

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sphere of the physical. Most people are content in following societal patterns and live a dependent life, and thus, are not truly successful in their endeavors. They are in trepidation of facing reality, which demands that a person leave the protective life of his early development. A conqueror is an individual who possesses the courage to leave the security that society offers and face the challenges of the external world. A person can utilize his courage and “step out”, making progress in two worlds; the world of the intellectual or the world of the physical. Rebecca’s two sons represented two courageous individuals who had the courage to face the external world and the internal world.

The Rabbis respected this personality as evidenced in halacha. An “ashir muflag”, an extremely rich person, can be called up to the Torah before a Kohane. Such an individual has utilized his intellect and has displayed the courage to go out into the world and conquer it.

It is important to draw a distinction to the hero. A hero possesses false courage. He simply seeks to go against the norms of society in order to achieve hero status. The hero’s drive is not based upon the quest of reality. The hero does not utilize his intellect as a demonstration of courage.

An understanding of the personality of Esau can also help us appreciate the incident concerning the sale of his birthright. The book of Genesis beginning at Chapter 25, verse 29 and through the remainder of the chapter, recites the circumstances of the sale. Esau returned from hunting in the field and was hungry and exhausted. He thereby asks Jacob for some of his red pottage of lentils. Jacob in turn purchases Esau’s birthright for the pottage. Esau comments, “behold I am going to die and thus I have no need for the birthright”. The Torah thereby concluded Chapter 25 with Verse 34, “And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way, so Esau despoiled his birthright.”

The Torah says that the day of the sale was the day Abraham died. Esau had displayed a strong affection and respect for Abraham. During Abraham’s life Esau did not stray onto the path of the wicked. Abraham was a super-ego figure, a true tzaddik, a righteous person. Esau had strong instinctual proclivities but he saw Abraham as an image of immortality because Abraham was righteous. This image of Abraham prevented him from sinning. Esau projected upon Abraham the image of immortality, because he was a truly righteous individual. Esau was an instinctual being and during Abraham’s life he did not succumb to the life of the instinctual. Esau viewed

internal world. The two children were not ordinary people, but possessed excessive energies and the abundant talent and ability to mold the external world.

Isaac admired Esau’s abundant energies. He respected his abilities as a conqueror. He was an individual whose countenance demanded respect. However Isaac made one miscalculation. He thought that Esau would exploit his abilities as a conqueror and assist Jacob in spreading the teachings of the Torah. The Torah likewise, in its description of Esau, recognizes and respects Esau’s unique abilities. The Torah appreciates the greatness embodied in the personality of the conqueror. There is a Midrash (allegory) that compares the personalities of the Grand Rabbi Judah the Prince, and the wicked Antiochos. They both reflect man’s ability of conquest. One excelled in the world of the ideational and one in the world of the physical.

We must appreciate the personality of the conqueror as one who perfects himself in physical conquest and is deserving of admiration. The Torah recognizes and pays tribute to the unique qualities of such an individual. Most people possess dependent personalities. They are incapable of progress and lack the ability of stepping forward and mastering the universe. Man unconsciously desires to perpetuate the state of infancy, which is essentially a protected state of dependency. An individual who conquers the physical world and is successful in his exploits has shattered this infantile state of dependency. Only such an individual is capable of accomplishment.

Courage is the ability of a person to use his inner strength and to step out into reality. This courage is manifested in an individual’s mastery of either the intellectual world or in the

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Abraham as being immortal. This fantasy of immortality prevented Esau from living the life of a wicked person. Upon Abraham's death his fantasy of immortality was shattered. Esau wrongfully concluded that there was no concept of reward, since he only viewed reward in terms of the physical. However a chacham, a wise man, appreciates the true reward.

The Midrash says concerning Abraham's death, "al tivku l'mase", do not cry for his death. Abraham had achieved true immortality. The ideational part of man, which is not subject to the constraints of the physical, lives on. However, Esau, the instinctual being could not appreciate true eternity. Thus the Midrash says one should cry for Esau. The death of a wicked person, one whose existence was solely in the realm of the physical, truly marks his end.

Esau, upon selling his birthright to Jacob, commented that the birthright had no value for him because he was going to die. The death of Abraham made him acutely cognizant of his own mortality. He thereby rejected any concept of reward and punishment. Thus, after the sale, the Torah made a point of reciting that, Esau did "eat, drink, rose up, went his way and despoiled his birthright". This critical juncture represented the commencement of Esau's submission to his instinctual needs and the dedication of his life to the physical. This is attested to as it states that when Esau came from the field he was tired. The Rabbis tell us that Esau had already killed someone this day and had raped an engaged girl. The attraction of the physical is the fantasy. When one commits a sin it is because he is usually overwhelmed by the allurements of the fantasy. However, after one commits the sin he realizes that the satisfaction is fleeting. The energies, which were propelled by the fantasy are diminished. The reality rarely conforms to the anticipation of the fantasy. Thus, Esau was tired because his energies were not fully satisfied. The commission of the sins did not satiate his physical energies.

Normally a wicked person, after committing a sin, does not feel tired because he channels the energies to the ego. The conqueror's sense of accomplishment removes the frustration which otherwise would result when the power of the fantasy is dissipated. However Esau felt tired, he was "ayef". After Abraham's death, he committed the sins because he was overwhelmed by the physical desires. Abraham's death had removed all impediments from sinning. However, he was not satisfied after the performance of the chate, the sin. His ego ideal was still Abraham. He had not yet attached his ego to accomplishment in the realm of physical conquests. Thus, he was

exhausted after the sin because all he had was the frustrated energy of the sin. Later on in life, as Esau became the man of physical conquests, he did not feel exhaustion. The frustrated energy was satisfied by the ego ideal of the physical man. He was successful in transferring the physical man - the conqueror - as his ego-ideal in Abraham's stead.

The Torah gives us the insight and opportunity to appreciate the personality of Esau and analyze the events in his life as he developed into the persona of a rasha, a wicked person. Therefore the Torah is unique in recognizing, that although the lifestyle of a rasha is not a value, which we aspire to, the personality of the rasha must be analyzed and recognized as a creature of the Creator. ■





THE BLESSINGS OF ISAAC

Upon analyzing the events surrounding the blessings of Isaac to his children it seems that certain inferences can be made. When Isaac discovered that Jacob fooled him, his response is recorded at Genesis Chapter 27 verse 33 “And Isaac trembled very exceedingly...” It would appear that Isaac was truly amazed upon discovering Esau’s true personality. However this reaction raises a very poignant question. When Jacob brought Isaac the venison he requested of Esau, Isaac remarked that his quest for the venison was successful rather quickly. Jacob answered that God facilitated the promptness of the mission. Rashi on this verse 21 states, “Isaac thought in his heart, it is not the custom of Esau that the name of God should be fluent in his

mouth...” It would thus seem that Isaac was aware of Esau’s true nature.

We must also understand the significance of the blessings. Chazal, the Rabbis, teach us that the blessings although couched in physical terms are blessings of the spiritual. In this regard, Maimonides in the ninth chapter of the Laws of Repentance states that the reason for blessings and curses is merely to reflect God’s providence in this world. Therefore, they are written in terms of worldly good and evil, although the true benefit is the world to come.

Why was Esau so interested in spiritual blessings? Furthermore, after Isaac discovered he blessed Jacob, Esau pleads with his father

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RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Transcribed by student

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three times, “don’t you have a blessing for me?” At first Isaac responded that the blessings were already given to Jacob, but finally he seems to relent and blesses Esau as well. What was this blessing if in fact Jacob had usurped the blessings beforehand? Furthermore, an analysis of the blessing of Jacob and Esau seems strikingly similar. Both seem to contain the blessing that each shall be fortunate to attain the dew of the heavens and the fat of the earth.

Isaac essentially had two blessings. One blessing was for the physical goodness of this world. This was a blessing for the material benefits of this world, which is not the ultimate good. However, Isaac also bestowed the essential blessing of the truly spiritual, which he obtained from his father Abraham. This was the blessing, which he gave Jacob and is recited at the commencement of Chapter 28. Chapter 28 verses 3 and 4 state, “And God almighty shall bless thee and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and thou may become a congregation of people. And I give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with you, so thou may inherit the land of thou sojournings which God gave unto Abraham.”

These blessings were inherently spiritual. This was the blessing of Abraham that the nation of Israel, a nation based upon the laws of the Torah, will come forth from Jacob.

Isaac was not fully ignorant of Esau’s character. He was aware of Esau’s instinctual needs and desires. In the same fashion, he appreciated that Jacob was a simple man, whose nature was more in line with perfection derived from the learning of Torah. Accordingly, the blessings in Chapter 28, which were inherently spiritual, Isaac had always intended to bestow upon Jacob. As the man of Torah, he had to be recognized as the one who would bring forth the will of God. However, because of Esau’s nature, Isaac felt that Esau needed the blessing of the physical as a means for Esau to reach his perfection. He didn’t perceive Esau as a wicked person but rather as an instinctual being who required the physical in order to assist him to elevate himself to a higher level of perfection. He felt that Esau would utilize the blessing of the physical to help Jacob perpetuate the teachings of the Torah. Isaac’s miscalculation of Esau’s true character resulted because of Isaac’s nature. Isaac was the consummate tzaddik. He was unable to leave Israel because of said status. Abraham was compelled to send Eliezer to choose Isaac a wife because

Isaac was incapable of judging an individual’s true character. As the purely righteous individual, Isaac was naive and incapable of perceiving evil. He was unable to appreciate the nuances of the average man’s actions. Thus he wrongly perceived Esau’s character. However, it wasn’t a total misconception. He intended to bless Esau with the blessings of the physical as a means for his perfection. He was oblivious to the fact that Esau sought the physical as an end, in and of itself. Thereafter, upon realizing that Jacob had received the blessings of the physical, which he intended to bestow upon Esau, a fear gripped him. He suddenly became aware that God’s providence had determined that Jacob receive these blessings. He thus realized that he misjudged Esau and that Esau was truly an instinctual being whose only value was the life of the physical. He thus realized and feared that he had raised a wicked person in his house. Rebecca was aware of her son Esau’s true personality and realized that if Esau obtained the blessing of the physical he would utilize it to destroy Jacob. Rebecca was raised in the house of wicked people and was a capable judge of human character.

Thereafter, Isaac informed Esau, that he had no remaining blessings for him. The blessing of the physical, which were originally intended for him, were already bestowed upon Jacob. The truly spiritual blessings, Isaac had always intended to give Jacob, and would still do so. However, Esau persisted and Isaac relented and blessed Esau. The blessing of Esau was not a true blessing. It was a conditional blessing. In verse 40 Isaac states, “And it shall come to pass, when you (Esau) shall break loose and you shall shake his (Jacob) yoke from off thy neck.” Rashi comments that when Israel will violate the precepts of the Torah then Esau will achieve the blessings of the physical. Thus Isaac did not bestow upon Esau any new blessings but rather he limited the blessing of the physical, which he had previously given to Jacob. If Jacob uses the physical as a means to achieve intellectual perfection then he will truly merit the blessings of the physical. However, if he violates the Torah and seeks the physical as an end, in and of itself, then Esau will have the upper hand and merit the blessings of the physical.

Upon reflection of the history of our people we can appreciate the authenticity and veracity of the blessings of Isaac as their ramifications have been manifested throughout the experiences of our nation. ■

was childless and Yitzchak prayed to Hashem and asked that they be given children. This incident clearly illustrates the efficacy of prayer. However, in everyday life the effectiveness of prayer is far less evident. So many prayers seem to go unanswered! Must one be a tzaddik like Yitzchak in order to merit Hashem's attention? Can more common people realistically hope that their prayers will be heard?

In order to respond to this difficult issue we must begin by analyzing and correcting two fundamental misunderstandings regarding prayer.

Many people wonder why Hashem does not answer all of our prayers. After all, Hashem is merciful and He is omnipotent. He has the power to grant all of our requests. Since this is the case, why does He not simply grant any petition that is sincerely expressed? Remember Tevyah – the poor dairyman in *The Fiddler on the Roof*? Tevyah struggles in his poverty and asks this simple question. Would it interfere with some grand scheme of the Almighty, if he were a wealthy man? Tevyah wonders what difference it would make to Hashem if he were relieved from the burden of his poverty. Certainly, there is no reason of cosmic importance that dictates that he should suffer! Why does Hashem not just grant him wealth? Let us consider whether Tevyah is asking a valid question.

How does Tevyah see the world? He sees the events of this world as an infinite collection of unrelated choices made by the Almighty. The Almighty made him poor and the Almighty can make him wealthy. Certainly, to the Almighty it makes little difference whether Tevyah is rich or poor. So, Tevyah asks, "Why does Hashem not make me wealthy?" But is this world view correct?

Nachmanides explains that one of the foundations of the Torah is that Hashem performs subtle, invisible miracles. When we think of miracles, we often recall the wonders described in the Torah – the splitting of the Reed Sea, the manna in the desert. However, Nachmanides explains that these overt wonders represent only a portion of the miracles that Hashem performs. Far more common are the less visible subtle miracles that He performs. In fact, these subtle miracles are fundamental to the Torah. The Torah tells us that we will be blessed for righteousness and punished for evil. This assurance is predicated on the assumption that the Almighty performs these subtle miracles. What is a blessing? A blessing is some material benefit that is accrued as a reward for acting righteously.

Inherit in this concept is that this material benefit was not destined to occur. A blessing is a benefit that is not destined to occur but results from acting righteously. Nachmanides applies the same reasoning to punishments. The Torah describes material punishments that we will experience if we violate Hashem's will. These punishments are not destined to occur. Instead, the Almighty interferes with destiny in order to punish evil.

Now, let us analyze Nachmanides comments a little more carefully. Nachmanides asserts that there is a concept of destiny that normally guides events in this world. Hashem sometimes interferes with this destiny in order to bless or punish us. But what is this destiny? Apparently, Nachmanides maintains that the material world is guided by physical laws. In general, these laws determine events in this world. When Hashem blesses or punishes us, He interferes with these laws. Nachmanides contention is that a miracle is a breach in the natural order. If this is so, then every time Hashem bestows a blessing or punishes us, He is performing a miracle. We may not be able to see this subtle miracle, but nonetheless it is there.

It is notable that Nachmanides maintains that the very concept of a miracle implies that there is a normal, natural order. There could not be a concept of miracle, without the complementary concept of natural law. If there is not natural law, then what is a miracle? This is because the very definition of a miracle is a breach in the natural order.

"For when I contemplate Your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars that you set in place – then what is the human being that You should have him in mind or mortal man that You should take note of him." (Tehilim 8:4-5)

When Hashem formed the universe, He created a system of natural laws to guide its activities and processes. It is His will that these laws determine events in this world. He only interferes with these laws in order to bestow a blessing or carry out a punishment. This means that Tevyah is quite wrong! Hashem created the physical laws that have conspired to condemn Tevyah to poverty. Tevyah assumes that the only issue at stake in his petition is whether he should be rich or poor. This is not the case. There is something much more profound at stake. Should the laws that Hashem created and wills to guide events in this world be abrogated? In other words, should Hashem "compromise" His will on

behalf of Tevyah? When the question is phrased this way, it is not as obvious that Hashem should make Tevyah wealthy.

Let us now relate this to prayer. When we pray to Hashem, we are asking Him to perform one of His subtle miracles. Someone is sick. We pray for the person's recovery. We assume that without Hashem's help this recovery may not occur. We are asking Hashem to interfere in the laws He created and wishes to govern the world. Like Tevyah, we are asking for Hashem to "compromise" His will!

This raises a question. If every prayer is a request for a miracle and every miracle represents some "compromise" of Hashem's will, then how can we expect any prayer to be answered? In truth, this is the real wonder of prayer! Although the more common question is why do prayers seem to go unanswered, the more reasonable question is why does Hashem ever respond to our petitions? Why should He "compromise" His will for us?

This idea is expressed by King David in the passage above. Hashem is the creator and master of the entire universe. Yet, Hashem cares for and provides for humanity. He even suspends the natural order that He created in order to benefit humanity! How different David's attitude is from ours. We ask why Hashem does not answer all of our prayers. David asks why Hashem should have any concern with our needs!

This brings us to the second popular misunderstanding regarding prayer. What is a prayer? It is generally assumed that a prayer is a sincere petition and that the more sincere the supplication, the more likely Hashem will respond. Based on this understanding of prayer, it follows that everyone can pray effectively. Anyone can sincerely appeal to Hashem to satisfy one's needs. But let us seek a definition of prayer from the Torah.

A study of the Torah's treatment of Avraham provides no instances in which Avraham overtly prayed to Hashem. However, the Sages maintain that Avraham did pray and that at least two of his prayers are explicitly recorded in the Torah. In the first instance Hashem, promises Avraham that He will reward him for his righteousness. Avraham protests. He has no children. What is the value of the reward Hashem will bestow upon him, if he does not have offspring? In response, Hashem promises Avraham that he will have children and his descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the heavens.[1] Our Sages describe this conversation between Avraham and Hashem as an instance of Avraham praying.[2] But this

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conversation does not seem to be a prayer. Instead, it seems that Avraham is debating with Hashem. Rather than presenting himself as a supplicant, Avraham seems to challenge Hashem.

There is another conversation between Hashem and Avraham that our Sages identified as prayer.[3] Hashem tells Avraham that He will destroy Sedom. Avraham protests. He argues that there may be innocents among the people of Sedom. How can the Hashem destroy the innocent with the wicked? This is not justice![4] Again, this does not seem to be a prayer. Instead, Avraham seems to be engaged in a debate. He argues with Hashem and urges Him to do justice. Why did our Sages regard these two instances as examples of prayer?

Clearly, the Sages did not define prayer as the act of a supplicant petitioning Hashem. Apparently, prayer need not even involve supplication. A different definition of prayer emerges from these examples. In each, Avraham is stating request accompanied by an argument for granting the request. Apparently, prayer need not involve supplication but it must include an argument favoring the granting of the request. Also, in both instances Avraham offers similar arguments. He contends that Hashem's will will be fulfilled on a higher level if his request is fulfilled. If Hashem grants him children, then His promises of reward will far more meaningful. If Hashem spares the innocent in destroying Sedom, then humanity will recognize Hashem's justice. In other words, we do not emphasize our needs as much as we express the desire to see Hashem's will fulfilled in the most complete manner. We petition Hashem by demonstrating our devotion to Him!

Let us consider another example of prayer in the Torah. Bnai Yisrael created and worshiped the Egel – the golden calf. Moshe prayed to Hashem to spare Bnai Yisrael. What was Moshe's prayer? Again, we find that it included an argument. What will the Egyptians say? They will say that Hashem took Bnai Yisrael out of Egypt just to destroy them in the wilderness. Moshe argues that the will of Hashem will be fulfilled on a higher level through sparing Bnai Yisrael.

Our own prayers follow this same pattern. Let us consider the Amidah – the central prayer of the service. We ask Hashem for health, redemption, forgiveness and so many other blessings. But in each instance we make an argument. Forgive us because it is Your nature to forgive and forbear. Redeem us because You are a mighty redeemer. Heal us because You are a trustworthy healer and merciful. In

each case, we appeal to Hashem to reveal Himself. We do not emphasize ourselves, we emphasize Hashem. In asking Hashem for His help, we are expressing our devotion to Him.

If we accept our Sages understanding of prayer, it emerges that it is not as easy as is imagined to offer sincere prayer. Yes, it is easy to be sincere in asking for one's personal needs to be fulfilled. But it is not as easy to frame one's request as an act of devotion to Hashem.

Through this understanding of prayer we can begin to answer David's question. We cannot completely understand Hashem's concern with humanity. However, a partial explanation emerges. We do not ask Hashem to compromise His will in our behalf. How can we expect Hashem to alter His universe for us? Instead, we ask Hashem to act towards fulfilling a higher objective. We ask Him to interfere with the natural order in order to reveal Himself. □

[1] Sefer Beresheit 9:1-6.

[2] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 16:5.

[3] Mesechet Berachot 26b.

[4] Sefer Beresheit 18:20-33.

exclusively and wholly to God. Unlike a sacrifice that is eaten, an "Oleh" is not. Flames wholly consume it. Isaac was wholly devoted to God.

I added, perhaps the story in Rashi, that the angels' tears caused Isaac's blindness, means that this act of his self-sacrifice perfected him so far (angels alluding to perfection) that he was removed from this world in some manner. One who is blind is removed from this physical life in a very primary way. The Torah says that one who is blind is considered as though he is dead. This means that he is removed from life to a great degree, i.e., removed from physical existence - a mark of perfection in Isaac's case.

The event of the Akeida was a trial not only for Avraham, but for Isaac as well. He sacrificed his own life. This must have had a profound effect on him as the Midrash that Rashi brings implies. What was that effect? Perhaps living a life subsequent to near death at God's word, elevates one's attachment to God in an irrevocable manner. Isaac would always be that devoted. The Akeida was not an 'event' of sacrifice, but he now lived a permanent state of sacrifice. He didn't do an isolated 'act' of Oleh Temima, but he remained in that state his entire life.

There is more to be developed on this point.

Reader's Comments: I had an idea this Shabbos that Yitzchak's staying in Israel, actually defined Israel.

Oleh Temima means that one is devoted completely to Hashem, i.e., that all of Yitzchak's energy was directed to Hashem (a result of the Akeida experience). And chutz l'aretz (outside Israel) is not fitting for him. Israel is the land designated for the Jewish people. It is designated for the purpose of a society that is wholly devoted to Hashem.

At the time Yitzchak is there, though, the land is not defined that way (except insofar as its designation for the future). Yitzchak is told to stay in the land because (26:3) Hashem will be giving to him and his children this land. His staying there will establish it for the future. (After all, Hashem planned to give this same land to Avraham and his children, yet Avraham was not bound to stay in the land). Yitzchak's staying in the land has a unique establishment (that even Avraham's staying there would not establish). This is because of his nature as the Oleh Temima. All of his energy is devoted to Hashem. Staying in the land makes a statement about the nature of the land. It is appropriate that the one who best illustrates complete devotion to Hashem remain in the land and that is designated for complete devotion to Hashem. □

Isaac Oleh Temima

RABBI REUVEN MANN

Written by student

What is the idea of Isaac not being able to leave Eretz Yisroel because he's an "Oleh Temima", an "unblemished sacrifice"?

I discussed this with Rabbi Mann, who said that Isaac was a different type of personality. He was not an Avraham or Yaakov, who was to concentrate his life on interacting with the world. Isaac's wife initiated dealings with Esav, (she suggested the goat skins to fool Isaac). Isaac's father sought for him a wife. These are two examples of Isaac's removal from world dealings. Remaining in Israel also represents that which would not befit him. "Oleh Temima" means something devoted



Taken from "Getting It Straight" Practical Ideas for a Life of Clarity

Lotteries

DOUG TAYLOR & RABBI MORTON MOSKOWITZ

"Mind if we make a quick stop?" I asked.

"Not at all," said my friend, the King of Rational Thought. Which was good, because he was driving.

"Where?" he asked.

"Any convenience store," I replied. "I just want to pick up a lottery ticket."

He glanced sideways with a raised eyebrow. "Why do you want to buy a lottery ticket?" he asked, quietly.

The question surprised me.

"Well, so I can win, of course," I replied. "Be rich. Cash in my chips. Quit my job. Live the good life."

"I see," he said. "You have a math background, right?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"If I toss a fair coin, what are the odds it will come up heads?"

What was this all about? "One in two," I answered.

"And how many times - on average - would you need to toss the coin to win once?"

"Two times," I said.

He turned a corner. "Now if I paid you one dollar every time heads came up, what would you think about that?"

I laughed. "It depends on what you charge me for each toss of the coin."

"How about 75 cents?"

"Forget it," I said. "That would mean that - on average - I would have to invest a dollar fifty, that is, 75 cents a toss for two tosses, in order to get a one dollar payoff."

"I agree," he said. "Now I think I recall hearing years ago that the odds of winning the lottery were one in 38 million."

"So?"

"So, based on this analysis, and assuming the jackpot is one million dollars, how much would you have to invest in the lottery in order

to get an average return of one million dollars?"

I thought about it. "Let's see, it would take -"

I stopped. Not because I didn't know the answer, but because I suddenly did know the answer.

"Yes?" he prompted.

I cleared my throat. "Uh, 38 million dollars."

"You'd have to invest 38 million dollars to get one million dollars back?"

"Uh, yeah."

"And does that seem like a good investment to you?"

"Now wait a second," I protested. "We're only talking about a dollar here. What's the big deal?"

"Ok," he said, "let's lop off a few zeroes and look at it differently. I'll offer you an investment. You pay me a dollar for a single try at a pot of 100 dollars. Your odds of winning are one in 3,800. How does that sound?"

"Lousy," I said. "I'd have to invest an average of 3,800 dollars just to win 100 dollars." My mind started working. "Hmmm," I said, half to myself. "So if that's true, why am I so interested in buying a lottery ticket when the odds are about the same?"

The King of Rational Thought let me chew on it.

"Is it because of the sheer size of the prize?" I finally asked.

"Close," he replied. "It's the fantasy. The fantasy of winning big. Few people would take up a bet with such poor odds when the payoff is small. But lots of people buy lottery tickets because they hope to become instantly rich. The Lottery Commission knows this, and they feed it. Listen to their ads. They try to get



people in touch with the fantasy of being wealthy. Yet on the face of it, viewed in realistic, financial terms, a lottery ticket is a terrible investment. You'd be better off to put your dollar in a savings account."

I wasn't overjoyed with the conclusion, but I couldn't argue with his logic. In fact, it occurred to me that if I were already wealthy, I would never buy a lottery ticket. I'd invest instead.

He pulled the car into a convenience store parking lot.

"Why are you stopping?" I asked.

"I thought you wanted to buy a lottery ticket."

"Oh. Well, I changed my mind." Then I decided to goad him a little. "I've got a better idea."

"Really?"

"Yeah. I got this great offer in the mail from a guy selling a sure-fire method for winning at the races. You see, all you have to do is..."

He shook his head and drove on. ■



Prayer How Parents Affect It

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Rashi's comments on Genesis 25:21 where both Isaac and his wife Rebecca prayed for children. Rashi notes the word selected by God's response, "And He was appeased towards 'him'." (God answered Isaac but not Rebecca.) Rashi derives a principle: "There is no comparison between the prayer of the righteous who descend from the righteous (Isaac son of Abraham), and the righteous who descend from the wicked." (Rebecca's father was wicked.) Therefore, Isaac, a descendant of another righteous person, received a response from God, but Rebecca did not.

On the surface, this contradicts the principle, "Where penitent people stand, even the wholly righteous cannot stand." (Yevamos 64a) This latter statement implies that the individual's own state of perfection is the sole criteria for their status. If one is righteous, their lineage is of no regard. If this is so, Rebecca, being righteous, should have been answered as well. Why is lineage an issue?

To answer this problem, let us read Rashi again carefully: "There is no comparison between the prayer of the righteous descendant of one righteous, and the righteous descendant of one wicked." Rashi is addressing a specific act: prayer. Let us rephrase the question: "What is it in one's lineage which determines one's level of prayer?"

What is prayer? It is the institution of one approaching the Creator as the Source of one's entire fate. When one recognizes God as real, he cannot help but to beseech God for his needs, and ultimately desire a relationship via prayer, even once his needs are met. God is the only source of man's fate.

Maimonides, in his code of law, the Mishneh Torah, Chap. VI Laws of Rebelliousness, outlines the laws of honoring parents, "Honoring fathers and mothers is a great positive Mitzvah, so too is fearing fathers and mothers, and they are equated by the Torah to the honor and fear of God,.....In the manner that we are commanded to honor and fear God, so too are we commanded on their (parents') honor and fear." Additionally, we find the Ten Commandments are split into two sections: The first five deal with man's relationship with God, the second deal with man's relationship with his fellow man. The one problem is that Honoring Parents is included not in the second five, but in the first five dealing with our relationship with God. This appears out of place. How is "Honoring Parents" part of the laws dealing with our relationship with God?

I believe the answer traces back to the design of man's entrance into the world, and his maturity. Man is not created today, as was Adam, fully grown. Man enters the world as a dependent infant; he grows through various processes, losing and regaining his teeth, acne, reaching adolescence, child rearing, and old age. Why? Is this just accidental? Of course not. This is part of God's precise design. One stage referring to our topic is childhood, and in particular, dependency on parents.

A child learns from early on, the concept of "authority". Parents are taller, stronger, and more capable, they punish us, and they nurture us. They are the source of our good and evil. We turn to them for all our fears and desires. In short, God designed mankind in a manner where he must learn the concept of an authority figure. Had man been born complete, and independent, with all the knowledge needed to survive, he would have no need for parents, and he would forfeit the lesson of authority. But it is vital that this lesson be learned, as it is essential for the recognition of one other need: recognition of God. It is only through our state as feeble and dependent infants, that the role of authority may be successfully permeated into our being. We require the learning of some semblance of authority from youth, to be projected ultimately onto God. Without learning what authority is from youth, we cannot begin our approach to God.

"Honor your father and your mother...equated by the Torah to the honor and fear of God." This is the lesson of Maimonides. The equation is that fear and honor of God is modeled after fear and honor of our parents. For this reason, the command to fear and honor parents is rightfully placed in the section dealing with our approach to God, not our fellowman.

Now we understand why Rebecca was not answered in this instance; her role model was not complete. In fact, her father Lavan was wicked. Rashi intimates that Rebecca suffered from a marred authority figure, and this had some effect on her prayer. God did not answer her. But if she had been the only one praying, we do not know what God's response would be. She might have been answered. Perhaps, God's lack of a response to Rebecca, according to Rashi, teaches that only in this scenario Isaac's correct role model, from whom he built upon his fear and love of God, entitled him alone to merit a response. But be mindful that Rebecca still had the child, regardless of her father's corruptions. Rebecca possessed no fault.

In prayer, a proper parent makes a great difference, as prayer is where one is in dialogue with God - the true Authority. (My friend asked, "But did not God grant children to Abraham, whose father was wicked?" One possible answer is that God bestowed children on him as God's own plan.)

This is not the case with the other statement, "Where penitent people stand, even the wholly righteous cannot stand." This refers to one's ability to exercise his free will and perfect himself. It is not discussing one's relationship to God as an authority. There is no contradiction.

Our fear and honor of God is very much based on our initial relationship with our parents. We see how essential our proper actions are, not only for ourselves, but also for the perfection of our children, and their relationship with God. Let this concern be prominent in our eyes as we raise our children to fear, and ultimately love God. ■

UNDERSTANDING RASHI

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: I am an Orthodox Jew and I have a problem: if you can believe it, I don't like Rashi! At all! I regret to say this. It would be so much easier if I could be in awe of his knowledge. But he causes me to distrust the whole concept of the Mesora, the transmitted traditions of the Rabbis. I feel he asks us to believe fantastic things in order to accommodate Midrashic interpretations or his world-view (i.e., the Patriarchs were perfect). How is it to be believed that Jacob didn't lie to Yitzchak when the holy words of Torah say that he did just that, albeit for a good reason? How is it fathomable that Eisav could halachically slaughter meat with a bow and arrow? Is it possible to study in a 100% Orthodox way and not accentuate Rashi?

Thank you.

Mesora: Acceptance of Rashi, or any other Torah commentator's words on philosophy, is not obligatory. We must only follow the Rabbis in areas of halacha, Jewish Law. The Torah teaches, "Al pi haTorah asher yorucha", "In accordance with the Torah (commands) that they teach you." Outside of Torah law, God has given the Rabbis no jurisdiction. You need not agree with them. The Torah is replete with arguments between this Rabbi against that Rabbi. Ramban did not take Maimonides' words as absolute "truths". Ramban used his own mind to determine what makes sense. In philosophy, we have no obligation to follow any given author. There is no "psak" (ruling) in philosophy, "Hashkafa". We must use our minds, as did the Rabbis. Use your mind as you see makes sense.

However, let us not be so fast to dismiss Rashi, a brilliant thinker, without due study of his words. Perhaps what Rashi is saying is something deeper than the surface meaning. I recently read an Ibn Ezra, who made a statement which astonished me. The Ibn Ezra says on the command to Abraham to "be perfect" the following commentary, "You should not ask why perform circumcision." On the surface, Ibn Ezra defies all that he stands for, i.e. a life of understanding. How then can he verbalize such a statement? I don't believe Ibn Ezra is

saying we should not use our minds. Rather, he is teaching us that Abraham should not make his performance of divine decrees dependent on his own intelligence. Ibn Ezra teaches that man can fall prey to an erroneous notion that "only when I know the reasons will I perform, but not before". To this, Ibn Ezra teaches, "do not inquire, 'why do the circumcision'." Do not let your inquiry determine your acts. "Be perfect with God and don't render your intelligence superior to His" - this is what Ibn Ezra is teaching.

We must respect the level of brilliance and ingenuity displayed by the Sages' in their commentaries, and not dismiss their words so quickly as nonsensical. If we can notice the obvious questions on their writings, certainly they have noticed them too! And yet they committed their words to ink. Mustn't we then give them the benefit and assume the obvious questions, which we lodge, were considered by them as well? Of course. Then let's do so with your Rashi, and see if we can unravel some rational, albeit concealed, idea intended by him.

In Genesis, 27:18, Isaac asks, "Who are you?" Jacob replies, "I am Esav your firstborn." The Torah clearly states that Jacob lied to his father Isaac in order to acquire the blessing justly sold to him by his twin Esav. But Rashi then interprets Jacob's words, "I am Esav your firstborn" to mean, "I am, (and) Esav is your firstborn." Meaning, Rashi seems to be twisting Jacob's words from one flowing, false statement, into two separate truths, that is, "I am" and "Esav is your firstborn." But the Torah clearly states that Jacob lied! How can Rashi contradict the plain meaning of the Torah's words? Additional proof that Jacob knew he was lying was his response to his mother, "I might get caught." He didn't say, "it is wrong to lie." Jacob clearly knew he was about to lie.

I would like to pose a possible answer: Perhaps Rashi was teaching that although Jacob lied, he still did not look at the situation of lying, as a free-for-all permission to lie brazenly, and without control. Perhaps Jacob, although lying, did so only with words that were necessary to fulfill his mother's command. So Jacob chose words, which veered less from the truth. Jacob valued over all



else, the search for truth, and living by truth. So even when it came to a necessary lie, he did so with the most minimalist expression of a lie. He did not allow his emotion's any outlet, even in a situation where a lie was demanded.

Study of God's universe requires a complete allegiance to truth. This being Jacob's commitment, he wished to keep himself allegiant to truth at all costs, and was extremely careful not to allow a necessary lie to have any effect on his goal. Had Jacob not been careful while lying, he feared that the attraction to lying might remain, however little, and he would suffer by losing further knowledge, if this tendency to lie might reappear later in his life. Jacob wished to curb a lie to the point that it would be ruled by his intelligence, thereby preventing his act of lying from encouraging his emotions towards that direction in general.

Rashi teaches us through an apparent contradiction, and perhaps purposefully that startling, what high level of sensitivity to truth our Patriarch Jacob displayed in even permitted actions.

We learn that we must not react with knee-jerk rejections of our Rabbis' statements. Certainly, those Rabbis who other greats took time to respond to, be it negative or positive responses. Ramban, Maimonides, Rashi and all the Sages did not take up every argument posed by simpletons, but only of those intellects deserving response. If those greater than us respected Rashi's words, enough to comment, we most certainly regard him in at least an equal light. ■

TELLING *the* TRUTH

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: Why was Jacob allowed to lie to his father? Isn't lying against the Torah?

Mesora: The "truth" is that Jacob deserved Isaac's blessing, and Rebecca knew this. She was intent on upholding the truth, and she also knew that if she didn't act, even with deception, that the blessing would never be Jacob's - it was now or never. A Rabbi once taught, a "lie" is not inherently evil, if it is not about an important matter. That is, if I lie about what foods I like, it is inconsequential in terms of absolute knowledge about the life God wishes for man. A lie is evil when it forfeits the truth about life. Here, the lie perpetrated by Rebecca was inconsequential, and in fact, she intended on upholding an important truth, i.e., who would be the leader of the nation.

Reader: Thanks for sharing with me your perspective on the "Truth" that Jacob upheld, as promoted by his mother. However, I still don't understand why it had to happen in a seemingly "tricky" way, as opposed to something more straightforward.

Mesora: Regarding Rebecca and the "truth", it appears she had no other option than to deceive Isaac, and secure the blessing, which was rightfully

Jacob's. Had she told Isaac that in fact, Esav did not deserve the blessings - as he was a wicked person - Isaac may not have believed it, or it may have had catastrophic results. Imagine a father, who all his life felt his son was perfected, only to hear that he was a murderer, a rapist, and an idolater.

Rebecca, with her high level of wisdom, devised the only plan she felt would succeed, which did not oppose Torah principles, as we see, God did not rebuke her. Additionally, the verses state that as soon as Jacob secured the blessing, no sooner did he leave his father's presence, that Esav entered. I feel this indicates that God worked with His providence to assure all went as Rebecca intended, and that God prevented Esav from arriving while Jacob was deceiving Isaac. Had Esav seen Jacob in front of his father, he might have killed him for stealing the blessings, even though Esav sold them earlier.

Truth is at the focus of a Torah life. How else may we arrive at what is real? However, truth, at times, must be compromised, if we are to uphold life, and "absolute truths". Rebecca demonstrated that for the success of the absolute truths, i.e., establishing the next Torah leader, other areas may be compromised. Similarly, one may lie to save his life. This in no way distorts one's goal of striving for Torah truths. In fact, it preserves it. ■

APOLOGY

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

I wish to respond to a few readers who had criticized my harsh response to a Rabbi in my article, "Tanya and Heresy III" two weeks ago. These readers correctly pointed out my use of unnecessary and strong words. I agree. Maimonides describes how Abraham approached all men with pleasantness, and was successful in his mission to attract people to the truth, through a gentle approach. My words were completely unwarranted, as the Rabbi I critiqued did nothing to deserve such treatment. I therefore apologize, and ask the reader who wrote in to convey my sentiments, and ask that this Rabbi please forgive me for the poor manner in which I responded. I also thank those readers who corrected me. *-Moshe Ben-Chaim*

Letters - White House Response to our French Boycott**THE WHITE HOUSE****WASHINGTON**

November 9, 2004

Mr. Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim
553 Central Avenue
Cedarhurst, New York 11516-2120

Dear Mr. Ben-Chaim:

Thank you for your letter to President Bush concerning the war on terrorism. The President appreciates hearing your views and welcomes your suggestions.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush has taken important steps to protect America from terrorist threats and prevent terrorists from striking us again. With the help of a broad international coalition, we are engaged in a campaign that spans the globe. Our efforts have resulted in the death or capture of many senior terrorist leaders and the removal of two regimes that harbored terrorists and persecuted their own people. This campaign has disrupted networks of terrorist financing and has included diplomatic efforts to enlist people of every nation in the pursuit of peace.

Our military victories in Iraq and Afghanistan are essential to the war on terrorism, but these nations still face challenges. In Afghanistan, the United States is working to ensure a future of freedom and peace, joining with the new Afghan army to hunt down the remnants of the Taliban regime and their terrorist allies. In Iraq, we have ensured that a dangerous dictator can no longer murder his own people or pursue or use weapons of mass destruction. Currently, terrorists are targeting our successes in Iraq because the rise of a democratic Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will be a further defeat to their ideology of terror. We are committed to giving our men and women in uniform the resources they need to help build free and prosperous societies in Afghanistan and Iraq because our missions in these countries are making America safer.

The war on terrorism is a test of our strength, perseverance, patience, and will, but no act of terrorism can weaken our resolve. The President is committed to bringing terrorists to justice wherever they hide. He is confident that this Nation and our friends and allies will succeed in securing America and making the world more peaceful.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. The President sends his best wishes.

Sincerely,



Heidi Marquez
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Presidential Correspondence

God's Divine
Commandments:

Obliterate Evil and its Memory

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM



Watching the news last night, I further admire President Bush on how he expressed his condolences to the “Palestinian people”. I applauded his denial of any talks with Arafat, viewing him as an unfit partner in peace due to his known terrorist activities and support of Hamas and Hezbollah. Then I heard Clinton’s condolences, and a clear distinction was noticed:

“Bill Clinton offered his condolences to Arafat’s family, to his partners in the PLO and to the Palestinian people.”

President Bush stated choice words, not recognizing Arafat at all or even mentioning his name, addressing the “Palestinian people” alone:

“We express our condolences to the Palestinian people. For the Palestinian

people, we hope that the future will bring peace and the fulfillment of their aspirations for an independent, democratic Palestine that is at peace with its neighbors. During the period of transition that is ahead, we urge all in the region and throughout the world to join in helping make progress toward these goals and toward the ultimate goal of peace.”

The President in no way addressed or recognized Arafat, only the Palestinian people, as his concern is to assist a people who have long been misled by this terrorist leader. The President desires to see all mankind benefit from a democratic government, guided by God’s Biblical morality. As President Bush views Palestinians as a people who are comprised of both - terrorists and those who are not – he sees this nation as possibly embracing moral and just codes, while eradicating terror. This is the President’s view and vision.

The President has again earned my respect in his unwavering commitment to identify terrorists, and not conceding to any emotional sentiments, even when “death” evokes these feelings in others. The President has displayed a praiseworthy character. This is no small point, and one, which must be valued by us all. Many times our emotions sway our logic, and when one of the most powerful emotions is awakened, I mean “pity”, most people succumb, abandoning true values. The President has remained firm, consistent, and committed to his clear perception of a just morality. It is disheartening that a majority of Jews do not recognize this, even suggesting the unthinkable: that Arafat deserved medical attention. In contrast, no excuse is available for Bill Clinton and Kofi Anan, both expressing condolences for Arafat’s family, as if some loss exists, thereby displaying some value for this known terrorist. This contrast is the point I wish to commence with.

The Amalekite Nation: God’s Response to Evil

The Bible contains precise, consistent definitions, including who is categorized as evil, and how evil must be viewed and treated. The Bible is a system of absolute truths and values formulated by God - the first and last word.

In Deuteronomy 25:17-19 we read of the Amalek nation. They sought to destroy the Jews, not based on national or military concerns, but due to their opposition to the philosophical role Jews possess as Bible leaders, and thus, their identification with God. Verse 18 says, “and they did not fear God”. We learn that Amalek is not defined through lineage, but through their deadly values. Therefore, all those who embody the Amalekite personality are equally defined as

(continued on next page)

Arafat

“Amalek”, and eventually, must be obliterated. Arafat, more than anyone, embodied Amalek’s trait of denying the Jews’ role of Bible recipients and its teachers. His desire for the Palestinian capital in Jerusalem denied God’s Biblical oath that Israel and Jerusalem are gifted to Abraham and his descendants. Our receipt of the Bible on Mount Sinai was for the express purpose of studying God’s word and teaching all mankind in His ways. Arafat saw to it that far fewer Bible scholars exist to address God’s mission. Arafat was truly one who “did not fear God.” This defines the Amalek personality.

Remembering and Not Forgetting Amalek

So essential is the identification and uprooting of evil, that the Bible’s 613 Commandments include the remembrance of Amalek as one of those commands: (Exod. 17:14) “And God said to Moses, ‘Write this remembrance in a book, and place it in the ears of Joshua, for you shall utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens.’” In this very command, God instructs Moses to “place these words in Joshua’s ears”. Why Joshua? The reason is because Joshua will next lead Israel, thus, God’s command hints to the ‘successive’ need to address new incarnations of Amalek throughout time. Identifying and uprooting evil will always be a leader’s chore. But we may ask why Amalek is a recurring phenomenon.

This idea of “not forgetting” is an essential aspect of wiping out those who oppose God, and His Bible. “Don’t forget” is addressed to a part of the human psyche that wishes such suppression. How do we explain this phenomenon? Why would one wish to forget the evils perpetrated by terrorists and evildoers? One answer may be man’s self image. Man wishes to be liked, and this is an understandable need. But man may feel that rejoicing in the death of the wicked, as King Solomon demands, is not morally correct. A person might feel poorly of himself for harboring such sentiments. However, the Bible teaches (Kings I, 3:12) that God granted King Solomon wisdom, unparalleled by any of his predecessors or followers:

“Behold I have done according to your words, behold I have give to you a wise heart, and understanding, that none were like you before you, and after you, none will rise like you.”

Knowing Solomon’s wisdom is of unmatched, Divine origin, we must now read his words on the death of evildoers:

“and with the destruction of the wicked, [there is] song.” (Ecclesiastes, 11:10)

If we allow any pity for Arafat to resonate, as expressed by Clinton, Anon and France, we then initiate a journey down a dangerous and self-destructive path. For when we lack a clear definition of evil, we cannot identify and eradicate it: certainly when we show pity for evil. Evil will then most certainly thrive.

This view is what both Clinton and Kofi Anon expressed. They identified with Arafat, in some respect. It is one thing to identify a praiseworthy character trait in Jacob’s twin brother Esau, without praising the entire person. But it is dangerous and foolish, when one recognizes the ‘person’ of Arafat, and worse, suggesting he sought peace, and then mourning his death. However, King Solomon makes it clear: one must be on guard of his emotions of remorse that might be expressed at the death of the wicked. Therefore, King Solomon states we must sing: we must actively realign our emotions with God’s Biblical philosophy to deplore evil in death, just as in life. The bodily “action” of song is required to get our emotions back in line with truth: abstract opinions do not work here. Solomon knew how the emotions work, manipulating the mind by embracing remorse: normally a good emotion. One might also feel remorse at ALL deaths. Death is usually looked at as a sorrowful event. Therefore, this uneasy but Biblically mandated, “celebrative” view of Arafat’s death requires us to follow God’s reasoning and not our knee-jerk emotions. We cannot allow this emotion of pity and sorrow to monopolize our minds, and mitigate our view of “evil”. We must now rejoice in the death of this vicious murderer, this slayer of babies.

So evil was Arafat, a true Amalekite, that not only is his existence an evil, but even his remembrance must be blotted out. This is also a Biblical law. For as long as his name is recalled by humanity, the danger exists that man might be attracted to some element of his personality. But even more derailing of God’s goal that man learns the truth, is that God’s name is obscured, so long as evil exists. This is what is meant when Moses said, “For the hand is on the throne of God, warring with Amalek, from generation to generation.” (Exod. 17:16) Moses stated that God’s “hand” (as it were) is raised in pledge of an eternal war against Amalek – any individual who opposes God will be warred with. (Nachmanides) The word for throne in this verse is in an incomplete form, thereby teaching that God’s very name in the world is yet obscured and incomplete, as long as evil has followers. God’s Biblical laws and philosophies must be the exclusive guidebook for all mankind. There mere memory of Arafat is intolerable. President Bush was correct not to mention his name.

“From generation to generation” means that

(continued on next page)

Arafat

each generation must wage a war on terror, as it can always return. The very germs of Amalek have human personality as their origin, and we are all human. The real chance exists for Arafat's philosophies to gain ground with others, and murder more innocents. Neo Nazis and other hate groups are proof. Allowing any recognition of evil to go unchallenged, allows the Arafat/Amalekite philosophy to fester, enabling atrocities to once again become commonplace. This cannot be. The evildoers must always be recognized and repudiated, and those who soften the blow, also must be censured: Clinton, Anon and France included.

In addition to God's Flood and destruction of Sodom, the Bible is replete with instances condemning evildoers, and what our correct sentiments must be:

"God protects all those who love Him, and all the wicked He will destroy."
(Psalms, 145:20)

"God is only merciful to the merciful."
(Talmud Sabbath, 151)

"Because King Saul had mercy on Agag (the Amalekite) the σ came from him Haman who pained the Jews."
(Path of the Righteous, Gate VIII)

As recipients of God's Bible, His Torah, which demands a clear identification and sustained condemnation and obliteration of evildoers and their memory, we must be thankful, praising President Bush for not wavering at all from his committed war on terror, as he expressed by not recognizing Arafat, even in death. \blacksquare

The aftermath of one of Arafat's many bombings:
torn bodies and torn families



Arafat's Terrorism - Partial List - (Courtesy Arutz Sheva)

Yasser Arafat, considered the founder of the modern-day terrorism used so widely by Moslems, began a wave of murder against Jewish targets around the world shortly after taking control of the PLO in 1968-9. Among the murderous exploits he inspired were the following:

- the Savoy Hotel attack of March 1975, in which seven hostages and two soldiers were killed after Fatah terrorists landed on the beach and seized the hotel.

- the Maalot massacre in May 1974 in which a school building was taken over

while children from Tzfat on a school trip were sleeping there. Three teachers and 22 schoolchildren were killed.

- the Munich Olympics slaughter, in which eleven Israeli

athletes were killed in September 1972.

- the Nahariya/Avivim school bus attack, May 1970. Palestinian terrorists crossed the border from Lebanon, ambushed the bus with a barrage of gunfire, and murdered 12 children and 3 adults, and left several others crippled.

- the Lod Airport Massacre, May 1972, carried out by three Japanese Red Army terrorists in an operation planned and supported by PLO faction PFLP-GC, killing 26 and wounding 78.

- the Kiryat Shmonah apartment building attack in April 1974: PFLP-GC terrorists penetrated the Israeli border town, entered an apartment building on Yehuda HaLevy St. and killed all 18 residents they found there, including 9 children.

- the Coastal Road bus hijacking of March 1978, in which 11 Fatah terrorists, who infiltrated by sea, killed a photographer and a taxi driver and hijacked a bus filled with adults and many children. The terrorists fired on passing cars from the bus, and when they were finally stopped, they began firing missiles. The massacre left 35 people dead and 100 injured.

- the brutal murder of three U.S. diplomats held hostage in Khartoum, Sudan, in March 1973. The terrorists demanded the release of Sirhan Sirhan, the Palestinian assassin of Robert F. Kennedy. Arafat was recorded as having given the execution orders.

- the Achille Lauro hijacking of a cruise ship in October 1985, in which wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer, 69, was shot and thrown overboard into the ocean. Israeli intelligence later showed that the terrorists had been in contact, via the ship's radio telephone, with a PLF coordinator in Genoa, who in turn was in touch with PLO headquarters in Tunis for final instructions.

Arafat was famous for denying responsibility for the terrorism committed by his underlings. Ion Mihai Pacepa, a former Romanian intelligence official who defected to the West after working closely with Arafat, writes that Romanian dictator Ceausescu advised him how to do this:

"In the shadow of your government-in-exile, you can keep as many operational groups as you want, as long as they are not publicly connected with your name. They could mount endless operations all around the world, while your name and your 'government' would remain pristine and unspoiled, ready for negotiations and further recognition."

Describing Arafat in his memoirs, Pacepa writes that Arafat represented "an incredible account of fanaticism ... of tangled oriental political maneuvers, of lies, of embezzled PLO funds deposited in Swiss banks, and of homosexual relationships, beginning with his teacher when he was a teenager and ending with his current bodyguards. After reading that report, I felt a compulsion to take a shower whenever I had been kissed by Arafat, or even just shaken his hand."

Internationally, in 1972 alone, PLO groups blew up a West German electricity plant, a Dutch gas plant and an oil refinery in Trieste, Italy. In 1975, the presence of Arafat and his 15,000-strong army in Lebanon triggered a bloody civil war that raged on for nearly two decades, costing 40,000 lives.

Arafat was banished from Jordan to Lebanon in 1970 in the course of a violent war against the PLO by King Hussein, and from Lebanon to Tunis in 1982 following the Peace for Galilee War. He orchestrated the first "intifada," beginning in 1987, from Tunis, though it had supposedly started spontaneously.

In 1994, following the Oslo Accords, Arafat was allowed to enter Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Israel essentially forbade him from leaving Ramallah for the last three years of his life. Palestinian terrorists, funded and encouraged by the "statesman" Arafat, have murdered over 1,300 Israelis since the signing of the Oslo Agreement.

Arafat



ARAFAT DEAD

CARRIE DEVORAH



I am not silent about Arafat's death. I have no energy to celebrate the passing of a madman. I am worn from watching, until I could not watch anymore, media coverage glorifying throughout the night of his dastardly handiwork. I had no emotion when person after person was brought on camera praising the devil's incarnate without one voice from the families of the murdered. And I listened as the roll call began of prominent enemies of Israel dignifying him with comments other than what should have been uttered, "no comment."

Watch. Listen. As the enemies of Israel declare themselves by honoring Arafat. Clinton. Kofi Anan. The list will grow. As will the tires burning in Ramallah. Not Palestine. Ramallah. I shake my head watching as media continues to bury history with badly researched articles spinning Transjordan, Palestine, off newsprint, into a virtual existence. How can they forget that Palestine exists today filled with Jews, Christians and Muslims. Arafat was only about expulsion of the Jewish people from a corner of Palestine. One murder at a time.

Dancing on Arafat's grave will not bring back my brother. Nor will it bring back the dead he built his

career on. Nor will it provide for his 7 orphaned children. They could not celebrate Chezi's birthday with him on November 8th. How quickly Arafat's crimes are forgotten. How sad the poverty Abu Amman sunk his people both sides of the green line into goes ignored.

All of 5'2 Arafat will never be a giant. He is a murderer. Of mice and men.

I am avenging my brother's murder. I will continue to by writing, educating and telling the world what they are seeing or choosing to ignore. In Judaism, we are told, Zechor, to remember. I will remind. So the next generation will not forget what media and diplomacy chooses to overlook- changing history by ignoring history. Never ever again, on my watch.

There is no irony the despot died the midnight after my brother's birthday. ▣

Carrie Devorah is a DC based investigative photojournalist. Her youngest brother, Canadian Yechezkel Chezi Scotty Goldberg, forever 41, January 29, 2004, on Bus 19, outside Sharon's office in Jerusalem.

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Who: Carrie Devorah

What: ARAFAT'S DEATH NOTATED BY SISTER OF MURDER VICTIM

Where: Washington DC

When: November 9, 2004

Why: Because, if you don't cry, who will

Weekend at Bernie's: PLO Style

CARRIE DEVORAH



My grandmother said she read the morning paper obituaries to see if she was alive. These days, it seems, the world is reading headlines to see if Arafat, reportedly in a coma being kept alive on a support system, is really dead. Yet. Or not. Or to figure out who is keeping him brain dead, as recently pronounced. And why.

Former US ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk, tore up Brookings Institute corridor rushing to a television interview. It was the day after President Bush was confirmed winner of the presidency. Indyk, a much in media demand senior fellow at the Saban Center for Peace was unaware of the turn in Arafat's condition. Hours had passed since news confirmed Arafat had loss of all functions of the brain. That is the definition of brain dead. No electrical activity. No blood flow. No movement. No response to stimulation. No breathing.

Patrick J McCrude, Director of Pastoral Care at Sioux City's Marian Health Center says "brain-dead" is a diagnosis misleading people into denial so they don't have to face thinking "this brain-dead patient is not a cold, stiff corpse but rather a warm body with a chest that rises and falls."

During the time Arafat was pronounced in a coma, reports issued addressing funeral arrangements, possible successors to running the

Palestinian Authority after the Chairman and President of the PA is declared dead. And buried. Noticeably, doctors are not speaking to press. Statements are being released by PLO chief negotiators.

The PLO leader had been ill two weeks before he was rushed from his Ramallah compound accompanied by AK-47 assault weapon bearing bodyguards. Arafat reportedly began

vomiting while drinking soup at the meal concluding his daily Ramadan fast. He collapsed, breathing heavily before losing consciousness. A team of doctors conducting medical tests on him for days prior, stabilized him in a makeshift clinic. Ramallah's hospital was not a consideration. It is medically deficient despite Europe granting and funding \$6 billion dollars to the PLO for modernizing Gaza.

Three days before Palestinians were surprised when Arafat was flown to France instead of seeking emergency medical care in nearby East Jerusalem or flying to Jordan, Saudia Arabia or his native Egypt. Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and PLO Secretary-General Mahmoud Abbas rushed to the Mukata compound. Arafat, a visibly aged man surrounded by doctors, looked at them blankly. After four decades he was unable to recognize them. Days later, after Arafat descended into coma, PLO aides announced their leader had issued two presidential decrees; first, entrusting Qureia, Abbas and speaker of the Palestine National Council, Salin Zanoun with running the PA during his absence; and the second, paying thousands of PA employees salaries. Something the billionaire Chairman did from time to time. Belatedly. Forbes

magazine says Arafat is worth \$1.3 billion or more in personal and Swiss bank accounts with details known only to former advisor on economic affairs Muhammad Rashid and Arafat's wife, Suha.

Suha, Arafat's wife of ten years, known as "the First Lady of France," for her lavish spending style, is accusing her husband's colleagues of conspiracy to murder him, "You have to realize the size of the conspiracy. I tell you they are trying to bury Abu Ammar (his pseudo name) alive." Suha has been living their marriage in France while Arafat has been living their marriage in Ramallah. She lived with him in a modest Gaza house, at the beginning almost ten years ago, for a short time. Soon after Arafat's condition was announced, Suha reportedly swept in to the Gaza compound, demanding a will from her ailing spouse before returning to her Paris residence in the Bristol Hotel. Whispers have surrounded Arafat's sexuality going back two decades. Rumors of affairs have nagged the couple's ten year marriage. There are questions over paternity of their two year old daughter. Suha Arafat, 41, who lives in Paris, has not seen her husband since the latest round of Palestinian violence since it began in 2000. Arafat had not been to France during their marriage before being flown there, disoriented, for hospitalization. Rashid returned to Paris after fleeing abroad several months ago, once again raising question about the Palestinian leader's secret Swiss bank accounts and the leader himself.

The Palestinian leader was born on August 24, 1929. His parents named him Mohammed Yasser Abdul-Ra'ouf Qudwa Al-Husseini. In 1968, the Russian KGB remade Mohammed into Yasser Arafat. Today Mohammed nee Yasser is laying in France attached to artificial life support until negotiations for his death are concluded. Suha insists her husband is fine, alive, going home. "God is great."

The battle mounts over where to bury the PLO chairman. Israel has refused Palestinian request to bury Arafat in his "beloved" birthplace, Jerusalem near the Temple Mount, fearing political instability along with physical instability of the crumbling prayer site. For years, Palestinians listened to Arafat's inspirational tales of his Uncle Sa'ud, his childhood in a Jerusalem home near the Western Wall, Temple Mount and oppressed life in Gaza's Khan Younis refugee camp. The leader's tales of "victimization by Zionism" describing how Israel's coming into existence displaced him struck a sympathetic chord amongst his "peers" in the West Bank. Coached by his Russian mentors, Arafat's political star, rocketed skyward.

The glitch in the biography the Kremlin wrote for Arafat, according to French biographers, Christophe Boltanski and Jihan El-Tahri, authors of "Les sept vies de Yasser Arafat", "The Seven

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Arafat

Lives of Yasser Arafat," is documentable. "Mr. Palestine was born on the shores of the Nile," not Jerusalem.

Muhammad Abd ar-Ra'uf Arafat al-Qudwa al-Husayni aka Yasser Arafat, was born in Cairo, the fifth of seven children of a Palestinian merchant. Arafat's biographers said his father, Abdul Raouf al-Qudwa al-Husayni, was killed 20 years later fighting Israelis. Al-Husayni received a Bachelor Degree in Architecture from King Fuad University. He attended the School of Civil Engineering in 1956, living in Cairo until age 28. He left Egypt in 1958 to work in Kuwait as an engineer. His early political affiliation was with an Egyptian student organization that excluded Palestinians.

Al-Husayni became an officer in the Egyptian military. In 1968, the then unknown Arab construction engineer and collector of race cars travelled on an Egyptian passport to Moscow. Two years later Al-Husayni caught the eye of the Kremlin. The KGB remade his image with his becoming Palestinian, their initial career move recommendation to him.

Lt. Gen. Ion Pacepa, former head of Romanian Intelligence wrote almost two decades earlier in his book "Red Horizons," Arafat was "an Egyptian bourgeois turned into a devoted Marxist by KGB foreign intelligence." Pacepa relates how "the KGB destroyed the official records of Arafat's birth in Cairo, replacing them with fictitious documents saying that "Abu Amman," Arafat's *nomme de guerre*, had been born in Jerusalem and was therefore a Palestinian by birth."

Russian strategy was the genius of the Palestinian leader's ability to charm Arabs and Western leftists alike. Arafat received military training from Russia's Balashikha special-ops. Romanian general Constatin Munteanu was assigned to teach Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization operations in deception and influence designed to fool the West into granting the organization recognition. The Ceausescu regime prepared themselves in the event Arafat no longer wanted to co-operate, taping amongst other things, Arafat's orgies with his body guards. Munteanu had spent months pulling together secret reports from Egyptian, Jordanian, Romanian and Syrian intelligence agency files. Pacepa wrote "The report was indeed an incredible account of fanaticism, of devotion to his cause, of tangled oriental political maneuvers, of lies, of embezzled PLO funds deposited in Swiss banks, and of homosexual relationships, beginning with his teacher when he was a teen-ager and ending with his current bodyguards."

The PLO was formed by Yasser Arafat and Abu Jihad. They met in Kuwait where Arafat worked as an architect, initially of buildings, later of roadmaps

to genocide. Together, the men hatched the idea of establishing the Fatah, Palestinian National Liberation Movement. Arafat returned to "Palestine" to found the Movement with support from a group of Palestinian activists. January 1, 1965, the PLO began. Arafat made three secret trips to Palestine before relocating to Jordan from Israel in 1967. Then, in 1969, Arafat was elected the third Chairman for the Executive Committee of the PLO. In the aftermath of the 1969 Jordan war, he moved to Lebanon where he remained until 1982.

The Palestinian Intafada erupted, 1987, in the disputed territories, lasting until September 13, 1993, when President Arafat signed the Declaration Of Principles agreement in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The Cairo Agreement, between Arafat and Rabin was signed May 4, 1994. July 1994, after 27 years of his mythical "staying away," Arafat entered Gaza. That same year Rabin, Peres and Arafat, the man who ordered the execution of the US Ambassador to Sudan, Cleo Noel, was warmly received in Washington DC by President William Jefferson Clinton. Despite world outcry, Arafat along with Yitzhak Rabin was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. NYC Mayor Rudy Guiliani had refused to honor the terrorist who almost exactly 24 years earlier, March 2, 1973, ordered PLO gunmen to empty bullets into the bodies of the ambassador and two other diplomats held hostage during dinner at the Saudi embassy in Khartoum. Some saw Clinton's invitation, a deliberate failure to arrest and prosecute terrorists, as a violation of International Law. The UN, in 1950, had stipulated "Offenses against the peace and security of mankind...are crimes under international law, for which responsible individuals shall be punished".

President Richard Nixon had refused to negotiate with Arafat. Arafat had demanding the release of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, Robert Kennedy's Palestinian assassin, as well as other Palestinians being held in Israel and European prisons, had communicated, by high-frequency transmitter, to his PLO faction Black September commander, Abu Iyad, at PLO headquarters in Beirut, the order "Remember Nahr al-Bard. The people's blood in the Nahr al-Bard cries out for vengeance. We and the rest of the world are watching you." "Nahr al-Bard" referenced a terrorist training facility Israeli troops had attacked 11 days earlier. There was no denying his role in these Embassy murders. Israeli intelligence intercepted and recorded Arafat ordering their murders. Transcripts were later turned over to the US State Department and Nixon.

March 2, at 9:06 pm, US Ambassador Noel and his two aides were lined up against the embassy basement wall. And shot. Authors David Halevy and Neil Livingstone wrote in their book, "Inside The PLO," "The terrorists fired from the floor upward, to prolong their agony of their victims by

striking them first in the feet and legs, before administering the coup de grace."

Thirty one years later, the formerly ruthless gun toting dictator who dressed in military fatigues, emerged from his Ramallah compound a feeble 75 year old geriatric wearing blue pajamas and a woolly knitted toque. Arafat's political career suffered. Although surrounded by armed bodyguards bearing Russian-made AK-47 assault rifles, he was no longer charismatic. No longer the lion of the desert. He appeared helpless.

As I watched Indyk race past me at Brookings, I looked at a colleague and said, "It's beginning to feel a little like "Weekend At Bernies." She said, "What?"

"Weekend At Bernies" was billed as the drop dead comedy of 1989. The taglines read "Two morons. One corpse. And the plot thickens" and "Bernie Lomax would be the perfect host, except for one small problem: He's dead," and "Bernie may be dead, but he's still the life of the party!"

The lead character, Bernie Lomax, was embezzling his own company's money. The fraud was discovered by two employees angling for a promotion. Their less than enthusiastic boss who had hoped to get away with his scheme, invited the two for a luxury weekend at his beach house where he planned to have them killed. They arrive to find Bernie dead and that he hired a hitman to kill them who won't kill them if Bernie is alive. So the two employees keep Bernie "alive" by dragging his body out, like a puppet, all over the island. Because they need him, just like interested parties in the world, need Arafat "alive." Some want Arafat kept alive for political motivation, others for spiritual comfort. After his negotiated death, predictably his artificial breathing support will be removed. Mohammed Yasser Abdul-Ra'ouf Qudwa Al-Husseini was buried 36 year years ago. Yasser Arafat will be buried along with the rumors of his homosexuality, forbidden in the Muslim culture he mastered. With Suha as his widow, and Rashid as Arafat's Swiss banker, the world is yet to see how human the despot was.

The Immam at the Taqwa mosque in Gaza City, spoke, asking "men of honor" to come forward as the world awaits the Wizard of Oz Munchkin Coroner's determination of the Wicked Witch of the East "Not only is she really dead, she's really most sincerely dead." It has been established, there is life in Palestine after Arafat.

The question on the table is will there still be deaths after Arafat. ■

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