

# KOL MEVASSER

## Pious Cruelty

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

Religion has two faces. One face is that of saintliness, idealism, holiness and selflessness. But the other face is one of hatred, cruelty, selfishness and egotism. Within the world of religion, one can find the most exemplary human beings; but one can also find inquisitors and terrorists. In his play, "The Father," August Strindberg has one of his characters state: "It is strange that as soon as you begin to talk about God and love, your voice becomes hard and your eyes full of hate."

It's not that there are two types of people, pious and wicked. Rather, saintliness and ugliness are intermixed within individuals. The righteous struggle to keep the ugliness out; the wicked strive to promote their own evil agendas. Often, the wicked camouflage themselves in the cloak of piety.

Niccolo Machiavelli, in his notorious advice on leadership, wrote of the value of "pious cruelty." Machiavelli recommended that the prince (or other leader) should perpetrate whatever he needs to do to enhance his power, but should give the appearance to be acting piously. As an example, he cites King Ferdinand who purged his kingdom of non-Catholics in a cruel and inhumane manner; and yet, he perpetrated his evil in the name of purifying Catholicism in his

realms. Pious cruelty was a useful tool for consolidating his power.

In Parashat Mas'ei, we learn of the commandment to establish cities of refuge for those who committed murder unintentionally. Such individuals were to reside safely in these cities of refuge, and not to be harmed by relatives of the victims of their murders. The Israelites were instructed to designate six cities of refuge, three on either side of the Jordan river.

The Me'am Lo'ez, the classic Ladino Torah commentary, observes the oddity of this arrangement. After all, once the Israelites were settled in the Promised Land, 9 ½ tribes would be west of the Jordan and only 2 ½ tribes would be on the eastern side. Why then were there to be the same number of cities of refuge on each side of the Jordan?

The Me'am Lo'ez suggests that there were a lot more murderers living east of the Jordan. But since cities of refuge were only available to those who murdered by accident, willful murderers were not eligible to reside in them. The Me'am Lo'ez posits: "There were deceivers who murdered intentionally but passed themselves off as having murdered by accident. A court could not prosecute them, because it would be impossible to prove that they murdered intentionally."

In other words, people would commit the

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## KJ Schedule Mattot-Masei

### Rosh Hodesh Av & Erev Shabbat

Friday, July 17th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer....6:15 am  
Minha / Arvit .....6:30 pm  
Candle Lighting .....7:45 pm

### Shabbat

Saturday, July 18th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer....8:30 am  
Women's Tehillim Group .....7:00 pm  
Minha & Arbit .....7:00 pm  
Havdalla .....8:54 pm

### Weekdays

Sunday, July 19th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer....7:30 am  
Monday to Friday July 20th to 24th  
Shaharit / Morning Prayer ...6:30 am

### Erev Shabbat

Friday, July 24th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer....6:30 am  
Minha / Arvit .....6:30 pm  
Candle Lighting .....7:42 pm

### Tisha B'Av Fast

*in LA goes from Motzei Shabbat on  
Saturday July 25th at 7:45 pm to  
Sunday night, July 26 at 8:45 pm*

### Torah & Haftara Readings

Bamidbar / Numbers  
Parashiot Matot-Masei 702—724  
Haftara from Prophets 725—729



## Congratulations

We wish our dear friend  
and member

**Michael Amron**  
a very happy 95th Birthday

May God bless you with  
happiness and health  
for many years to come

## Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored  
In honor of

Michael Amron's  
95th Birthday

by  
The Amron Family

## Congratulations

Jason Tuvia and  
Gisele Gomez

on your engagement

Mazal Tov  
to both families

## Congratulations

Yelena and Ben Hagooli  
on the birth of a son

Mazal Tov to the grandparents  
Kate and Michael  
Ruth and Edmond  
and to both families

## Refuah Shlemah

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron  
Sylvia Cohen • Esther Duke  
Sassoon Ezra • Tilda Levy  
Maurice Ovadia

## In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries  
July 18 to 25, 2015. It is customary to light a  
memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend  
Shabbat services.

### 2 Av / Shabbat, July 18th

Shlomo Dallal  
Shimon Sarraf

### 3 Av / Sunday, July 19th

Hilda Nawy *Habiba bat Lulu*  
David Stoler

### 4 Av / Monday, July 20th

Sylvia Aboulafia *Sylvia bat Miriam*  
Yaakov Kemareh *Yaakov ben Ezra*

### 5 Av / Tuesday, July 21st

Rev Albert Morris *Abdala Faraj ben Moshe*

### 6 Av / Wednesday, July 22nd

Eric Morris *Itzhak Rahamim ben Abdullah*

### 7 Av / Thursday, July 23rd

Suzanne Azincott  
Looloo Khazzoom

### 8 Av / Friday, July 24th

Albert Jacob *Abdullah ben Avraham Hayim Yaacov*  
Sally Meyer Judah *Salha bat Aziza*

### 9 Av / Shabbat, July 25th

Alice Acoca *Alice bat Esther*  
Aziza Jacob *Aziza bat Farha*  
Amalia Mussry *Amalia bat Rahel*  
Mary Nathan *Mariam bat Bolisa*

KJ Women's Tehillim

Shabbat Afternoon  
Saturdays @ 7:00 pm  
before Seudah Shlisheet

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horrendous crime of murder but present themselves as being innocent of willful homicide. They would say: it was an accident, I didn't mean any harm, I am not guilty of murder. I am a fine person who was accidentally involved in a crime.

The Talmud (Sotah 22b) records the opinion of King Alexander Yannai who said to his wife Salome Alexandra: "Do not be afraid of the Pharisees or the non-Pharisees [the Sadducees], but of the wildcats who mimic the Pharisees; for their deeds are like the deeds of [the wicked] Zimri but they seek the reward of [the righteous] Pinchas." The King was suggesting that those who posed as being righteous, but were actually malicious, were a great danger; they were guilty of "pious cruelty." They lulled the public into thinking they were acting from noble motives, but they were in fact engaged in perfidious behavior.

The subtle, insidious and seemingly pious person attempts to achieve immoral goals under the cloak of religion. Such an individual is not only ruthless and hypocritical; but highly dangerous.

While these thoughts apply to many contexts, they are especially relevant to the newly fashionable anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. The haters and maligners pretend to be moral individuals acting in the name of human rights; but their goal isn't the advancement of human rights: it is the destruction of Israel and the undermining of the Jewish people. They focus their wrath obsessively on Israel/Jews, because their real

intention is to harm Israel/Jews. But instead of blatantly identifying themselves as the anti-Semites that they are, they try to pass themselves off as moral agents who are acting with humanitarian motives. For them, everyone has rights—except for the Jews; every nation may defend itself—except Israel.

"Pious cruelty" is not piety. It is cruelty masking as piety. Wise people are not deceived. Those who allow themselves to be deceived are accomplices. *Shabbat Shalom*

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## The Three Weeks

*from Midrash Ben Ish Hai*

It is written in the Talmud (Tractate Taanith): *"Five calamities befell our forefathers on the Seventeenth of Tammuz, and five on Tish'ah be Av (the Ninth of Av).*

*On the Seventeenth of Tammuz the Tablets of Stone were broken (by Moshe Rabbeinu), the daily-offering ceased (in the Temple), the walls of the City (of Jerusalem) were breached, Apostomos burned the Torah Scroll and placed an idol in the Hekhal (Sanctuary). Some say it was actually Apostomos, while another opinion is that it was Menashe.*

*On Tisha b'Av it was decreed upon our forefathers that they should not enter the Land of Israel (because of the sin of the Ten Spies), the First Temple was destroyed, so too the Second, Bittair was seized and the City of Jerusalem ploughed up."*

These twenty-two days from the Seventeenth of Tammuz to Tisha B'Av are thus,

among the saddest in our calendar and the Halakhoth (laws) and the Minhaghim (customs) that we have adopted, reflect this. On these "Days of Distress" we lessen our laughter and pleasures for it is written that every generation which does not witness the rebuilding of the Bet Hammikdash (Temple) it is as if it were destroyed in its day.

From Rosh Hodesh Av, the onset of the month of Av joyfulness should be lessened. If possible, one who has a court-case should postpone it until after the tenth of Av. Sepharadim do not perform weddings from Rosh Hodesh (the new month) to the Ninth of Av.

Purchasing items for joyous occasions, such as weddings, is postponed until after the Ninth of Av. However, shopping is permitted if the items would not be available later, or if they would then be more costly.

Sepharadim do not customarily partake of meat and wine from the night after Rosh Hodesh Av, except on Shabbat and on Rosh Hodesh itself, when meat and wine are consumed in honor of the special day.

Of course, a person who is sick, a woman who has recently given birth, or somebody who must eat meat for medical reasons, is permitted to eat meat. One who does this should still try to refrain from meat from the seventh of Av until the ninth, when the enemy entered the Sanctuary of the Temple. But, one who must eat meat may do so even on those especially mournful days.

*This year Tisha B'Av's Fast begins Motzei Shabbat, Saturday, July 25th at 7:45 pm and concludes on Sunday, July 26th at 8:45 pm.*

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*Norma & Sam Dabby Jewish Education Center*

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Celebrate, Explore & Inspire  
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