

# KOL MEVASSER

## Rabin's Funeral

*Rabbi Daniel Bouskila*

from "Reflections" blog, Vayera 5771/Oct 2010  
*This moving piece was written five years ago, but is equally poignant, important and relevant now.*

I wasn't born when JFK was shot, but I certainly remember where I was when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was gunned down by an extremist. It was Shabbat, November 4, 1995 (12 Heshvan, 5756, on the Hebrew Calendar). I was about to sit down to Shabbat lunch with a group of students in the synagogue, when someone came in to inform me that Rabin had been shot at a peace rally in Tel Aviv. Were it not for the two weddings I was scheduled to officiate at that week, I would have flown to Israel to attend the funeral.

I remember every moment of Rabin's Funeral. I remember the moving tribute delivered by his granddaughter Noa, who opened her eulogy by saying "Forgive me if I don't speak about the peace process today, for I wish instead to speak about my grandfather."

I remember President Clinton – who brought me to tears with his "Shalom Haver" remarks moments after the assassination – moving me yet again, this time by delivering a "Dvar Torah" on that week's parasha: "This week, Jews all around the world are studying the Torah portion in which God tests the faith of Abraham, patriarch of the Jews and the Arabs. He commands Abraham to

sacrifice Yitzhak. 'Take your son, the one you love, Yitzhak.' As we all know, as Abraham, in loyalty to God, was about to kill his son, God spared Yitzhak. Now God tests our faith even more terribly, for he has taken our Yitzhak."

Last year at this time, I was privileged to travel to Israel with Israeli Consul General Jacob Dayan and seventeen other rabbis for a three day mission to Israel. Our very first stop was the site of Rabin's assassination, where the consul laid a wreath, and I was honored with leading the "El Malei Rachamim" prayer.

This year, I am back in Los Angeles, the same city where I was fifteen years ago when Rabin was assassinated. This week marks the fifteenth anniversary of the assassination (on the Hebrew calendar), and official ceremonies were held throughout Israel. This week, we read the same Torah portion – Parashat Vayera – that was read the week of Rabin's funeral, the parasha of "Akedat Yitzhak" (The Binding of Isaac). This week, I look back at that unforgettable funeral, and I remember one more feature that stands out in my mind more than any speeches: the fact that a Jewish funeral took place in Israel where the deceased was surrounded and eulogized by Jews and Arabs.

I remember how Rabin was publicly eulogized (in this order) by Israeli President Ezer Weizman, King Hussein of Jordan, acting Prime Minister

*(Continued on page 3)*

## KJ Schedule Parashat Vayera

### Ereb Shabbat

Friday, October 30th

Minha .....	5:30 pm
Candle Lighting .....	5:44 pm
Arbit / Kabbalat Shabbat .....	6:00 pm

### Yom Shabbat / Shabbat Day

Saturday, October 31st

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .....	8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah .....	10:15 am
Musaf .....	11:30 am
Minhah & Women's Tehillim....	5:30 pm
Se'udah Shelisheet .....	6:00 pm
Arbit .....	6:40 pm
Habdallah .....	6:46 pm

### Weekdays

Sunday, November 1st

<i>Please Note: Daylight Savings Time</i>	
Shaharit .....	7:30 am
Talmud Torah .....	10:00 am

<i>Monday to Friday, November 2 to 6</i>	
Shaharit .....	6:25 am

### Ereb Shabbat

Friday, November 6th

Minha .....	4:30 pm
<b>Candle Lighting .....</b>	<b>4:38 pm</b>
Arbit / Kabbalat Shabbat .....	5:00 pm

**Shabbat Shalom  
U'Mevorach**

The Kahal Joseph  
Board of Directors

are happy to be  
celebrating

the 20th Anniversary of  
Rabbi Melhado's  
Bar Mitzvah

**Shabbat Kiddush**  
is sponsored by  
**Rabbi Raif & Jessica  
Melhado and the  
Kahal Joseph Sisterhood**  
in honor of the  
**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
Rabbi's Bar Mitzvah**

**In Memoriam**  
We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries  
October 31 to November 7, 2015. It is cus-  
tomary to light a memorial candle, donate  
tzedaka, & attend Shabbat services.

**18 Heshvan / Shabbat, October 31st**

Diana Aaron *Dina bat Masooda*

Yeshaiiah ben Yaacov *Shalom*

Hazan Gabriel Solomon *Gavriel ben Shlomo*

**20 Heshvan / Monday, November 2nd**

Mordechai Harkham *Mordechai ben Hacham David*

Victoria Zeubaida Nissan *Victoria Zeubaida bat Lulu*

Esther Robbins *Esther bat Matana*

**21 Heshvan / Tuesday, November 3rd**

Joshua Moses *Yehoshua ben Ephraim Moshe*

**22 Heshvan / Wednesday, November 4th**

Khuzna Levi *Khuzna bat Esther*

**24 Heshvan / Friday, November 6th**

Joseph Ezrapour *Yoseph ben Ezra*

Yaacov Moshe ben Eliyahu

**25 Heshvan / Shabbat, November 7th**

Charles A. Lelah *Salah ben Aharon*

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**Condolences**  
to the Family and Friends of  
**Helen Zakoo, z"l**  
Ezra, Aaron, Rita, Barbra & Ashley  
*May Hashem comfort them together with  
all the mourners of Tzion*

**Refuah Shlemah**

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron • Sylvia Cohen •  
Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke  
Sassoon Ezra • Miriam bat Yetta • Tilda Levy  
Maurice Ovadia • Habiba bat Mazli

**Torah & Haftarah Readings**  
Parashat Vayera in Hertz edition  
From Beresheet/ Genesis pp 63 to 76  
Haftarah Kings II /Melachim Bet pp 76 to 79

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Shimon Peres and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. A Jew, followed by an Arab, followed by a Jew, followed by an Arab, all standing together at one graveside in Israel, eulogizing one Jewish leader. I think about the children who were born that year in Israel. They probably have a hard time understanding how such an integrated funeral was possible, given the Middle East they have witnessed since they were born.

As I reflect on that moment, I ponder the spiritual significance of Rabin's funeral. Was Rabin's funeral, which brought together Jews and Arabs for one brief moment, a first in Middle East history?

At the end of next week's Torah portion, Hayei Sarah, the Torah describes the death and burial of Abraham. A "father of a multitude of nations," Abraham fathered two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, whose offspring were unfortunately doomed to struggle with one another for thousands of years. Having one common father in Abraham, each son's offspring were poised to become "great nations." The Jewish people trace their lineage through Isaac, for God told Abraham "it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued for you." The Arabs, and later the Muslims, trace their heritage to Ishmael, of whom God said to Abraham, "I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed." Each son was destined to be a leader of his own people.

After growing up together briefly, the half brothers were separated, Isaac's family

going one way and Ishmael and his mother Hagar going in another direction. They were separated from one another for some 70 years. During that time, according to the Midrash, Isaac actually had gone to visit Hagar. We do not really know the purpose of the visit, but perhaps it was Isaac's overture at reconciliation between the half brothers.

Then Abraham dies. "And Abraham was gathered to his kin. *His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the Cave of Machpelah.*" The Talmud describes Ishmael's attendance at his father's funeral as an act of "teshuvah." To do teshuvah means to return. Ishmael returned to his father and to his half brother, Isaac. Was Ishmael's teshuvah a response to Isaac's earlier visit to his home? We will never know.

All we know is that Isaac and Ishmael, Jew and Arab, stood together at their father's graveside, tending to Abraham's burial needs together, each probably having delivered moving eulogies for all of "Abraham's kin" to hear at the funeral.

It is an unfortunate fact of history that the momentum of Isaac and Ishmael standing together at their father's graveside was not carried into the future of their respective people's history.

Similarly, it is unfortunate that when a funeral similar to Abraham's took place just fifteen years ago, the momentum of that event was not carried forward equally by both sides beyond Rabin's graveside.

*Shabbat Shalom*

## Parsha Summary: Vayera

**1st Aliya:** The three angels appear to Avraham and foretell the birth of Yitzchak. Upon hearing the news, Sarah laughs to herself.

**2nd Aliya:** The angels depart to destroy Sodom, and Hashem [G-d] tells Avraham about His plans for destroying Sodom. Pasuk 18:18-19 proclaims G-d's confidence in Avraham to teach the world the concept of justice. Avraham negotiates, unsuccessfully, on behalf of Sodom.

**3rd Aliya:** The story of the destruction of Sodom is told. Lot's generosity to the "two visitors" is rewarded and he, his wife, and only two of their children are saved from Sodom.

**4th Aliya:** Lot's wife looks back upon the destruction of Sodom and dies, and Lot and his two daughters escape into the mountains. Lot's daughters conspire to rebuild humankind, and taking advantage of Lot's drunkenness, they become pregnant from Lot resulting in the birth of Ammon and Moav. Avraham encounters Abimelech after which Sarah gives birth to Yitzchak.

**5th Aliya:** Yishmael and Hagar are forced out of Avraham's home, and an angel reassures Hagar of Yishmael's destiny.

**6th Aliya:** Abimelech and his general Phichol resolve their conflict with Avraham over water rights, and they "sign" a covenant of peace.

**7th Aliya:** When Avraham was 137 and Yitzchak was 37, Avraham is commanded to make an offering of Yitzchak—Akedat Yitzhak. This heralds the end of Avraham and Sarah's era, and the beginning of Yitzchak and Rivkah's era.

# Monotheism on Trial

*From the teachings of Rav Kook*

The great merit of Abraham's trial of the *Akeidah* (the Binding of Isaac) is mentioned repeatedly in our prayers. It is a theme of central importance to Judaism. Yet one could ask a simple question: What is so profound, so amazing about the *Akeidah*? After all, it was common among certain pagan cults to sacrifice children (such as the idolatry of Molech). In what way did Abraham show greater love and self-sacrifice than the idol-worshippers of his time?

Rav Kook addressed this issue in a letter penned in 1911. The absolute submission that idolatry demanded — and received — was not just a result of primitive mankind's fearful attempts to appease the capricious gods of nature. Even the most abject paganism reflects the truth of the soul's deep yearnings for closeness to God. Even the most abase idolatry contains profound awareness that the Divine is more important than anything else in life.

With the introduction of Abraham's refined monotheism in the world, it was necessary to counter the objection of paganism: can the Torah's abstract concept of God compete with the tangible reality of idols? Can monotheism produce the same raw vitality, the same passionate devotion, as paganism? Or is it merely a cold, cerebral religion — theologically correct, but tepid and uninspiring?

Through the test of the *Akeidah*, Abraham demonstrated to the world that, despite the intellectual refinement of his teachings, his approach lacked none of the religious fervor and boundless devotion to be found in the wildest of pagan rites. His refined Torah could match idolatry's passion and fire without relying on primitive imagery and barbaric practices.

Shabbat Shalom



## Celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rabbi's Bar Mitzvah

*This Shabbat!*  
*Saturday, October 31st*

We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Rabbi's Bar Mitzvah. He has read the parashah almost every year since 1995, and he is excited by the opportunity to read it for the first time in the community that has welcomed him so warmly as its new Rabbi.

Everyone is invited to join him in marking this milestone with kiddush sponsored by Rabbi, Jessica, and Penny Melhado.

## Day Trip to Iraqi Jewish Archive Exhibit



*Nixon Library & Museum, Yorba Linda*

Sunday, November 8, 2015

Bus departs Kahal at 11:30 am & returns at 4:30 pm

**Transportation is Free for Members, Limited Seating** Reservations processed as received; priority to members. Non-members will be placed on a waiting list for available seats. Call the office to reserve at 310.474.0559