

Memorial Address

for the

Sheloshim Commemoration

of the death of

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin

by

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They planned the assassination with few doubts in their mind as to the justice of the terrible deed they were about to perpetrate. They just *knew* they had to get rid of him, that only that way would they protect the integrity of the people of Israel from his egotistical designs. Their animosity drew from two deep, dark, irrational sources: their *hatred* for the man--who did he think he is to lord it over them, to tell them what to do?--and their *envy*: they were deeply jealous of him, and therefore mistrusted his vision, his dreams, his plans for the future. And so they decided to murder him without thought as to the consequences.

They were lucky--at the last moment their eldest brother intervened, as Reuben pleaded with them to spare Joseph's life and he stalled for time by recommending that they sell him into slavery instead. And so Reuben saved Joseph from the brothers of whom we read: ויקנאו בו אחיו וישנאו אותו (Gen. 37:4, 11).

But when it came to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, no Reuben was to be found in time to save him. The Reubens of our time--the Rabbis and the Roshei Yeshiva and the academicians and the journalists and the politicians and the pundits and the intellectuals--were too busy, they were engaged in more important things and could pay no attention to the escalating verbal violence all around them, to the wild epithets shot like bullets by and on all sides in the increasingly bitter polemics. And so this החלומות, this dreamer, reviled and envied by some and admired and revered by so many others, was murdered in cold blood and lowered into the בור, to his final resting place.

The Midrash [איכה רבה (וילנא) פתיחות] describes what went on in Heaven on the day the First Temple was destroyed:

אמר הקב"ה לירמיה אני דומה היום לאדם שהיה לו בן יחידי ועשה לו חופה ומת בתוך חופתו, ואין לך קאב לא עלי ולא על בני! לך וקרא לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב ומשה מקבריהם שהם יודעים לבכות... מיד הלך ירמיה למערת המכפלה ואמר לאבות העולם, עמדו, שהגיע זמן שאתם מתבקשין לפני הקב"ה, אמרו לו: למה! אמר להם, איני יודע, מפני שהיה מתירא שלא יאמרו "בימך היתה לבנינו זאת"...

The Holy One said to Jeremiah: I am this day like unto a man who had an only son, and prepared for him a wedding canopy--and the son died under the canopy [as he was being married]. Do you not feel pain for Me and for My son? Go, then, and call upon Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses to rise from their sepulchers, for they know how to lament... Jeremiah said the patriarchs, "Arise! for the time has come that you are summoned before the Holy One." They said to him: "But why?" He answered, "I do not know" [even though he really did] for he was afraid they would say to him, "In your days this [disaster] happened to our children!"

א"ר שמואל בר נחמן בשעה שחרב בית המקדש בא אברהם לפני הקב"ה בוכה וממרט זקנו ותולש שערות ראשו ומכה את פניו וקורע את בגדיו ואפר על ראשו והיה מהלך בבית המקדש וסופד וצועק, מר לפני הקב"ה, מפני מה נשתנית מכל אומה ולשון שבאתי לידי בוש וכלימה זאת

R. Samuel b. Nachman said: When the Temple was destroyed, Abraham came weeping before the Holy One... rending his garments, ashes upon his head...lamenting and crying: "Why am I different from every other people that I have come to this shame and disgrace?!"

Yitzhak Rabin was killed as he neared the climax of his career, almost like the son who died at the moment of his great joy, his wedding. He was cut down at a rally celebrating his historic achievements. And so we experienced a sense of disaster--both for the assassination of a Prime Minister and for the enormity of the חילול השם--the desecration of the divine Name--and the devaluation of the kind of "Yiddishkeit" that we and our educational institutions represent, because the murderer was "one of our own." It is a קאָב עָלֵי וְעַל בְּנֵי --suffering for the man, Rabin, and for our Father in Heaven whose Name has been profaned by this foul act.

And, despite all the eulogies that have been spoken, we are all in the category of Jeremiah who, despite his authorship of איכה, the Book of Lamentations, was "unable to lament," incapable of giving adequate expression to the vastness of the misfortune that had befallen his people. And, again like Jeremiah, *our* efforts have fallen short for the same special reason: because we are just too embarrassed to admit that "בימיך היתה לבנינו זאת"--it represents a failure that is peculiarly ours, and it hurts to admit it. We feel deeply, even those who won't admit it publicly, the בושה וכלימה; it is *our* shame and *our* disgrace. It happened on *our* watch, the magnificent age of Yeshivot Hesder, of religious Zionism and religious universities, of the growth of Torah along with openness to the broader culture in which we live.

But if our situation bears remarkable parallels to that of Jeremiah, it is in certain important ways remarkably *different* from that of Abraham, as portrayed in the Midrash.. Both he and we have learned to bewail our situation as best we can, and we experience בושה וכלימה--shame and disgrace. But unlike Abraham, however, our מפני מה נשתנית מכל is not that we are *different* from all the nations, מכל, but that we are so much *like them!*--like every banana republic where political killing is a way of life, and even like America, which saw political assassinations of its greatest and finest, its best and its brightest.

And perhaps our greatest chagrin is that the Arab world now sees us *as being just like them!* Here are a few choice morsels from a front page article in last week's (11/27) Wall Street Journal; a similar article appeared in yesterday's NY Times:

A strange thing is happening to many Arabs -- they are starting to see Israelis as more like themselves.

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a fellow Jew destroyed a basic element of many Arabs' understanding -- and awe -- of the Jewish state: that Israel was somehow above the social maelstrom that afflicts the rest of the Mideast.

Post-Rabin Israel... is at least an Israel that its neighbors can relate to.

"The average person has a stereotype of Israel as unified and democratic; the murder of Rabin reverses that... Some Arabs are seeing Israelis as human for the first time."

Now, thanks to our murderous friend, we can achieve peace with our *murderous* adversaries because they realize that we are as unbalanced and *murderous* as they are. We too are "human," finally, a "normal" people... Thank you, Yigal Amir,

Father Abraham would have experienced much greater *בושה וכלימה* over this than over the disgrace of the destruction of the Temple. The zealotry of young, immature, arrogant, know-it-alls has made the world--and especially our adversaries--lose all their respect for us. Indeed, *הנה ככל הגויים בית יהודה*--the House of Israel is like unto all the nations (Ezek. 25:8)!

Of course, this has nothing to do with how one stands on the Peace Process. I must make it crystal clear: *I am not taking sides on the basic political issues. I by no means disqualify those who are for peace but are against the way the present government is going about it.* I am referring *only* to the way we articulate and propagate and teach certain opinions--and how treat those who disagree with us,

It would be immoral as well as undemocratic for the pro-government people to exploit the tragedy by demonizing the legitimate and loyal opposition and blaming them, directly or indirectly, for the assassination. We should not and must not tolerate a witch-hunt, an inquisition into what Rabbis think--and that is what seems to be taking place--or engage in self-abnegation. Indeed, *no one is entirely guiltless*, the halls of the Knesset least of all.

The entire political culture of Israel is too loud, too intemperate. It was no one less than Ben Gurion who referred to his political enemy Jabotinsky as "Vladimir Hitler." It was the Left which, during the Lebanon war, taunted Begin to distraction with the epithet "baby killer"--which they adapted from the anti-Vietnam activists in America who proclaimed, "Hey Hey, LBJ, How many babies did you kill today." It was the late Prime Minister himself who said, that the settlers are "enemies of peace" and they are "collaborators of Hamas."

Nor can the action of a few misguided violence-prone zealots be legitimately used to discredit an entire population that has proven its loyalty to Israel over and over again. No sane, intellectually honest person will hold all Bar Ilan responsible for Yigal Amir, or all Yeshiva University for Baruch Goldstein. Let it be said openly and clearly: We Orthodox American Jews will not, as Jews, permit extreme secularists in Israel to excommunicate from Israeli society its most Jewishly learned and committed segment. And, as Americans committed to democracy, we will protest vigorously and, in every forum, expose the hypocrisy of so-called "liberals" who use undemocratic and racist demagoguery to deligitimate us. We will stand

united in sustained and sharp opposition to the vicious, malicious efforts by the Assistant Minister of Defense who, according to a recent issue of *Haaretz*, threatened to investigate and close all yeshivot Hesder and Nachal. We will not accept a situation whereby, according to a recent report in *Yediot Acharonot*, it costs 40 shekel in Israel to "buy a stigma"--20 shekalim for a *kippah serugah* and another 20 for a *tallit katan*... Remember, we Orthodox Jews have much to be proud of: our rate of Aliyah is disproportionate to our numbers; we send our children to study in Israel more than others; and we visit and provide political and financial support for the Jewish State. The exercise of introspection and the assumption of a degree of moral responsibility should by no means diminish the value of these achievements.

Indeed, Mr. Peres should be congratulated for taking steps to avoid such group libel and for exploring ways of reconciliation. It is both politically astute and statesman-like. That it is precisely what is needed at this time. But those in lower positions in government and elsewhere, including the academy, are less scrupulous and must cease exploiting the situation to discredit the political Right and all religious Jews. And the police must learn to be more cautious of civil rights; there are simply too many cases of blatant police malfeasance. I am confident that when Israelis will get their rage and frustration out of their system, the situation will turn tolerable again. All of us pray that soon, very soon, cooler heads and warmer hearts will prevail.

But that does not mean that we can avoid any responsibility by dividing it up amongst many others. What we must aim at is self-criticism as a way of reacting to our *בושה וכלימה*, even while we refuse to grant to others the right to use that commendable exercise of honest introspection to cast aspersions--and worse--upon us. Too many of us are in a state of denial that we can ill afford. If we will not be realistic, if we will be blind to the gathering storm and deaf to the nearing thunder, we will be defeated by our own defensiveness. Putting your head in the sand is most tempting to an enemy who wants to decapitate you...

It appears exceedingly difficult to attempt public stock-taking, even self-criticism, without providing grist for the mill of our adversaries. But it can and must be done. For instance, as the Rav (Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik) זצ"ל points out in one of his great *derashot*, the laws of mourning involve self-judgment, the experience of deep guilt, and repentance; that is why the Laws of Mourning are in so many ways similar to those of Yom Kippur, which is the day of guilt-feeling *par excellence*.

But would that justify an "outsider" who visit the mourners to berate them, blame them for their grief, and enumerate their sins? So, such self-critical experiences as we are undertaking are exercises in moral and spiritual growth, and no non-participant may use them to point a finger and cast aspersions upon those who indulge in such commendable introspection. Would that they do the same!

In a sense, this communal self-judgment is based upon the assumption that we affirm a "Double Standard." We Jews have grown up through the centuries to

know that we are and must be different; that for us there are certain things that, as the Yiddish expression goes, "es past nisht far a Yid"--that are not appropriate, not suitable, even unthinkable for a Jew...Indeed, that is the essential content of the concept of Jews as "the Chosen People."

רבי חנניה בן עקשיא אומר, רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות.

R. Hananiah b. Akashya said: The Holy One desired to grant merit to Israel, therefore He gave them a copious Torah and many mitzvot (Mishnah *Makkot* 3:16)

Note that the word לזכות means not only to give merit or privilege (זכות), but also purification (from תעור). Moral purity and probity in Judaism are incompatible with thoughtlessness, insensitivity, and careless language--let alone murder--even if such conduct is tolerated or expected in other cultures or sub-cultures.

Hence, *even if the assassination had never taken place*, we should still learn some enduring lessons from the excessive rhetoric that we have too patiently tolerated in the past. But certainly must we do so now that this insufferable and unspeakable crime has been committed.

אמר רבא ואיתימא רב חסדא: אם רואה אדם שיסורין באין עליו - יפשפש במעשיו; פשפש ולא מצא יתלה בבטול תורה (--גמ' ברכות דף ה עמוד א)

Raba (some say, R. Hisda) says: If a man sees that painful sufferings visit him, let him examine his conduct... If he examines and finds nothing [objectionable], let him attribute it to the neglect of the study of the Torah.

And what is it that our painful self-examination has discovered? That indeed we sinned in neglecting the study of Torah. And the Torah we failed to learn is in two areas: one, in תנ"ך, namely, דברי חכמים בנחת נשמעים --"The words of the wise [are] spoken in quiet" (Eccl. 9:27--and that, therefore, people--whether laymen or rabbis, who shout and clamor forfeit their claim to wisdom...) and second, in the Mishnah (*Avot* 1:11)--

אבטליון אומר, חכמים הזהרו בדבריכם שמא תחובו חובת גלות ותגלו למקום מים הרעים וישתו התלמידים הבאים אחריכם וימותו ונמצא שם שמים מתחלל:

Avtalion used to say: Sages be careful with your words, lest you be condemned to exile and you be exiled to a place of evil waters, and the disciples who follow you drink and die, with the result that the Name of Heaven becomes profaned.

Let us speak the truth: the Amirs and the Goldsteins did not invent their depraved justifications for murder out of thin air. It is true that they were *weeds* in our garden; but they were weeds in *our* garden. The atmosphere in certain quarters was heavy with viciousness and intolerance. There were rabbis who took it upon themselves to speculate aloud and carelessly on life-and-death issues for a whole state, a whole people. They proclaimed that any other opinions are a violation of Torah. They arrogated to themselves the right to throw around, casually, carelessly,

and with abandon, such terms as **מסור** and **רודף** ("pursuer" and "informer"--both capital offenses)--and without the hoary, traditional disclaimer **לפי עניות דעתי**, "in my *humble* opinion," or **אלולי דמסתפינא**, a phrase of modest hesitation, which is standard fare in halakhic responsa of any kind. Is it a wonder that young people, barely out of adolescence and at the mercy of their boiling hormones, extrapolated from it and acted out the consequences?

I know, I know--it has been argued that words are only words, and you cannot blame criminal action upon mere rhetoric. Well, legally you can't, but morally you can! Because if you cannot *blame* words for maiming and humiliating and degrading, then you also cannot *credit* words with encouraging noble action, expressing love, and promoting heroic achievement. And if that is so, all speech is but static, all communication mere clamor and without consequence, and we humans had best learn to be shut our mouths and teach and say nothing at all--and thus be no better or wiser than dumb animals...

If our experience of *teshuvah* is to be real and effective, we must ask ourselves a series of exceedingly important questions. They have been teasing and troubling me for a long time, but since the assassination they have assumed more ominous proportions. I shall share these six questions with you, and either leave it at that or offer some preliminary thoughts on the way to a fuller treatment some other time. These include:

1. Is the territorial integrity of **א"י השלמה**, of "Greater Israel," one of the **מצוות שייהרג ואל יעבר**--those commandments which must be observed even under pain of death? The last I heard there were only three such, and the territorial integrity of Israel was not one of them...

Furthermore: There has been much talk of the prohibition of turning over even a square inch of "Greater Israel" to the Palestinians. But this contradicts an explicit teaching of the Torah! In I Kings 9:11 we read of Solomon turning over twenty towns to Hiram, King of Tyre, as a gift to the pagan king; thus: "then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee"--and not a whisper in the Bible or in the Talmud or Midrash criticizing him for it! Moreover, Hiram wasn't pleased by this gift because the twenty cities were sandy and sterile! In II Chronicles 8:2 we read that Hiram gave Solomon twenty towns--and of the commentators, only Ralbag complains that it was improper for King Solomon to give away territory of Eretz Israel, but he concedes that an *exchange* of territory was quite kosher. The other commentators, such as Malbim, say that Solomon sent in Jewish labor to make the land fertile and then gave the produce to Hiram; but *no* protest against giving away an inch of "Greater Israel," **א"י השלימה**!

Let us assume one will be make every effort to answer the question in some sophisticated way. Is such abstract, theoretical discourse enough to warrant attacking the government with such truculent speeches and savage rhetoric? As the Rav taught us, *pulling any one mitzvah out of context and absolutizing it beyond all others is עבודה זרה*--sheer idolatry!

2. Who has the right to "pasken" halakhic decisions for כלל ישראל, for all the Jewish people?--a Chief Rabbi? a community Rabbi? a pulpit Rabbi or a Rosh Yeshiva or a High School Rebbe? Which one of the above would offer a firm halakhic decision (פסק) on a microwave oven without expert advice on its physics? And which of the above, therefore, is so proficient in *Realpolitik* and international affairs and military strategy that he can "pasken" such issues without hesitation from the comfort of his office or classroom? Clearly, someone who is unqualified and yet passes judgment on such fateful issues must stand accused of endangering all of Israel by a wrongful and arrogant assumption of infallibility, and he will have to answer for the consequences before the Almighty Himself in the בית דין של מעלה.

3. Indeed, do we have the material with which to issue halakhic judgments affecting the whole of our people, considering the paucity of halakhic literature on such subjects? There are hundreds, thousands, of halakhic tomes on subjects such as גיטין, טרפות, טהרה, and other "ritual" matters, but hardly anything on the conduct of war according to Halakha--or even the question of "territories" in contemporary times...

I am deeply convinced that the attempt to *over-apply* Halakha to situations where our ignorance exceeds our commitment can only damage the reputation of Torah and cause a desecration of Torah and the good name of Judaism--חילול שם שמים.

4. Do halakhic precepts that obtain for normal, individual or communal life, also apply, in the same way, to national life?

Let me give you one example of *misapplied Halakha*: the Halakha of אין דוחין נפש מפני נפש, that one may not give preference to one life above another (but must follow the natural sequence) is an expression of the Torah's law and ethics regarding a birth which threatens the life of the mother (Mishnah *Ohalot* 7:6):

האשה שהיא מקשה לילד מחתכין את הולד במעיה ומוציאין אותו אברים אברים מפני שחייה קודמין לחייו יצא רובו אין נוגעין בו שאין דוחין נפש מפני נפש

If a woman is in difficult labor such a choice must be made between her life and the life of the child, then the rule applies: one may not set aside one life for another. Thus, if the baby is yet unborn, it may be killed, dismembered, and withdrawn. But if most of the baby has emerged from the womb, the same principle applies, and the child's life may not be sacrificed for that of the mother.

Now, a distinguished rabbi has applied this principle to the political situation, namely, we may not jeopardize anyone's life now in order to save many lives later. Hence, we may not put the lives of citizens at risk of being murdered by Hamas, or endangering the lives of the settlers, now in order to avoid a nuclear confrontation with Iran or Iraq later on; such a policy is "anti-Torah," and therefore such risk-taking is tantamount to complicity in murder.

Is that really so? Yes, that is correct when deciding a medical question before us. It does *not* apply to the laws of *war and peace*!! Proof comes to us from the Talmud (*Shevuot* 35b):

אמר שמואל: מלכותא דקטלא חד משיתא בעלמא לא מיענשא

Samuel said: A government which kills only one out of six is not punished

ואע"ג דכ' תוס' למלחמת רשות, לאו --- ודוקא אלא לצורכו וכבודו, לאפוקי ברצחן וחמסן בעלמא דגזלותא דמלכותא לא דינא, אלא דינא דמלכותא ובמשפט יעמיד ארץ (שו"ת חתם סופר חלק א או"ח סימן רח)

This means that not only does this refer to a "permissible war" for which approval was granted by the Sanhedrin, but even for a war which the king or government considered important for its prestige and standing. Without such permission, a general could probably be punished for sending out a reconnaissance group on a dangerous mission.

5. Further, which *halakhot* that we do have clearly apply *only* in Messianic times? Are we so sure that *all* *halakhot* that deal with borders and national and international affairs are meant for our contemporary non-Messianic reality?

6. Which brings us to the next step: is Religious Zionism inextricably tied to the Messianic assumption, that of *אתחלתא דגאולה*, the "beginning of the redemption?" Or can it function, perhaps more successfully, without the benefits of Messianic fervor, but also without its negative consequences?

Such a reassessment involves more than style or civility or even proper halakhic methodology. Our current ideology is based upon the

assumption that we are living in Messianic or pre-Messianic times, and that halakhically and politically that must be a major factor in our thinking and attitude. Hence we must seriously confront *the* axiom of the nationalist right of our national-religious camp, and we must ask deep, probing questions about the nature of religious Zionism.

My feeling is that classical Religious Zionism was tragically sidetracked after the euphoria of 1967 and linked to an extreme form of nationalism (i.e., territorialism) that the elder Rav Kook would not have approved of. I was disturbed by Gush Emunim from the very beginning. I admired them--and still do--but their ideology and self-certainty scared me. I should have talked up more. When I did talk and write (in a *Tradition* symposium shortly after the Six Day War), about my "Messianic agnosticism"--by which I mean that we can't, as mere humans, identify our location in the grand divine plan of redemption, that it may or may not be *אתחלתא דגאולה*--many of my colleagues and friends were dismayed. But I should not have been dissuaded.

Look at we have lost as a result of our smug certainty that we are experiencing, as the phrase in our Prayer for the State of Israel goes, *ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו*--"the beginning of the flowering of redemption": we have become wedded to the concept of *א"י השלמה*, "Greater Israel," and consequently lost control of the Ministries of Education and of Religion, so that these two highly critical portfolios are now held by people who either know little about the subject or are inimical to Judaism. We have lost influence in government, in society, and in the world at large. And we are looked upon--unfairly, it is true--as wild-eyed fanatics who are anti-democratic and a danger to the future of the State. And the settlers--idealistic, self-sacrificing pioneers, the flower of our people--are now suffering a cognitive dissonance as their Messianic ideals unravel before their eyes. I maintain that it was not and is not worth it.

It is because I so identify with Religious Zionism and am so proud of its brilliant record of achievement on behalf of the People and Land and Torah of Israel, that I believe that it is time to reassess the tendency to evaluate all current events through the Messianic prism--*without* at all yielding a single iota of the belief in *ביאת המשיח בכל יום* שיבוא, for the latter phrase means, quite literally, *whenever* Messiah comes, and not necessarily that all that is happening this very day is related to his imminent arrival.

כי הא דרבי זירא, כי הוה משפח רבנן דמעסקי ביה, אמר להו: במטותא, בעינא

מנייכו לא תרחקוה. דתנינא: שלשה באין בהיסח הדעת, אלו הן: משיח, מציאה,
ועקרב. (--סנהדרין דף צז עמוד א)

R. Zera, whenever he chanced upon scholars engaged in calculating the time of the Messiah's coming, would say to them: I beg of you, do not postpone it (i.e., Messiah's coming) for it has been taught: Three come unawares: Messiah, a found article, and a scorpion.

The best way to have the Messiah come is--by not talking about him overmuch, by not forcing his hand, as it were, but by proceeding with normal life while entertaining the quiet but powerful hope that he come soon.

Too many of us find it easy to scoff at the runaway Messianism of Lubavitch, but turn a deaf ear and blind eye to our own romantic notions of incipient Messianism; and both types of over-eager anticipation of the קץ הימין, the "end of days," can lead us--*has* lead us--into deep crisis. And we are sufficiently sophisticated to know the tragic historic events which confirm my fears for the future.

These are some of the serious questions that beg to be discussed--seriously, soberly, softly, and without sloganeering. And if the answers offered are concise, clear, crisp, and uncomplicated--you may be quite sure they are crude and misguided, just plain wrong. *Don't trust them!* Life is complex. It is filled with paradox, riddled with ambiguity, suffused with subtlety and nuance, and simplistic answers are dangerously misleading. Never must we entrust our national lives or treasure in the hands of people with primitive perspectives.

Until we are much, much surer of ourselves in correctly interpreting the Halakha, I would prefer that the political debate on Oslo I and II proceed *without* involving Halakha. Bring "proof" to your point of view, if you wish, from interpreting a Biblical verse, or citing a Midrash, or a "gut vort"--all of which represent a rather free and non-coercive use of sacred sources and speak of Jewish values in a general sense, but do not invoke the decision-making authority of Halakha. To use Halakha to buttress a political "line" skirts the very dangerous area of מגלה פנים בתורה שלא כהלכה, of improper use of Halakha.

So, at the occasion of this memorial for the late Yitzhak Rabin, we experience regret, deep and soul-shattering and painful regret, at the murder of this Jewish leader whom some of us knew and admired personally; and deep dejection and aching sorrow at the חילול השם, at our special chagrin that this shameful and blasphemous act was committed and abetted by products of our kind of education.

As a sign that this process of *teshuvah* will be serious, and not just sentimental, we at Yeshiva University will soon begin to meet--faculty, administration, distinguished outsiders--to think deeply about our educational offerings. A commission I am

appointing will be talking about tolerance and דרך ארץ and extremism and respect for dissent and xenophobia and genuine אהבת ישראל ואהבת הבריות and democracy--yes, democracy. I deny utterly the dogmatic assertion by the Kahane Chai people that Judaism and democracy are irreconcilable--and the announcement by a Labor Party Member of Knesset, equally undistinguished, to the same effect, from the opposite vantage point. We plan to initiate annual public lectures by distinguished Torah authorities and other Jewish scholars on Judaism and these themes, to be published thereafter. Other, more substantial results will be evident as time goes on.

Now the time has come for peace and reconciliation. After almost every terrorist attack in Israel, the government said that it must not be allowed to stop the peace process between Israel and the Arabs. The same reasoning must apply now. This damnable act must not be allowed to ignite, ח"ו, a civil war, an uncontrollable *Kulturkampf*, and hatred between Jew and Jew. There must be a covenant of peace, ברית שלום, in the corpus of כלל ישראל, and the leitmotif must be: דרכיה דרכי נועם --"[The Torah's] ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

We have spoken about Israel, about the Diaspora, about Judaism and Orthodoxy and education. But at bottom lies the tragedy of one single man, one distinctive, special, brave soldier and visionary statesman who, whether you agreed with his policies or not, whether you liked him or not, was a living, breathing, sentient, father and husband and grandfather as well as a dynamic and historic leader of Israel. It is a personal tragedy as well as a collective one.

We bow our heads in commiseration with Yitzhak Rabin's family. Perhaps most appropriate, and with only minor paraphrasing, are the eloquent words Abraham Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, a grieving mother who lost five sons on the field of battle:

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic he died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים