

ISRAEL NEWS
A collection of the week's news from Israel
A service of the Bet El Twinning Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

Commentary...

Gaza's Final Evacuees By Jeff Jacoby

The last Jewish inhabitants were removed from the Gaza Strip this week. They put up no resistance. Unlike the emotion-drenched scenes two weeks ago, when 8,500 residents were expelled from their homes -- some in tears, some in prayer, some berating or imploring or grieving with the soldiers sent to evict them -- the Gazan Jews who left this week went in silence.

That is because they were taken from their graves -- the remains of 48 men and women, exhumed from what was supposed to have been their final resting place in the Neveh Dekalimm cemetery. As part of Israel's "disengagement" from Gaza and northern Samaria, even the dead had to leave. Israelis know from experience what happens to Jewish graves that fall into Arab hands.

One of those reburied this week was Elkanah Gubi, an Israeli commando who died three years ago at the age of 21. In the agricultural settlement of Atzmona earlier this year I met his father, Moshe, who told me the story of Elkanah's death as we walked through the hothouses where until last month he grew orchids and other flowers for export.

In March 2002, while on a weekend leave, Elkanah saw a terrorist firing at drivers near the Kissufim crossing into Gaza. He grabbed his weapon, leapt from his car, and returned fire, forcing the sniper to flee. But when Israeli troops arrived on the scene, they mistook Elkanah, who wasn't in uniform, for the terrorist. They ran him over with their jeep, killing him.

To Moshe Gubi, the lesson of Elkanah's final moments was clear: "Against terrorists, you must fight -- you don't negotiate, you don't make concessions." For the government of Ariel Sharon to be digging up his son's grave so the land can be turned over to terrorists is an outrage, he said. "They should be learning the lesson Elkanah died for."

But if Sharon and the supporters of unilateral withdrawal are right, the departure from Gaza should mean fewer terrorist attacks like the one that cost Elkanah Gubi his life. No longer obliged to defend a Jewish presence there, physically separated from the Palestinians by a security fence, Israelis ought to be more secure without Gaza than they ever were with it.

For years, Israel has been told much the same thing by its critics: Since the "occupation" of Gaza and the West Bank is the cause of Arab terrorism, the way to end Palestinian terrorism is to end Israel's presence in the territories.

But far from reducing the terrorists' bloodlust, Israel's retreat from Gaza has only inflamed it. In just the past two weeks, a Palestinian knifed a Jewish student to death in Jerusalem's Old City, an Israeli policeman was stabbed in the throat by an Arab in Hebron, Kassam rockets were fired from Gaza into the southern Israeli town of Sderot, a suicide bomber blew himself up in Beersheba's crowded bus station, a Katyusha missile launched from Lebanon exploded in the Israeli village of Margalioth, a firebomb was thrown at an Israeli vehicle on a highway outside Jerusalem, and a 14-year-old boy from Nablus was caught with three bombs.

In a videotape circulated by Hamas this week, archterrorist Mohammed Deif vowed that Israel's departure from Gaza would mean more of the same.

"Today you leave Gaza in humiliation," he taunted the Israelis. "You are leaving hell. We promise that tomorrow, with Allah's help, *all* of Palestine will be hell for you." For the umpteenth time, an Israeli government spokesman urged the Palestinian Authority to disarm and dismantle Hamas, as required by the international "road map" it has agreed to.

And for the umpteenth time the Palestinian Authority made clear its intention to do no such thing. In Damascus, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei personally assured the heads of Hamas and Islamic Jihad that the PA would not disarm or interfere with them. "There will be no calm until the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," Qurei told reporters. Israel might be out of Gaza, in other words, but the murder of Jews would go on.

As always, the political hatred was reinforced by religious hatred. "The Prophet Muhammad foretold in a hadith that 'Judgment Day would come only when the Muslims fight the Jews, and the Muslims kill the Jews,' the deputy director of the Palestinian Clerics Association, Sheikh Muhammad Ali, said on Hezbollah's Al Manar TV. "Allah willing, we will enter [Palestine] as

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conquerors and liberators, not through negotiations but through jihad . . . because the hadith goes: 'And the Muslims will kill the Jews' -- there is killing involved."

The retreat from Gaza is a reward for such hatred and the violence it fuels. In the war on terrorism, civilization has just suffered a defeat. (Boston Globe Sep 1)

The writer is a columnist for *The Boston Globe*.

What Do We Tell the Children? By Stewart Weiss

In the aftermath of the disengagement trauma, young people throughout the Jewish world are asking pertinent, probing questions that trouble their souls and cloud their vision of the future. My kids, too, press me for answers and direction. As a concerned parent, I cannot ignore their heartfelt pleas of "What now?" and "How can we go on?" They must be addressed if we are to salvage their hope and optimism.

And so I am sharing my response to their four main issues:

How do we respect and follow a government that has hurt us so badly?

The government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has caused enormous pain and suffering to Jews over the last several months, and brought our nation to an unprecedented divide. As disturbing as Sharon's policies have been, his arrogant attitude has been equally unnerving and obnoxious. In his obsession to implement the government's plan, he has ignored the will of his own party, his past chief of General Staff and perhaps half the nation.

Yet Sharon is neither a king nor a conqueror, though he may act like one. In time, he will have to face the people and bend to their will. While the risk of democracy is that it can bring to power all manner of men and mischief, the positive flip-side of the system is that eventually these characters can only maintain their position at the behest of the majority.

Sharon's day of reckoning will come, and we will have the opportunity to replace him -- if we can identify a better leader to take his place.

Should I still be proud to be a Zionist?

On the surface, many would argue that Zionism, particularly religious Zionism, has been dealt a death blow by the disengagement. After all, what kind of Zionist movement turns land over to gleeful terrorists, and cruelly evicts the true pioneers of the country from their homes?

Is this not the Zionist dream turned on its head?

But here again, we must be careful to differentiate the patient from the illness and the sin from the sinner. Supporters and detractors of the Gaza pullout will both argue that their position is what's best for Zionism and a healthy State of Israel. The only question is: Whose opinion will prevail in the long run?

WE BELIEVE that capitulation will not lead to peace, and that Arab refusal to accept a Jewish state of any size -- and not "the settlements" -- is the essential impediment to a lasting solution. That is our belief and we must stay true to the course, despite any detours along the road.

History is a harsh mistress, and she will have the final say over the legacy of Gaza.

How can I serve in an army that evicted Jews from their homes?

Perhaps the most odious aspect of Sharon's initiative was to use the IDF to carry out his plan. The army is perhaps the last bastion of national unity, the "great equalizer" which has always been regarded with love and admiration by even the most cynical citizen, above suspicion and reproach.

The greatest fear was that the "people's army" would turn into the "army against the people." Thank heavens, that did not happen. The army acted with amazing restraint, compassion and Jewish heart. In fact, the pictures on television most worth watching were those of the soldiers and settlers in each others' arms, crying and consoling one another as they headed for the buses.

The admirable ethical heroism of the IDF should only encourage young people to serve, and should help to reverse a dangerous trend of this generation to "drop out" of military service.

Where was God during disengagement?

This may be the toughest question of all. Kids ask: "I prayed, I marched, I fasted, I protested, I donated, I prayed some more. I did my part; why did God not do His? Why did he not cause a miracle to stop this retreat? How can I now go on believing?"

Like any tragedy, the events of Gaza challenge our faith and shake our belief in an all-caring, all-capable God of truth and justice. Our failure to

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understand God's response – or lack thereof – is a hard blow to absorb.

But as hard a lesson as this is for the young – or old – spiritual maturity dictates that we accept that God does not respond on command to our whims or desires. He does not always do that which we think He ought to do. He has His own will and His own way, and it is precisely in these situations when we must activate our trust component. Because trust is the foundation of every serious relationship, human or cosmic, and we need lots of it now.

What I believe we can assume is that God has duly witnessed every prayer, every tear, every cry, every act of kindness and commitment by our young people, and He will surely repay all these efforts in His own time and place.

As hard as it is, we must try to focus on all the positive actions in our midst: The devotion of young people to a cause, the abounding love of Jews for their Land, the willingness to sacrifice – and refrain from violence – which guides the settler movement. All this positive energy – plus a great deal of patience and faith – will yet see us through to a better day.

The writer is the director of the Ohel Ari Jewish Outreach Center in Ra'anana. (Jerusalem Post Sep 5)

Save the Yesha Council (we still need it) By Tzvi Ben Gedalyahu

The Council of Jewish Communities of Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Yesha) has become the target of two opposing camps. One argues it was not sufficiently steadfast in its opposition to the pullout from Gaza and parts of northern Samaria, the other that it represents a fifth column and is disloyal to the state.

Paradoxically, both critical camps ignore the settlement body's raison d'etre – as well as its colossal failure to fulfill its duty.

The Yesha Council, made up of the five heads of the regional councils throughout Judea, Samaria – and once-upon-a-time-Gaza – has been under attack for being a non-elected body. It has also been accused of inciting rebellion during the anti-disengagement campaign.

Labor Minister Matan Vilnai is reported to have called for the dismantling of the Yesha Council because it "has become a provocative, inciting element" and "turned itself into a messianic body that is irrelevant for the majority of the Israeli public."

On the other hand, many settlers and other opponents of the expulsion have demanded that the council's members resign because of their failure to stop disengagement.

Neither attack is justified.

The Yesha Council is necessary because Yesha communities do not have equal status with other communities such as those in the Negev and Galilee. We, by law, are under military rule, and we need the council as a lobby on our behalf.

The council's members should not resign for the simple reason that they took on a job which was out of their realm. They should admit their failure, not just during the struggle against disengagement, but during the past 15 years of negotiations between Israel, the United States and Palestinian Authority.

The Yesha Council has no business trying to represent the country any more than the Histadrut Labor Federation or the manufacturers association can claim it speaks for all workers or all businesses.

Yesha leaders were supposed to promote the idea that Judea, Samaria and Gaza are part of Greater Israel. Instead, it did the opposite, forming the impression among the public that Yesha is a separate entity.

It fell into a trap when, early on in the disengagement process, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called on the Yesha Council to meet with him and establish a dialogue. The council, being made up of small-time politicians with delusions of grandeur, seized the opportunity to gain a forum with the prime minister of Israel. In doing so, they neglected the majority of the opponents to disengagement.

Yesha residents, not including those living in the annexed parts of metropolitan Jerusalem such as French Hill, Gilo and Pisgat Ze'ev, number approximately 250,000 people, five percent of the country's Jewish population. Depending on which poll you want to believe, opponents to the plan numbered between 1.5 million and 2.5 million people, making Yesha residents between 10 and 15 percent of the opposition.

Moreover, the Yesha Council's members sport knitted kipot and hanker after the approval of leading nationalist-religious rabbis. In doing so they relegated disengagement's secular opposition to the back of the bus.

IN THE early part of 2005, when the Yesha Council was lobbying the Knesset to reject Sharon's plan, a new organization called the Mateh Mishutaf (Coordination Headquarters) sprung up. It saw the handwriting on the Knesset wall and combined efforts of secular students, farmers and national-religious residents of urban cities to lobby against Sharon's plan. The Yesha Council declined an invitation to sit at the opening meeting but changed its tune when it saw that the Mateh was filling a power vacuum. Once it joined, however, it took back command.

Academics, businessmen and secular kibbutz leaders, along with religious figures, should have led the struggle. Instead the Yesha Council insisted on calling the shots, eventually encouraging its supporters to form a slapstick imitation of the pre-state Jewish underground in order to fight our own defense establishment. Anxious to count every supporter, its wrongful silence allowed

a tiny majority of hooligans who call themselves Orthodox to run amok.

One of my greatest fears the past few weeks has been the chilling ramifications had Yesha succeeded in stymying the execution of disengagement using such tools.

But the council's justification of using the tactics of rebellion to win public support did not hold and accomplished the opposite. Sharon exploited the IDF to carry out the expulsion and cut off the bridge connecting the people and army of Israel; but the Yesha Council, by pitting itself against the IDF, set fire to the bridge.

Now the Yesha Council is getting its just desserts.

And yet I'd make the case that those of us who live in Judea and Samaria need a representative body to advocate on our behalf on a wide range of issues.

But the one thing the Yesha Council should not try to do is play the role of a national political party. And maybe it won't have to if and when the national camp finally gets its house in order. (Jerusalem Post Sep 4)

The writer, a former daily journalist in the US and Canada, lives in Beit Yatir in the southern Hebron Hills.

Our Pakistani Pals By Caroline Glick

Last Thursday's "historic" meeting between Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri in Istanbul was immediately extolled by the local media as the "first fruits" of the disengagement from Gaza.

In his statement following the meeting Shalom said, "I wish to particularly thank President Musharraf for his courage in promoting peace and moderation in our region and in general."

In the midst of the hullabaloo about the the first public meeting between Israeli and Pakistani officials, it was hard to remember that Pakistan is the operational epicenter of the global jihad and a major proliferator of nuclear weapons technology and know-how to Iran.

Only recently, CIA director Porter Goss effectively said that US intelligence is certain that Osama bin Laden is in Pakistan. Goss explained that the US is unable to apprehend the arch-terrorist due to "sovereignty issues," - that is, Pakistan isn't cooperating.

It is unclear how Pakistan is "promoting peace and moderation" when terror training camps are operating openly in several provinces of the country. The suicide bombers who struck in Bali, in London and at Mike's Place in Tel Aviv, like the terror cell members apprehended in New York state and Virginia, underwent either indoctrination or training, or both, at al-Qaida camps in Pakistan.

In recent months, Taliban fighters have reentered Afghanistan from the Pakistan border areas. They arrived refreshed, retrained and well-armed and have been responsible for the killing of dozens of US troops and hundreds of Afghans in recent months. Pakistan's refusal to make any concerted efforts against the vast terror infrastructure openly and conspicuously operating on its territory led even The New York Times to publish a scathing editorial last month attacking Pakistan and its dictator "President" Musharraf, for refusing to take action against the Taliban. As the Times noted, "Musharraf seems to invest far more energy in explaining his government's tolerance of Taliban activities than he does in trying to shut them down."

Last March, Pakistan's information minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, acknowledged that Pakistan, through its nuclear witch-doctor A.Q. Khan's nuclear Walmart, had provided centrifuges to Iran. At the same time, Ahmed reiterated Pakistan's abject refusal to allow any foreign government to interrogate Khan stating, "We are not going to hand over Dr. Qadeer to anyone. We will not."

EXPERTS ON Pakistan readily acknowledge that on most levels, Pakistan is a failed state. It has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world. Most children who do go to school receive an average of five years of education. As of last year, the Pakistani government invested a paltry two percent of its GDP in education and has taken no effective action against the large network of madrassas in the country responsible for jihad indoctrination of hundreds of thousands of Pakistani youngsters.

Aside from this Pakistan exercises no effective sovereign control over large swathes of its territory. The high-profile arrests and renditions of senior al-Qaida terrorists like the mastermind of the September 11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and assaults on terror-ridden provinces seem to occur, as Timothy Hoyt of the US Naval War College noted in an online symposium on Pakistan, "at very convenient times for US-Pakistan relations," such as before or after the visits of senior US officials to the country.

Given this dismal state of affairs, the question should be raised: What does Israel have to gain from bestowing undeserved praise on Pakistan's rulers? There are two apparent answers to this question. One is constructive but unlikely, while the more probable alternative raises serious concerns about the priorities of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government and those of the Bush administration today.

ACCORDING TO a report by Asia Times, the Iranian regime was

distraught over the meeting. The paper quoted a source close to the government of President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, who referred to the Iranian leaders as being "shocked to the point of being choked off."

If embracing Pakistan is part of a larger plan to internationally isolate Iran, then there is a strategic logic to holding the meeting.

At the same time, the fact is that Britain's Foreign Minister Jack Straw told journalists last Friday: "Nobody is proposing military action in regard of Iran. This is an issue that needs to be resolved and can only be resolved, by diplomatic means."

Taken together with the dubious American assertion that there is no need to worry about the Iranian nuclear program for the next decade, it is reasonable to rule out the optimistic view that the international community is working to encircle Iran. In light of Pakistan's refusal to allow US intelligence officials access to Khan, it is impossible to believe that Israel would receive any valuable intelligence cooperation from Islamabad as a result of its embrace of Musharraf.

The second explanation of the meeting is more worrisome. News reports of it claimed that the Bush administration was the primary architect of the summit which the Israeli press effusively praised as the result of the expulsion of the Jews of Gaza and northern Samaria.

On Sunday, The New York Times reported that the Bush administration is going to great lengths to buttress Sharon to help him avert the calls for early primaries for the head of the Likud, which polls indicate he will likely lose. While Sharon ally Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert acknowledges that the government's refusal to strengthen Jerusalem's eastern borders is the result of US pressure, a senior Bush administration official explained to the Times that at next week's UN General Assembly meeting the administration will "be saying to anyone who asks us, that if your goal is Israeli-Palestinian progress, you're not going to get there by misunderstanding the Israeli political situation."

As with the bizarre 1996 summit of "peacemakers" in Sharm e-Sheikh choreographed by then president Bill Clinton in an attempt to shore up domestic support for then prime minister Shimon Peres in the lead-up to his failed election bid against Binyamin Netanyahu in the same year, the Shalom-Kashuri meeting can be seen as a return of Clinton's policy of heavy-handed interference in Israel's domestic politics, undertaken with the express aim of strengthening the forces of appeasement in Israel's body politic.

Today, the Bush administration seeks to bolster Sharon's standing among Likud voters. This it does by both delaying public pressure for further expulsions, and by exploiting the Israeli media's love of summitry and Sharon's weakness to confer legitimacy on one of the most active enablers of global jihad in the world.

DURING HIS visit to the US for the General Assembly meeting next week, Musharraf is scheduled to speak with the American Jewish Congress. For the Pakistani dictator this is a major breakthrough. In recent years more level-headed Jewish groups, like the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and the American Jewish Committee, have been actively engaging both the Indian government and Indian-American organizations in order to lobby the US Congress and the Bush administration to embrace the Indo-Israel alliance for the inestimable contribution it makes to the global war against terrorism.

By providing Musharraf's jihad-supporting government with a cheap photo-op, Israel is undercutting this work by conferring legitimacy on a regime that poses a danger to it through its nuclear proliferation activities, and a strategic threat to our Indian allies. At the same time Israel is helping the administration to convince a skeptical Congress of the value of the dubious benefits of the Bush administration's stubborn embrace of Musharraf, despite his refusal to act effectively to either stem his country's nuclear proliferation or combat and destroy the vast terror infrastructure that operates openly throughout his country and is used against US forces in Afghanistan.

In light of all of this, perhaps the local media was correct in proclaiming the Shalom-Kasuri meeting "the first fruits" of disengagement. We reap what we sow. When we sow defeat and surrender, we reap its bitter fruits. In this case, we have built upon our gift of Gaza to the Fatah-Hamas alliance by strengthening al-Qaida's best friend. (Jerusalem Post Sep 5)

L.A. Terrorists Threaten American Jewry By Daniel Pipes

The Jewish High Holidays this year fall in early October, and that's when a massacre was planned against two Los Angeles synagogues, as well as other targets, according to an indictment just handed down against four young Muslim men.

Law enforcement traces the origins of this plot to 1997. That's when Kevin Lamar James, a black inmate at New Folsom Prison, near Sacramento, Calif., founded Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh (Arabic for "Assembly of Authentic Islam" and known as JIS). JIS promotes the sort of jihadi version of Islam typically found in American prisons. As the indictment puts it, James, now 29, preached that JIS members have the duty "to target for violent attack any enemies of Islam or 'infidels,' including the United States government and Jewish and non-Jewish supporters of Israel."

James, serving a 10-year prison sentence for an armed robbery in 1996, recruited acolytes among fellow inmates. Volunteers swore to obey him and not to disclose the existence of JIS. On release from prison, they promised to get

directives from him at least every three months, recruit Muslims to JIS, and attack government officials and supporters of Israel.

Levar Haney Washington, 25, allegedly joined the JIS and swore allegiance to James just before being released from New Folsom in November 2004, having served his six-year sentence for a 1999 assault and robbery. On getting out, Washington immediately began recruiting at his mosque, Jamat-E-Masjidul Islam in the Los Angeles area. "He regarded Osama bin Laden very highly," reported one person whom Washington tried to recruit.

Two men, both 21 years old and without criminal records, did sign up: a lawful Pakistani immigrant and student at Santa Monica College, Hammad Riaz Samana; and a black convert who had worked at a duty-free shop in Los Angeles International Airport, Gregory Vernon Patterson. The three, plus James, now face up to life in prison for conspiring "to levy a war against the Government of the United States through terrorism."

They did so in five ways. They conducted surveillance of American government targets (military recruitment stations and bases), Israeli targets (consulate in L.A. and El-Al airlines), and Jewish targets (synagogues). The trio monitored the Jewish calendar and, the indictment notes, planned to attack synagogues on Jewish holidays "to maximize the number of casualties."

They acquired an arsenal of weapons. To fund this undertaking, they set off on a crime wave, robbing (or attempting to rob) gas stations 11 times in the five weeks after May 30. They engaged in physical and firearms training. Finally, they tried recruiting other Muslims.

But Patterson dropped a mobile telephone during the course of one gas station robbery, and the police retrieved it. Information from the phone set off an FBI-led investigation that involved more than 25 agencies and 500 investigators. The police staked out Patterson and Washington, arresting them after they robbed a Chevron station on July 5. Washington's apartment turned up bulletproof vests, knives, jihad literature, and the addresses of potential targets. Patterson was waiting to acquire an AR-15 assault rifle.

The JIS story prompts some worried observations.

Although Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales lavished praise on "the work of able investigators at all levels of government" in solving this case, law enforcement was as clueless about the JIS gang as was its British counterpart about the July 7 bombers. If not for the lucky break of a dropped phone, the jihadists probably would have struck. It is extremely disturbing to see law enforcement pat itself on the back for ineptitude.

American prisons are comparable to the banlieues in France, the principal recruiting grounds for a criminal form of Islam. As Frank Gaffney observes, "The alleged New Folsom State plot had better rouse us out of our stupor." Will it? Senate hearings in 2003 on prison jihadism yielded distressingly few results.

The emergence of a primarily African-American Islamist terrorist cell signals a new trend. Native-born Americans have taken part in terrorist operations before, but (again, as in London), this case this marks their first large-scale plot.

Terrorist plans that fail don't make headlines, but they should. This was a near-miss. Home-grown radical Islam has arrived and will do damage.

Even though most Jews resist acknowledging it, the Muslim threat is changing Jewish life in the United States. The golden age of American Jewry is coming to an end. (New York Sun Sep 6)

Regarding Rav Lichtenstein's Letter to Rav Avraham Shapira, Rosh Yeshiva of Merkaz Harav By Rabbi Sholom Gold

Harav Lichtenstein writes "For example, what would the esteemed Rav (Shapira) recommend to one of the students of HaRav Yosef Dov HaLevy Soloveichik OB" M who vigorously determined that there is absolutely no transgression involved in handing over parts of Eretz Israel to the nations of the world considering the question of *pikuach nefesh* [saving of a life in mortal danger], and also established that the opinions of military and political figures may even be taken into consideration."

This is Torah and I am obliged to learn it. I do not understand what connection there is between Rav Soloveichik's words which were said thirty years ago and our situation today. I want to understand the words of a *gaon* who was one of the great Torah figures of the past generation and merited to be *mechanech* [educate] and raise thousands of students, and through his *shiurim* and writings we are able to benefit from his advice, resourcefulness and Torah knowledge. I will explain what it is that I have trouble understanding.

There is no person alive who can state with any degree of certainty what Rav Soloveichik would say if he were alive today. There is absolutely no comparison at all between what he said and our present day situation.

For example, he may have been referring to handing over territory [of Eretz Israel] to another "nation", but not to a band of terrorist murderers who have adopted the destruction of the State of Israel as their *raison d'etre*. Murderers who we ourselves have brought here, and to whom, in an act of insanity, we even gave weapons and ammunition. Maybe the Rav would have said, that there is no way that we can rely on their promises and that they endanger the very existence of the State of Israel. And we, being

used to suffering at their hands, have learned that agreements with them carry no value at all. No one ever considered speaking with them during the Rav's lifetime, and in fact, the State of Israel even outlawed any contact with them.

Furthermore, at the time of the Rav's *halachic* decision, the question was one of handing over unsettled territories which fell into our hands during the Six Day War and which were not full of vibrant, thriving Jewish communities and thousands of Jewish settlers. Who can say that the Rav would agree to the expulsion of thousands of honest, innocent Jews from their homes where they settled with the approval and encouragement of all the governments of Israel, from across the political spectrum? The same settlers who were exposed to over six thousand mortar rounds and who have been living on the Israeli border (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim Section 329*), heroes of Israel, as Rashi describes them three times in *Parshat Vezot Habracha*.

I imagine that he would say "My dear students, have you all gone mad?! This is not what I meant. Please do not profane my name and my memory. How can you possibly distort my words after my death?"

Who can say that the Rav would have agreed to the disengagement plan which is unilateral and does not include any sort of agreement with any other parties, and there are no guarantees that it would not lead to a further increase in terror activity. Maybe the events of 9/11 would have become an important consideration and would have caused a major shift in his thinking.

Who can say that the Rav would agree to the destruction of Yeshivot, Shuls, Upanot, educational institutions, and other institutions of Torah and Chesed? My dear students, have you gone mad?

Perhaps the Rav would explain himself saying that it would be acceptable to consider the opinion of politicians and military leaders as long as they are honest and have an innate love for *Eretz Yisrael* and a fondness for *Torat Yisrael*. Do you think that the Rav's intention was to take into consideration the opinions of military and political figures who are only looking out for their own self-interests and political careers? Those whose opinions are so strongly influenced by their own personal aspirations and ambitions that today they say one thing and tomorrow the exact opposite?

Would he consider the opinions of cowardly political and military figures driven by personal interests, or might he say that he would in no way consider their assessments and recommendations? Can we possibly rely upon those who promised peace with security but were unable to defeat the bitter enemy and because of whom we have paid with thousands of Jewish lives? Can we rely upon an expert doctor who has left thousands of dead patients on the operating table?

Were the Rav alive today, he would protest to his *talmidim* quoting things in his name which have no relevancy at all to the current situation.

Maybe he would shout out loud: "This shall not be done". A nation elects a Prime Minister on the basis of his promises not to transfer Aza to the enemy, and the nation casts their ballots electing the candidate who opposes the withdrawal plan and he changes his mind completely reversing his previous stand. He does not bring the decision to new elections or to a referendum, and fires the ministers who disagree with him, then agrees to abide by the decision of his own party, and when the party electorate answers with a resounding "no", he simply ignores them! The Rav would shout at his students "Can you rely on a man like this, someone who blatantly tramples democracy? Have you gone mad??? You are using me to justify an injustice which cries out to the heaven? How could you possibly even have considered that I would agree to such a loathsome and abominable action?"

In my mind's eye I can see the Rav saying "Have I not strived my entire life to the absolute, pure truth, and if I erred would I not admit it and accept the truth? My soul is disgusted by falsehood, so how can you possibly justify and support a lie like this and place the blame on me?"

Do you not know how many political and military figures were against the Oslo Agreement and the Disengagement Plan but became avid supporters in order not to negatively impact their careers? Does the lie not glare directly at you?

The Rav would say to his *talmidim*: "Open a *gemara*, *Masechet Baba Batra*, page 130 (side 2) and internalize what it says:"

Rava said to Rav Papa and to Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua: When a document containing a judgement of mine comes before you and you see a flaw [in my judgement], do not rip up [the document] until you come before me. If I have an explanation I will tell it to you; and if I do not, I will retract. If you see a flaw in one of my decisions after my death, do not rip up [the document]; but neither should you learn from it. Do not rip up [the document] – for if I would be there, perhaps I would give you a valid reason for my decision, but neither should you learn from it, i.e. do not apply my ruling in other cases, for a judge has only what his eyes see; he should rule on the basis of his perception alone.

The words of the *gemara* are crystal clear. Rava told his students that after his death it is their responsibility to determine their stand on any questions which arise. Do not cancel my words, but at the same time, do not decide based upon them. He [a judge] should rule on the basis of his perception alone!!

The Rav would demand that his students study the various issues that arise from day to day, seriously discussing and analyzing them, and not simply rely upon a thirty year old quote which was relevant to a different time, under different circumstances and a reality that is totally different from today's. The

exaggerated use of the Rav's words by some of his students seems to be a lot more dangerous than those of the group that relies upon "*Daat Torah*" which many of the Rav's students reject? The opponents of "*Daat Torah*" use the Rav's supposed "*Daat Torah*" regarding *Pikuach Nefesh* without actually having seriously discussed the issue.

The author of the "*Eim Habanim Smeicha*" on pages 161-162 quotes "two prophets who prophesize in a single style". The *Kedushat Levi*, from Rav Levi Yitchak of Berditschev and the "Mabit" in his work "Beit Elokim". The "Mabit" was from the *Beit Din* of the *Beit Yosef*. They ask, why in the future will we be asking Eliyahu Hanavi, as the *gemara* says "Teiku" – *Tishbi yetaretz kushiyot ve'abayot* – Eliyahu Hanavi will answer the unanswered questions, why not ask Moshe Rabenu himself?

They both answer that Eliyahu Hanavi remained alive and lived through all the various periods [of Jewish history] and experienced all that the Jewish People experienced. Only he can be *posek* [decide the open questions]. Moshe Rabenu had died and could not therefore be the *posek*. See the original for the rest of his wonderful words.

Talmidim of the Rav, please. Do not profane the words of your great Rabbi. Do not transfer to him the responsibility that should be yours. Do not think that by quoting the Rav's words, the argument is ended and any and all claims of the opposing side are no longer relevant. Even the *Gaon*, *Harav Ovadia Yosef*, whose famous responsa permitting the return of territories in consideration of *pikuach nefesh* [mortal danger], a responsa from the time of the Oslo Accords which the Israeli government disseminated around the world, changed his mind and determined that the return of territories was the reason for the loss of Jewish lives, and not the opposite. Also Rav Shach retracted his original *psak*.

Talmidim of the Rav, please retract your statements. Have mercy on his honor.

With deep pain,
Sholom Gold

A Tale of Two Drivers By Emanuel Feldman

I always knew that Israeli drivers were deranged, second only in madness to the Italians, so what happened did not shock me. What did shock me was the aftermath.

I was driving along a Jerusalem road when a car appeared on a small side street. The driver saw me, and I fully expected him to wait until I had passed. But he was impatient. He darted out in full throttle, made a screeching turn directly in front of me and sped down the road. Had I not swerved and slammed on my brakes he would have struck my car.

I was furious. I drove behind him, honking my horn repeatedly just to let him know that he was a fool. These demented Israeli drivers, I muttered to myself, always in a hurry, filled with *hutzpa*, oblivious to the dangers they pose to everyone around them.

The country is filled with driving schools, and no one knows how to drive.

It did not help alleviate my "road rage" when I noticed that his car was flying a blue ribbon – supporting disengagement – while I am a staunch man of orange. I also noticed that he was not wearing a *kippa*. Aha! This madman was a reckless secular supporter of the Gaza withdrawal. Wait until he stops at the next light, I'll give him a good tongue-lashing.

A MOMENT later he stopped at the light. I pulled in beside him, rolled down my window, and motioned to him. He rolled down his window, ready for the confrontation. His wife, sitting beside him, cringed, expecting the worst.

I don't know what came over me at that moment, but, somehow, like a certain heathen prophet with whom I would rather not be compared, the words that emanated from my throat were not the ones I had thought I would utter. I said to him: "You have a blue ribbon and I have an orange one, but we are both Jews, right?"

Puzzlement spread over his face. "Most definitely," he said.

"And we both love Israel, right?"

"Sure." He was completely bewildered.

"Wonderful," I said as pleasantly as I could, a smile on my face. "May God bless you with all good things. May you have good fortune in all you do, good health and a long life."

His jaw dropped, and he looked at me as if I were a lunatic.

"Thank you, thank you," he finally blurted out.

Then, after a long pause, he added, "By the way, I apologize for what I did back there. It was stupid, and I am truly sorry" – which may enter the Guinness Book of Records as the first time in the history of mankind that a reckless Israeli driver apologized for anything.

The light turned green. He made a left turn, I a right. We went our separate ways. (Jerusalem Post Aug 23)

The writer is the former editor of Tradition magazine.
