

### **1989-2003: The Path of Peace**



Yael Arad & Oren Smadja-  
Olympic Medalists (1992)



Peace with Jordan (Hussein/Rabin 1994)



The Gulf War (1990-1991)



Rabin Assassination (1995)



Ilan Ramon, First Israeli Astronaut  
in Space (2003)



Memorial for  
73 fallen  
soldiers after  
2 helicopters  
collided (1992)



Doron Erel, first Israeli to scale  
Everest (1992)

*When the siren sounded at about two a.m., Meir and his brothers – neighbors of mine from the building next door – came to me and asked me not to stay at home alone. I guess they figured an old lady like me couldn't take care of herself in the middle of the night. They asked me to return with them to their house to wait out the attack. They said they wanted me to feel more secure. I agreed.*

*A few seconds later, just as we left my house, and just before we reached theirs, the missile fell in the alley right between my house and theirs, totally destroying both houses.*

~ Yediot Achronot, January 20, 1991

There are two words for strength in Hebrew: *koach* and *gevurah*... *Koach* means the strength to overcome your enemies. *Gevurah* means the strength to overcome yourself.. 'Who is strong? One who is capable of self-restraint.' *Koach* is the strength to wage war. *Gevurah* is the strength to make peace... Israel has fought impossible years and won. But in recent years Israel has shown that it has *gevurah* as well. It took immense courage for Israel to practise self-restraint during the Gulf War, but it did so.

~ **Faith in the Future, p. 90-91, R. Jonathan Sacks**

*If there is an IDF - let it appear immediately, for if not- its throne will be cast down forever (Ha'aretz, 14 February 1991)*

*If there's justice—let it come now!*

But if it should come after I've been blotted out beneath the sky,

let its throne be cast down.  
Let the heavens rot in evil everlasting,  
and you, with your cruelty,  
go in your iniquity  
and live and bathe in your



*We were staying in a neighborhood in southern Tel Aviv during the first missile attack, visiting with other Russian immigrants who were living in the area. Many of the people in the poorer houses of the neighborhood had not bothered to prepare a sealed room, so when the siren went off we all rushed to the nearby public bomb shelter. The shelter was huge and it was located inside a large public building made of concrete and metal.*

*About 200 people gathered together to seek shelter inside the formidable building. A number of us moved to the wall on the eastern side of the shelter. If required, that side of the shelter served as a synagogue and the wall was filled with prayer books, Bibles and other Torah books. People were reciting Psalms over the sound of crying babies. And then came the explosion. Everything came crashing down around us. The shelter had taken a direct hit by a missile carrying 550 pounds of explosives. There was a smell of burning sulfur, and a thick cloud of dust filled the room.*

*Some of the people were thrown into the air. Others had thrown themselves to the ground and were screaming wildly. When the noise stopped and the dust began to clear, the people who had been frozen in shock began to get up and look around. Everyone was totally astonished to see that not one of the 200 people was touched.*

*The next morning, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir visited the area with the Mayor of Tel Aviv. Shamir asked in astonishment if there really were people in the shelter at the time of the attack. Mayor Lahot answered that indeed, there were two hundred, and all were saved by a miracle.*

~ Missiles, Masks and Miracles, Charles Samuel

blood.

~ *On The Slaughter, H.N. Bialik (1893)*

HaAmeK Davar,  
Bereishit 26:1



וגו': ויִצְחָק יִצְחָק וּגְוִי. שֶׁהִיָּה לְצוֹ צְטוּחַ עַל  
לְצִימְלֵךְ שְׂכָרָת צְרִיחַ אֲהַבָּה עִם אֲצִיּוֹ שֶׁהִיָּה לוֹ  
לְעוֹר לְפָרְנִסָּה צִימִי רַע, אֲצֵל שׁוֹא תְשׁוּעַת אֲדָם,  
וְלֹא הִיָּה כֵן כֹּאשֶׁר יִבּוֹאֵר עוֹד אֲשֶׁר עוֹד שְׁטֵמוּהוּ  
וְהָרַע לִינְחָק יִשִּׁיבְתוּ צַעִיר הַמְּלוּכָה, עַל כֵּן חֲשָׁב  
יִנְחָק מִחֲשָׁבוֹת לִילֵךְ לַמַּזְרִים, וְהִזְהִירוֹ הַקְּב"ה עַל  
זֶה: (ב) שֶׁכֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ. שֶׁנּוּ מִיִּבְעֵי, מִכֹּאֵן יִנְחָק הַדְּרָשׁ

Amir framed his fanatical resistance to an Israeli withdrawal almost entirely in religious terms and specifically in the context of God's biblical 613 commandments. He liked to describe these commandments, which ranged from dos and don'ts about prayer and idol worship to long-outdated doctrines on animal sacrifice, as his "instruction manual" for life. "My own morality doesn't matter. It is determined solely according to the Torah itself," he would eventually explain. To Amir, as to other Jewish fundamentalists, the Old Testament was literal, word-for-word truth. "The Torah is the brain. If the Torah tells you to do something that runs counter to your emotions, you do what runs counter to your emotions."



As long as the peace process sputtered, Amir allowed himself to deliberate, alone or with his brother, on the options for ensuring its failure. But now that it was in gear again, his resolve to kill Rabin grew stronger. He thought about it every day. In contemplating the religious justification for such an act, Amir focused on a Talmudic principle known as *rodef*. The concept referred to a person who pursues another person with the intent to kill him

—*rodef* meaning literally "pursuer." The law of the pursuer, or *din rodef*, permitted a bystander to kill the aggressor in order to save the innocent victim. It was one of the few circumstances in which the Talmud allowed extrajudicial killing.

Amir decided that Rabin fit the definition of *rodef*—he was a pursuer—because his policies were undermining the safety of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. In his logic, Rabin was effectively chasing them down with the intent to kill them. He also decided that Rabin was a *moser*, a person who handed over Jews to a hostile power, in this case the newly formed Palestinian Authority. In truth, of course, all the settlers remained under Israeli rule, subject solely to Israeli law, including those in Gaza, which Arafat now controlled. *Din moser* also mandated death for the offender.

If his conclusions seemed like a stretch, Amir was certainly not the only person scouring the Talmud for laws that Rabin might be violating. By now, questions about *din rodef* and *din moser* had already surfaced in the Haredi press and been discussed in religious seminaries. The majority of Israelis would remain unfamiliar with these terms for some time to come. But in the religious world they had slipped into common usage.

In yeshivas, these discussions may have had a theoretical quality to them, as if the question of *din rodef* and whether it applied to Rabin possessed some scholarly value. But Amir, true to both his character and his zealous brand of faith, interpreted them literally. If *din rodef* applied, he was permitted to kill Rabin—not just permitted but obligated to do so. The possibility of being jailed or killed had no bearing. "There's no such thing as cognitive dissonance



Thus was Avner ben Ner killed by Yoav (Samuel II 3:26,27). When King David heard the news he was horrified, and at the funeral he pronounced the following immortal words: "Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in chains." One would have expected him to die a hero's death – gloriously, on the field of battle, slain by an enemy in the course of combat on behalf of his people. Instead, he was done in by one of his own who came silently, in stealth. We assemble here to cry, to mourn and honor a modern Avner ben Ner. And we are filled with grief and apprehension. Let me begin my eulogy by referring to a sugya (Talmud passage) you are now in the midst of learning. There is a form of oath called an *issar*, whereby one swears he will not eat meat



or drink wine – and here the Talmud gives four examples: "As on the day my father died; as on the day so-and-so died; as on the day Gedaliah ben Ahikam was killed; as on the day I saw Jerusalem in its destruction." Now, I can understand the day one's father died is very personal. The day an acquaintance died is certainly a human consideration. The day one saw Jerusalem's tragedy is one of national significance. But why the day that Gedaliah, governor of Judea, was murdered? I suggest the following answer: The assassination of Gedaliah included all three of the above – the personal, the human and the national elements and, in addition, had fateful consequences for the future of an entire people. So it is with Yitzhak ben Nehemiah Rabin: We have lost a human being, not the caricature depicted by those who demonized and dehumanized him. Direct yet thoughtful, tough but introspective, unceremonious, even humble, always tense and nervous, which he had

every reason to be... And, most important: just as the murder of Gedaliah led to the dissolution of the Jewish state and the beginning of the hardest part of galut, Exile, so the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin may leave in its wake consequences as disastrous as they are unforeseen and unforeseeable.

But naturally, this shame should be felt by our camp, the National Religious camp, more than any other. Here was a man who grew up in the best of our institutions. A day before the murder, he could have been cited as a shining example of success and achievement, and a source of communal pride. Coming from a "deprived" background, he studied in a Yeshiva High School, attended a great Yeshivat Hesder, and was accepted to the most prestigious division of Bar-Ilan University. Today, we hide behind the phrases, "a wild weed," "from the outskirts of our society." But if a day before the murder we would have said proudly, "See what we have produced," we must say it now as well - "See what we have produced!" It is indefensible that one who is willing to take credit when the sun is shining should shrug off responsibility when it begins to rain. Let us face our responsibility not defensively, but as Chazal would see it. I cite words which are so terrible that it frightens me to say them. I am not saying that we should apply them literally, but let us examine how Chazal see such things and what is their standard of responsibility. Concerning one who worships the Molekh, the verse states, "I shall put my face against that man and his sinned, did his family sin? This The gemara asks, "If he an extortionist where they are not all teaches you that there is no family that includes where they are not all robbers - because they protect him (Shevuot 39a)." Let us not fool ourselves - to a great extent we are all his family. Protection is not only the fact, but also before; not only cover-up, but also nourishment and support. ...



Today we must, out of the crisis, assume an educational and ideological task. Someone may say, "The Rosh Yeshiva says that azarot can lead to bloodshed - let's close the azarot!! Let us abandon the Mikdash!" I say, no! We will not close a single azara, nor will we encourage tepid and unenthusiastic service. The challenge is, can we continue to inspire the yearning for sanctity, shake people out of complacency, get them to face the great call of the hour - to understand the importance of the Medina, to understand the historical process in which we live - without losing a sense of morality, of proportion, of right, of spirituality? Do we have to choose between azarot and morality? Chas ve-shalom! But we must purify our hearts and our camp in order to serve Him in truth.<sup>1</sup>



The Ramban, commenting on the commandment to appoint a king, states that whomever the Jewish people choose is the choice of God. If God had not approved, the election would not have succeeded. This horrible act, directed against the kingdom of Israel, is also an assault on the kingdom of God. It is an assault on the entire people of Israel, not only because of the act itself, but because one man cannot say: I will decide for everyone, I have the right to assault the anointed of God, chosen by the people, a man who dedicated his entire life to the Jewish people. How many merits he had! *Even if one disagreed with all his policies, the role the Prime Minister played in the Six Day War alone is sufficient to atone for anything else he might have done.* Our sages tell us even a sinful idolater cannot be put to death unless the highest judicial authorities condemn him - and now, along comes an individual who decides that he is the Sanhedrin. Aside from this, we are obligated to rend our garments over the desecration of God's name. Have we become like Sodom, do we resemble Gomorrah? The Jewish people, who taught the world absolute morality, beginning with the prohibition on murder; the Jewish state, the only democracy in the Middle East, a nation founded on the vision of redemption - now resembles some Third World banana republic. This obligates us in keria (tearing), if not in rending our clothes, then in rending our hearts. What has happened to us? Rav Menachem Zamba zt"l, commenting on the argument in Agudat Israel sixty years ago concerning the partition plan, stated that the continued suffering of the Jews in the world constitutes a desecration of God's name. The State of Israel, the refuge of all Jews, represents the sanctification of God's name after the Holocaust. And now, I tremble - for God does not forgive the desecration of His name. There is a double

<sup>1</sup> <http://etzion.org.il/en/assassination-prime-minister-yitzhak-rabin-zl>

chillul Hashem (desecration of God's name), when one who claims to be a ben Torah, who sees himself as serving God, is capable of this deed. This is Torah? This is Torah education!? What a terrible chillul Hashem!! Anyone who is not shocked lacks even a iota of yir'at shamayim (fear of God); he has no idea of what is the honor of God.<sup>2</sup>



Shimon Peres (1995-1996)  
(2001-2006)



Binyamin Netanyahu (1996-1999)



Ehud Barak (1999-2001)



Ariel Sharon

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There can be no voluntary agreement between ourselves and the Palestine Arabs. Not now, nor in the prospective future. I say this with such conviction, not because I want to hurt the moderate Zionists. I do not believe that they will be hurt. Except for those who were born blind, they realised long ago that it is utterly impossible to obtain the voluntary consent of the Palestine Arabs for converting "Palestine" from an Arab country into a country with a Jewish majority... Zionist colonisation must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population. Which means that it can proceed and develop only under the protection of a power that is independent of the native population – behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach.

~ **The Iron Wall, Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1923)**

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*Sharon Touches a Nerve, and Jerusalem Explodes*

By ARIEL GREENBERG SEPT. 29, 2000



*IT'S A NORMAL THING TO VISIT THE TEMPLE MOUNT, AND EVERY JEW CAN VISIT TEMPLE MOUNT, EXACTLY AS EVERY ARAB CAN VISIT ANY OTHER PLACE IN THE COUNTRY. AND, ALL OF US WOULD LIKE PEACE, ALL OF US ARE COMMITTED TO PEACE, I CANNOT SEE ANY POSSIBILITY FOR A REAL PEACE IF JEWS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GO TO THE HOLIEST PLACE THAT BELONG TO THEM, JEWS WILL BE VISITING THE TEMPLE MOUNT, THEIR MOST SACRED PLACE, THE HOLIEST OF THE HOLIEST*

~ CNN INTERVIEW, ARIEL SHARON, SEPTEMBER 29, 2000

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.shamash.org/mail-jewish/Rabin/Amital.txt>



*Over 60 years ago, a small child in Bergen Belsen received a small sefer Torah from the Rav of Amsterdam who taught him for his bar mitzvah. This boy read the parshas hashavua and haftarah from this sefer. With much luck, this child was saved from the holocaust. He came to Israel, fought in the Israeli wars as a general and eventually became an established and honored professor in Tel Aviv University. His name was Professor Yosef Yehoyachin, "YoYa". This Torah has a very exciting history and it is here with me in the spaceship! I am very grateful to YoYa, and I think this highlights more than anything the ability of the Jewish people; even with all of the terrible holocausts, to come to days of hope and faith in the future." ~ Ilan Ramon ז"ל's conversation with Ariel Sharon from the spaceship (Feb. 2003)*