



***Authentic Kabbalah - Sephardic Studies
Benei Noah Studies - Anti-Missionary/Anti-Cult Materials***

29 Av, 5763 – Aug. 27, 2003

Erev Rosh Hodesh Elul Contemplations

*by Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok
Copyright © 2003 by Ariel Bar Tzadok. All rights reserved.*

Tonight is Rosh Hodesh Elul. Soon we Sephardim will begin Selihot prayers. Soon the eyes of all religious Jewry will turn to our Maker in a spirit of contrition. At least, this is what is supposed to be.

With all the horrors happening in Israel these days, we certainly did not need another terrible occurrence to happen so soon. Yet, we have another horror, this time in New York. This act of terror might not have killed anyone physically, but it is sure to add to the fuel firing up anti-Semitism.

On the front page of the New York Post newspaper and reported in the other city papers is a story about the federal indictment of the head Orthodox Rabbi of the Haredi Beis Yaakov schools of Brooklyn charged with stealing close to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars.

The matter of his guilt or innocence is not here the question. We all say someone is innocent until proven guilty. Yet, as we all know in trial by media, one is guilty, even if later proven innocent. The damage to this Rabbi's reputation and that of all religious Jewry is immeasurable. The Rabbi will never recover from his personal disgrace. Yet, more than this, so many now will look at religious Jews in particular, lump us all together, and call us crooks. This too is a terror attack, not against our bodies, but against the good name of Torah Jewry.

If this Rabbi is guilty, he will be punished. If he is innocent, who will know other than those in his own community? The millions of readers of the New York newspapers will not be following the story. In their eyes, the Rabbi is guilty, and for many of them, so are we all. What a fitting reminder for us on the day before Elul, the beginning of penitence.

In Israel today, the world's "man of peace" Yassa Arafat has called for the hudna-cease fire to be renewed. The world of course applauds this "bold step" towards peace. Yet, in reality, Arafat knew that Israel was "kicking his butt" by killing the leaders of the terrorist infrastructure. If the hudna is renewed and so-called peace reigns again, then Arafat will have time to regroup, choose new terrorist leaders and plan future atrocities against innocent Jewish women and children.

When is this old desert mongrel going to drop dead already? How many more lies and devastation must we suffer pursuing a peace that does not and never will exist? Contemplate this when you begin to be penitent before G-d. Ask the Almighty to show mercy to the merciful and terror to the terrorists.

As we move into the month to prepare us for Judgement Day, world Jewry is inundated with problems. Terrorists try to kill us daily. Respected leaders are exposed as crooks, not just a Rabbi in Brooklyn, but also secular Israeli politicians. Poverty is growing in the Holy Land, and American Jews for the most part are happy that they live in America and not in Aretz. All these ingredients are a potent recipe for a disaster in world Torah Jewry. Yet, there is one more major ingredient to add towards making this disaster, and this is the growing influence of Jewish religious cults.

Jewish cults, you did not know there was such a thing, did you? Alas, I am sorry to say, that yes, there are a number of Jewish cults, most claiming some association with the Kabbalah.

Last night, I did some Internet research on one Kabbalah cult in particular. This group for many years now has been correctly ostracized by most in the Orthodox community, yet they still seem to grow. Why, I cannot say. I did a thorough review of their website and found things so shocking that I am still at a loss as how to properly respond.

This group for whatever devious reason is presenting Kabbalah as something completely divorced from Torah and Judaism. Although the group will deny it, they are endeavoring to make Kabbalah a religion unto itself with their leaders being the new heads of a new religion. You might not consider this a big matter now, yet in years to come this medium size, but wealthy cult, might grow up and claim itself to be another branch of Judaism. We already have the Reform rebellion and the Conservative corruption; do we now need the Kabbalah kooks?

Please do not shake your head in surrender asking what can be done about it. A lot can be done. A lot can be done to prevent terrorism, a lot can be done to prevent criminals in our midst, and a lot can be done to expose cults and their evil machinations. While all these are a problem, there is yet, one greater problem that allows all these three other problems to continue. The biggest problem facing us today is our complacency and our relative weak resolve and action.

Here now are some real solutions.

Do you want to stop terror? Then wipe out the terrorists. Kill them and their supporters in large numbers, by the thousands. Do this in Judea, Gaza, Iraq and Afghanistan and you will have far less terrorists who can regroup for a come-back. Keep it up and you will wipe out terrorism totally, before they explode a nuke on a major western city.

Do you want to stop the desecration of G-d's name when our leaders are exposed as crooks? Then get rid of these leaders. Cast them out of their reputable positions. Let them know that their public will not tolerate such immoral behavior, regardless if one is a secular politician all the more so if one is a Rabbi. Teach morality and midot in the yeshivas and public schools. Teach our children and adults right from wrong, and let them know there is a harsh penalty for doing wrong, just as there is a rich reward for doing right. The lust after money has got to stop. We all need money to live, but stealing it is never the right way.

Do you want to stop cults? Then you have to be willing to support successful cult fighting activity. You by yourself cannot fight a cult, any more than you can pick up a gun to fight terrorists. Only those who are professionally trained in these areas can do this. So support those who are supporting you.

Support the I.D.F. Support anti-cult activity. One protects us physically; the other protects us spiritually, psychologically, and socially. Remember that a cult member is brainwashed and can easily be used to support endeavors dangerous in general to you! If you do nothing to stop it and somehow your life is affected because one of your loved ones get ensnared in one of these malevolent groups, it is then too late to prevent the tragedy. You must act now with foresight, to prevent that which might happen tomorrow, or the next day.

If your penitence does not lead you to proper action, that what good is your penitence? We do not seek closeness to G-d during Elul to make ourselves feel good, we draw close to G-d so that we can see what is wrong with ourselves, so that we can change, change ourselves and our world.

Judgement Day is now one month away. Whatever will happen to us over the next year will be decided in just the next few weeks. We now have the opportunity to influence that judgement. Who does not want to take advantage of this opportunity?

Remember the victims of terror, the indicted Rabbi, and the brainwashed cult members, they all began last year with the intent of having a healthy and prosperous year. Now, there is death, disgrace, and loss of soul. It can happen again, but it does not have to.

Rosh Hodesh Elul is here, take it seriously. Take your penance seriously. I do not want to have to read about you in the newspapers this year in a story about yet another tragedy.

I will be praying for you. This I promise. Along with my prayers, I will act for you the best I can. I pray my endeavors be reciprocated. Hodesh Tov to you all.