



Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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Celebrating after Osama bin Laden's Death

With America and the entire world riveted by the US Military's success in assassinating Osama bin Laden, we felt it important to bring you Rav Aviner's response to the death of Yassir Arafat (in 577).

When Your Enemy Falls, Do Not Rejoice?

It is true that it says in Mishlei (24:17): "When your enemy falls, do not rejoice," but there are enemies and there are Enemies.

The Talmud in Megillah (16a) relates that when Mordechai was led around on the horse by Haman, he did not treat him exceedingly mercifully. When Haman questioned him: Doesn't the verse say, "When your enemy falls, do not rejoice"? Mordechai responded: This does not refer to you.

Arafat was like Haman. He not only wanted to kill Jews, but actively did so, and left many widows, widowers, and orphans, as well as thousands of wounded and suffering. We could say that every child in Israel has a wound on his soul for a person who was close to him who was murdered.

It is also true that when the angels wanted to sing and join with the song of

the Children of Israel after the Splitting of the Red Sea, the Master of the Universe prevented them, saying: "My handiwork has drowned in the sea and you are singing a song?" (see Sanhedrin 39b and Megillah 10b). This is correct, and yet the Children of Israel did sing! How so? We are not angels. As the Admor of Pisetzna, Rav Kalman Kalonymus Shapira, wrote during the Holocaust (see "Aish Kodesh"): Was an angel ever hit? Was an angel ever murdered? Was an angel ever humiliated? We were! The angels did not suffer as we did in Egypt, so they could not sing. But we did suffer -- suffered immensely -- and therefore during the Exodus from Egypt "Moshe sang." And Miriam and the women also went out with singing and dancing after the Splitting of Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptians. And so, for Arafat, as for the Egyptians, we say, "and joy went through the camp" (Melachim 1 22:26) and we say "when the wicked perish, there is joy" (Mishlei 11:10).

May we be comforted by the building of Jerusalem.



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

