

Israel Mourns Death of 4-Year-Old Injured in Rock-Throwing Attack

Thousands of mourners arrived on Wednesday to pay their respects at the funeral of 4-year-old Adele Biton, who died from complications of pneumonia on Tuesday, two years after she was critically wounded when Palestinians threw rocks at the car she was in on Route 5 in Samaria.

"I whispered in your ear the whole time that mommy would never leave you, and now my darling girl, I let you go, I left you, I felt that you had suffered enough," said Biton's mother, Adva, at the funeral.

Among those at the funeral were Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein, Economy and Trade Minister Naftali Bennett, Likud MK Miri Regev and Kulanu party member Yoav Galant.

Adva and her husband Rafi embraced their daughter's tiny body, wrapped in a burial shroud, before she was lowered into the ground.

Nearly 5 years old when she died, Biton had spent half her life in treatment and rehabilitation for the severe head injury she suffered in the stone-throwing attack. Her parents were determined to see her recover, even pursuing legal action after rehabilitation center staff told them there was nothing more that could be done for her there.

In her eulogy, Adva said, "My darling, beloved daughter, my life, my enormous soul—it is so hard for me to write and to speak about you in the past tense.

"When you were a baby, you didn't like to sleep and we struggled with you. 'No sleep, mommy,' you would say, and you

would wake up every hour-and-a-half ... now I understand that you needed the time. There is no doubt that in your short life, you managed to accomplish so much. You managed to excite those around you, to lead, to honor God's name many times over.

"The third of [the Jewish month of] Nisan is a date that is forever etched upon my heart. That was the day that your body was murdered by villains who were trying, and will continue to try for the rest of their lives, to destroy us. But your heart continued to beat. You went through a period of horrible physical anguish. I saw [on Tuesday] the suffering in your eyes, how much you fought for each and every breath.

"I felt in my heart that something bad was about to happen. God made a decision and took you to be with Him."

Rafi had trouble speaking, but finally said, "What will I do now without you? I'll go out of my mind. You are going up to heaven now, but I can't let you go alone. All that is left to do is to flip over an hour glass and to think about when I can join you." When he finished speaking, he carried his daughter's body in his arms to her grave at the entrance to the family's hometown of Yakir, where Edelstein promised to get government approval for her to be buried, despite the fact that there is no cemetery there.

At the funeral, Bennett said, "What can you say about the grave of a 4-year-old girl? What can you say about a girl who spent half her life learning how to laugh and the other half fighting to stay alive?"

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to Biton's grandmother, Rachel on Wednesday evening. "We are all crying with you and we are all embracing you," he said. "May the love of this nation give you the strength to rebuild your life."

Biton is survived by her parents, three sisters and a brother, who was born only a few months ago.

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