

Terrorism in Israel

Yonatan Eldar was barely 16 years old, but he chanted from the Torah (the biblical scrolls) beautifully on that Sabbath day in March, in the ancient melodic tradition that so many religious Jews continue to this day. I remember seeing his smiling face beaming with pride as the older congregants congratulated him warmly.

The Eldar family lives around the corner from us in Shiloh, Israel, on a street that could be called Terror Victims' Row due to the high concentration of child terror victims who lived there.

Avi Sitone, 17, was murdered by a terrorist who shot several boys playing on his high school basketball court. Three houses down on the same street is the Kessler family, whose young granddaughter, Gila Sarah, was killed in a bomb attack on Israeli civilians.

In the very next house lives the Yerushalmi family, whose 17-year-old-son Samuel, Avi's close friend, was also killed in a bombing attack. It has been a few years since Samuel's murder, but just weeks ago, Samuel's next-door neighbor, 16-year-old Yonatan, was added to the growing list.

Yonatan was in the library of his Jerusalem high school one night when a Muslim terrorist infiltrated the library, shooting at everyone and everything in his sight. When the bloody rampage was over, eight young students were dead and many more wounded. Most of them lived in the biblical heartland of Israel, in the idealistic, pioneering communities that much of the world mistakenly calls the "West Bank."

This region is violently threatened today by an unofficial coalition of Muslim terror organizations. The young people there, who have suffered a disproportionate amount of attacks, are among the most idealistic and courageous Jews in Israel

today. They walk in the spirit of Joshua and King David, fighting for the land as officers in the Israel Defense Forces. Yonatan was a prime example.

What will be our response to the terrorists? And what can the average Christian friend of Israel do when all our liberties and freedoms are under attack?

Certainly we can encourage our political leaders to confront both the Muslim terrorist ideology and its armies. But what else can we do as ordinary citizens?

When my then 3-year-old son and I were wounded in a vicious shooting attack several years ago, I asked this question. I believe God showed me through the story of the prophet Jeremiah that in difficult times, He expects us to boldly rise to the challenge, with no thought for personal gain. So after my son and I had recovered from our wounds, both physical and psychological, I established the Shiloh Israel Children's Fund to initiate and support therapeutic and educational projects for children in Shiloh and the rest of the biblical heartland of Israel.

The goal of the Muslim terrorists was to make us leave Shiloh and run for our lives. My response was that we were going to stay and build for the future. Just as Samuel the prophet grew up into maturity in Shiloh, so will my children and thousands of others. G-d has called His children home, and we are determined to be active partners in that prophecy.

I call on our Christian friends to partner with us in our efforts. Your prayers are very important to us, and I ask you to pray about how you can participate in our struggle.

The Muslim terrorists and their supporters would like to divide God's land and destroy Western civilization. It is vital in these times for those who understand that the Lord's covenants are eternal to respond to darkness with light.

I encourage you to speak out to everyone who will listen and ask them to stand with us as we fight the battles on the front lines. Remember: Though the Muslims' focus is currently on Israel, their ultimate target is Judeo-Christian civilization, so we must be united in our cause.

I also invite all friends of Israel to visit me in Shiloh, to see how important the Israeli biblical heartland is to our shared history and destiny. Be strong, and we will witness the Lord's salvation together!