

The Totality of History

As my friend Amir said, in some ways our daughter Kaila, who is serving in the Israeli Defense forces, is the totality of 3,500 years of Jewish history. For millennia, since the downfall of the second Commonwealth at the hands of the brutal Romans, the Jews have wandered the earth an exiled man, in the words of Bob Dylan's Neighborhood Bully from the album Infidels. Indeed, the Jewish people have been hounded and torn, scorned and treated like the devil. Even the cats, who the Jews favored wherever they lived, were killed by Christian hordes as handmaidens of the devil. When the Crusaders captured the Holy Land and slaughtered every Jew in Jaffa, not to mention Stadt in Jerusalem, the next thing they did was kill the cats. The murder of the cats owned by the Jewish people caused the spread of Bubonic Plague, which ultimately destroyed almost 25% of the population of Europe, especially in England. It is amazing how ignorance backfired.

The current war against the Jews, is against the Jewish State. When Arabs live within the indefensible 1948 armistice lines, that is considered egalitarianism, democracy and peaceful. When the Jewish people instituted affirmative action for Arabs living within the 1948 armistice lines, which we call Israel, that is touted as a good thing. However, when Jews live outside the 1948 armistice lines, they are said to be settlers and occupiers. What hypocrisy can be more evident? Obviously the Jewish people, just like Arabs, should be able to live anywhere on the West Bank of the Jordan River. The fact that the Arabs hope to have yet another Arab terrorist state which they call Palestine, on the West Bank of the Jordan River, should not mean that Jews are excluded from the area, just as many Arabs live peacefully as Israeli citizens within the 1948 armistice lines, the State of Israel.

Seeing Kaila represents for me what we have prayed and worked so hard for. Three times a day, we have prayed for redemption of Israel, peace for our people, and the grace of G-d. Finally, in 1948 we were able to have our own organized Army to protect our people and to be able to live in harmony with the surrounding nations. It is amazing to see Kaila in uniform, hear her fluent Hebrew, and even the commands that she now knows in Arabic, Stop, stop, put up your hands or I will shoot. Of course, no Arab would give a similar warning; they just slit the throats of their opponents.

I know what Kaila means when she says she feels like an Israeli. She is an Israeli. She is a defender of our people and she stands at the outpost of democracy. It is comfortable sitting in the United States to talk about wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. We suffered an attack on 9/11, and two Presidents, both Republican and Democrat, thereafter bungled the opportunity to unify the country and to wage a world-wide war against terrorism which seeks to bring down Western civilization. Bush engaged in an unnecessary war and divided America. President Obama was elected with a large majority and failed to seize the opportunity to do what he could to stop the spread of fundamentalist terrorist Islam.

Kaila stands as a beacon and vanguard of what we want for our world and our children. She is a young woman dedicated to principles, both religious and secular, who knows herself, understands her people, and respects everyone. She stands as a citizen soldier in a country so diverse, that its Army is made up of black and white, men and women and young people from more countries than we can name.

She has brought great pride to herself, her family, everyone who loves her, and even those who simply appreciate what she is doing and say *toda raba*, thank you very much. We thank you, Kaila; we salute you, and we respect your ideals, mores, values and dedication to religion, peaceful coexistence, G-d and democracy.

*Clifford A. Rieders, Esquire
Rieders, Travis, Humphrey, Harris,
Waters, Waffenschmidt & Dohrmann
161 West Third Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
(570) 323-8711 (telephone)
(570) 323-4192 (facsimile)*

Cliff Rieders, who practices law in Williamsport, is Past President of the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association and a member of the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority. None of the opinions expressed necessarily represent the views of these organizations.