

אלהי מעוזי Maoz Israel REPORT

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Where did Michael Jackson go?

By Shira Sorko-Ram

I have never been a fan of Michael Jackson. I gave my heart fully to the Lord before I heard of him, and he simply never interested me. Elvis Presley was “the idol” in my teenage years. So when the terrible trial of alleged child molestation dominated the news in 2004-2005, it was hard for me to feel anything but disgust for Michael Jackson.

Watching his funeral on TV, I found myself trying to dissect from a spiritual standpoint what I was seeing.

First of all, it became clear Michael Jackson had done a lot of good things in his lifetime. According to news items, he gave large sums to charity, wrote outstanding music on the subject of world peace and helping children with AIDS, and was considered a true humanitarian.

His famous friends all report that he was a great friend, a gentle and kind man. What is certain, he was a musical and entertainment genius. God had endowed him with incredible talents and gifts which he used to write songs, create unusual dances and produce all kinds of creative media.

But, as so often happens with men and women possessing genius but no moral compass, he was unable to retain his equi-



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librium as to what was wise and right. He soon learned that the more bizarre and eerie his performances, the greater his acclaim as a brilliant entertainer.

A PERSON WHO ALWAYS THOUGHT OUT OF THE BOX, HE SOUGHT TO CREATE THE MOST UNEARTHLY AND FREAKY VIDEOS. THE PUBLIC LOVED IT.

In 1984, he produced a video clip called “Thriller” which launched Michael as a world-class entertainer. In this 15-minute video, he became a werewolf who joined many dead monstrosities who came out of their graves as ghosts and spooks. This was his all-time best selling video and put him on the map by breaking through the racial barrier on MTV. “Thriller” sold 50,000,000 copies.

Today I watched “Thriller” on Internet. I felt encrusted with filth after seeing it. The faces were faces of demons; the words of his songs were from the kingdom of darkness.

Thirteen months after making “Thriller,” Jackson at the height of his career, had a freak accident when making a Pepsi advertisement. The special affects went wrong and caught Jackson’s hair on fire causing second-degree burns on his scalp. Singer Liza Minnelli’s estranged husband who had been friends with Michael since he was 18, believes the accident changed his personality forever. “Michael,” he said, “was in so much pain after that, he became unbalanced. Before then, he had a tight hold of his career. The trauma and the pills (painkillers) changed him.”

Jackson was a very handsome entertainer. He had a nose job done and begin to bleach his skin, stating that he had a skin disorder that destroyed the pigment of his skin.

And then, in the most extraordinary way, he began a series of plastic surgeries over a number of years, which like the horror films he produced, turned his face into a demonic disaster. It’s as if he were possessed by an evil spirit that drove him to sculpture his face more and more like the spirit itself.

Though not a pious man, still Jackson was spiritually sensitive. He delved into a number of religions. Wiki.answers.com has this to say:

“Michael Jackson’s parents were Jehovah’s Witnesses. Michael was born a Jehovah’s Witness, and practiced this religion for a short period of time up until his hit “Thriller” was released. In 1987, when the Jehovah’s Witnesses criti-

cized his album, Michael Jackson announced that he was no longer a member of this religious following.

”He briefly took interest in Islam when his brother Jermaine converted to that religion. There is speculation that Michael Jackson himself converted in November 2008. However, no official statement or confirmation of these rumors has ever been made, or been publicly released by him or his publicists. For a brief period of time he wore a red string on his left wrist, a symbol of Kabbalah,” a mystical Jewish philosophy full of witchcraft.

The King of Pop somehow reminds me of King Manasseh, the son of the righteous King Hezekiah. Manasseh surely knew right from wrong but the book of Chronicles says he “practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery and consulted spiritists and mediums [provoking] God to anger until he brought calamity on Jerusalem. . . . So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil.” (II Chronicles 33:6,9)

Alas, there is nothing anywhere in Jackson’s life that would testify of his having had any personal relationship with God or born again experience, giving him assurance of salvation.

As one blogger wrote, “Sadly, Jackson’s often outlandish and frequently bizarre behavior gave zero appearance of the transforming power of Jesus Christ.”

In 1993, a father accused Jackson of molesting his 13 year-old son, but settled out of court for \$20,000,000.

JACKSON’S BROTHER, TITO, STATED, “I WATCHED THE LIGHT IN MICHAEL’S EYES FADE AS HE FACED TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS FOR BEING MISUNDERSTOOD.”

In 2003, he was arrested and handcuffed on several counts of child molestation after publically stating that he had shared his bed with children. The jurors acquitted him on all charges.

By this time, by all accounts of close friends, Michael was addicted to a variety of powerful and dangerous drugs. And he looked absolutely ghastly, each plastic surgery increasing his grisly looks. Surely he had to be drug-influenced when giving instructions for his mutilation.

God gives gifts to men and to women. They can use them to glorify God or they can use them to glorify themselves, which always means selling out to the one who came to steal, to kill and to destroy. Such artists as Madonna have been

given incredible gifts. But Madonna, like Jezebel, has chosen to seduce the world to all that is evil through her talents, even to blaspheming the Messiah.

Today, these electronic stars become idols and cast their spells over the young people throughout the world with the help of today’s media. They become figures of worship. As one journalist quoted fans of Michael:

“BECAUSE MICHAEL JACKSON WAS AN ICON TO US, MICHAEL MEANT MORE TO US THAN JESUS. I THINK THEY’RE BOTH ABOUT EVEN.”

Indeed, Shmuley Boteach, a rabbi that tried to help Jackson for two years get free of drugs, said, “My criticism of Michael is his self-absorption – the whole celebrity thing where he needs to feel like he’s worshipped.” (shmuley.com)

With the world going down hill at the speed of a shooting star, we must take the word of God as our Light and Instruction, our Rock, no matter how we are mocked by the world.

The Apostle John said, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (I John 2:15)

Yet the funeral loudly proclaimed the love of God. Indeed, at first you might have mistaken it for an old fashioned camp meeting celebrating the death of one of God’s saints. There were prayers and references to God and the love of Jesus from beginning to end.

Everybody there believed in God. There seemed to be no atheists or agnostics in all the crowd of 20,000 who cheered and shouted amen to every reference to God.

The casket was brought in to the music of the well-known Gospel song, “Soon and very soon we’re going to see the King.”

Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., declared, “At the end of the day, it is only God’s love that will sustain you and move you to a higher ground, far above the noise of life...”

Eulogizing Jackson’s achievements, Rev. Al Sharpton began his speech with “All over the world today people are gathered in love vigils to celebrate the life of a man that taught the world how to love.” He credited Jackson with beating down the racial barriers and allowing personalities like Oprah and

golfer Tiger Woods to rise to stardom. Perhaps. There is no question his talents were enormous.

Continuing the tributes to his good deeds, the Jackson family pastor Lucious Smith spoke about how “Michael did so much to try and heal our world.”

As the final song, “We are the world” was sang by all the stars together, symbols of every kind of religion were projected on the screens: Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Baha’i, Confucianism, Jainism, Germanic Paganism and more. The huge screens dazzled the audience with colorful symbols of crosses, the Star of David, Ying Yang, Wicca, Hamsa, the lotus, the peace symbol, etc.

So where did Michael lead the people who were so willing to follow him? To live for the one and only God? To love the sacrifice of Yeshua who so loved the world that He gave Himself for Michael Jackson’s life? Or to live a life of freedom from all restraints. The Biblical word is “lawlessness.”

The Israeli press, for the most part, did not take to him kindly, saying, “he led a life of hedonism and debauchery and died a sad, lonely man, addicted to a range of drugs.” (Jerusalem Post, 3July09)

And here is what I found most amazing. In all the religious fervor at the funeral, there was nary a word about sin, about wrong doing, about breaking God’s heart by turning our backs on Him and living for ourselves. They never mentioned that you can’t serve two masters.

Instead Sharpton looked at Jackson’s children and said, “I want his children to know: there wasn’t nothing strange about your Daddy. It was strange what your Daddy had to deal with. But he dealt with it anyway.”

Jermaine, Michael’s brother who converted to Islam, wrapped up the ceremony by thanking the crowd.

“I STAND HERE TRYING TO FIND WORDS OF COMFORT... TRYING TO FIND WHY THE LORD HAS TAKEN OUR BROTHER AFTER SUCH A SHORT TIME ON EARTH.”

On behalf of his family, Jermaine wished that Allah would be with Michael forever. Another brother Marlon added, "All his life Michael was unable to move without a crowd gathering. Maybe now, Michael, they will leave you alone... you have finished your work here on earth, and the Lord has called for you to come home with him."

I suddenly realized that America had created a new religion. It had the form of godliness but denied the life-changing power of God. It was not the real thing. It was a mixture of God the Father, Jesus, good works, and an acceptance of all the religions of the world - a full-blown New Age Christianity. It was the ultimate in a warm fuzzy one world religion.

And since human nature is unchanged over the centuries, we see these same religious creations in Bible days. The books of Judges, Kings and Chronicles are full of such behavior.

The people of Israel "served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel."

And then the change came: "When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel." (See Judges 2)

In years past, black Americans suffered under incredible slavery and bigotry. But through all their affliction many had an especially deep revelation of the love of God. They knew the meaning of being a child of God because they obeyed His Word. They knew what salvation was. They knew what it meant to be a sinner saved by grace.

But today, for much if not most of this new generation, that knowledge is largely gone. Today, God and His moral standards, His gift of salvation through intimate living in Him and His Word is unknown. (True of most Americans)

The Bible explains how God sees it: The children of Israel "did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baals, and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers. . . and they provoked the Lord to anger." (Judges 2:11)

One of the best Biblical examples is the story in Judges 17. Micah, a young man had stolen a huge sum of money from his mother. Then he had a change of heart and admitted his theft and returned the money. His mother was jubilant. "May you be blessed by the Lord, my son."

Then as a joyful act of thanks to the Lord, she said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the Lord for my son, to make a carved image and a molded image." She took 200 silver shekels and gave it to the silversmith to make some household idols.

The next verse says, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Today, New Age Christianity among many in America means doing what is right in one's own eyes. No sense of right or wrong. Just succeed in what you want to do in life. If you succeed, God is pleased. Such behavior led Israel to disaster. What will it do to America? To all post-Christian countries?

I think of the four different ministers who spoke at that funeral. Have they wandered so far from God's word? The children of Israel thought they were still serving God. They did not think God paid attention to acts that were in defiance of His Word.

Eli the High Priest had two sons who were also priests dedicated to the Lord. But they were immoral. They slept with women coming to worship God and they mocked God's tabernacle, the place where He resided.

The religion that I saw at that funeral - which was seen around the world by 31 million people, second only to Princess Di's funeral, plus untold millions on Internet - is not the faith of the God of the Bible.

Since God is always the same, the future of those who serve God by doing what is right in their own sight will meet the same fate as that of the children of Israel. The Bible is our treasure. It gives us these examples, and they were written by Jewish saints who risked their lives for us. "These examples were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1 Corinthians 10:11)

Every soul that goes into eternity without the King, is a tragedy. For one soul is worth more than the whole world. Michael Jackson, with his gifts, was a jewel - that was robbed and destroyed by the lies of the evil one, a colossal waste of life and talent.

The king of pop, perhaps the greatest entertainer the world has seen, spent only 50 years on this planet. Outside of a last-minute cry to God, his New Age Christianity, or any other religion he was attracted to, will not help him. Now he has an eternity to think about what he did and didn't do. ■



NOTHING UN-KOSHER



Maoz has cooperated with Attorney Calev Myers of The Jerusalem Institute of Justice, a Messianic Jewish law firm, in fighting for the rights of other believers under persecution in the land of Israel. Here he comments on the recent victory of Pnina and Israel Conforti, members of our Tiferet Yeshua Congregation in Tel Aviv. Editor

Pnina Conforti, a committed Messianic Jew, was shocked and hurt when the kosher license of her bakery in Ashdod was revoked by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel over three years ago. She was shocked because her bakery, "Pnina Pie" strictly abides by the kosher laws in Judaism. Since this decision of the Chief Rabbinate caused her business to lose about 70% of its clientele, she had no choice but to turn to the Israeli courts for relief. The only reason given for the denial of a kosher license? Pnina's faith that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah.

In a detailed 12-page opinion, on June 29, 2009, the High Court of Justice presented the parties with a benchmark decision forcing the Chief

Rabbinate of Israel to grant "Pnina Pie" a kosher license.

The judges emphatically rejected the claims of the Chief Rabbinate's counsel, which received the support of the Attorney General of Israel, that it is impossible to trust Messianic Jews to uphold their commitments before the Rabbinate, since they are "apostate Jews". According to Justice Danziger, the Rabbinate's decision was "unreasonable, disproportionate" and "impossible to support".

The Jerusalem Institute of Justice wants to applaud the Israeli High Court of Justice for upholding equality, democracy and justice in this case. We rejoice with Pnina in this victory and achievement which will undoubtedly positively affect the restaurants, bakeries, catering services and other food businesses owned by members of minority religious streams in Israel.

The Jerusalem Institute of Justice, www.jjj.org.il

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The Rabbinical authorities in Israel have endless funding from the Israeli government to harass believers legally and illegally. They do so because they believe the Messianic Jews will not have the finances to challenge the infringements on their basic humans rights in a nation that loudly proclaims its democratic values. Contributors of Maoz together with two other charitable organizations, made it possible for Pnina and Israel Conforti to contest this injustice and win! Thank you, Maoz contributors!



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