

Giuliani: There is no joy for the death of the enemy

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In Devarim/Deuteronomy we find the first biblical mention of Gaza, spoken by Moses. In his first speech to the sons and daughters of Israel, he who freed the Jewish people from the Egyptian enslavement in fact mentions the Avvim, a population that “dwelt in villages as far as Gaza” later destroyed by the Caphtorim, who “dwelt in their stead.” This is recalled by the scholar and professor of Jewish thought Massimo Giuliani in his new book *Gerusalemme e Gaza. Guerra e pace nella terra di Abramo* (Jerusalem and Gaza. War and peace in the land of Abraham) published by Scholé and available in bookstores from November 10th.

The author specifies that the text does not belong to the genre of the historical essay nor does it aim to provide new geopolitical analyses, but its purpose is that of bringing back both historical processes and geopolitical dynamics “against the background of much older religious symbols and beliefs, which only apparently do not constitute immediate reasons for the conflict, but which lie, and it has always been so, in the underground of events and decisions.”

The book starts with an in-depth study of history, memory and political theology in order to “understand Israel.” In a subsequent chapter, Giuliani illustrates how the city of Gaza is perceived in the Bible and throughout history. He then mentions, among the various themes, “war and peace” in Jewish religious thought. In a period pervaded by mourning, in the midst of a war that for Israel is also existential, the author hopes that “we do not forget the ethical lesson that comes from the ancient midrash set in the aftermath of Egypt’s exodus,” when “thanks to the powerful hand of the Lord, the sons and daughters of Israel got safely to the other side of the sea, while the Pharaoh’s army drowned.”

At that moment, the scholar recalls, “the angels in heaven began to sing and rejoice for the great miracle...but blessed God turned to them and reproached them: ‘How dare you sing and exult while a part of my creation is drowning in the sea?’”. This is the Jewish religious ethic, Giuliani emphasizes: “One does not rejoice at the suffering and death of the enemy.”

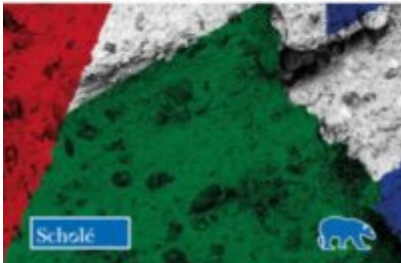
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