

# The Antidote to a Year of Scandals

By Rabbi David Wolpe

This year has presented a series of shocks to the Jewish system: the Madoff scandal and others indicted for financial crimes; rabbis who stole and laundered money; the ex-Prime Minister of Israel indicted. With each successive shock I would be told that these things don't really represent our community. To some extent I agree. But if we take pride in those who do well, and feel them a part of ourselves, can we really disclaim those who do wrong and say their choices have nothing to do with our heritage or community? Can we celebrate the good and not be chastened by the evil?

The Dubno Maggid told a story that should be learned by every Jewish child. He told of a father in a small Eastern European village who was walking his child to cheder, to school. Suddenly they heard a fanfare of trumpets and an elaborate coach pulled by beautiful horses rode down the road. The coach stopped right by them and out stepped a man wrapped in lush furs and dripping with jewels, dazzling the onlookers.

The father whispered to his son: "Take a good look, my child. For unless you learn and live Torah, that's what you are going to look like!"

Learning Torah — and living Torah — can save us from the excesses that masquerade as meaning. How many of us are wise enough to whisper those words to our children — or heed them ourselves?