



**Conversations recorded between August, 2000 and April, 2001. Michael Jackson did not speak to Shmuley after 2001, due to Shmuley stealing from Michael Jackson's Heal The Kids Charity.**

**This book is stripped of all Shmuley's negative and rude opinions.**

**The conversations are complete in their entirety. Nothing is edited out of the conversations.**

**This version is for fans who want to read the conversations without the Rabbi's hateful comments.**

## **Michael Jackson Speech at Oxford University 2001**

*You probably weren't surprised to hear that I did not have an idyllic childhood. The strain and tension that exists in my relationship with my father is well documented. My father is a tough man, and he pushed my brothers and me hard, from the earliest age, to be the best performers we could be.*

*He had great difficulty showing affection. He never really told me he loved me. And he never really complimented me either. If I did a great show, he would tell me it was a good show. And if I did an okay show, he told me it was a lousy show. He seemed intent above all else on making us a commercial success. And at that he was more than adept. My father was a managerial genius and my brothers and I owe our professional success in no small measure to*



*the forceful way that he pushed us. He trained me as a showman and, under his guidance, I couldn't miss a step.*

*But what I really wanted was a Dad. I wanted a father who showed me love. And my father never did that. He never said, "I love you," whilst looking me straight in the eye, he never played a game with me, he never gave me a piggyback ride, he never threw a pillow at me.*

*But I remember once when I was about four years old there was a little carnival and he picked me up and put me on a pony. It was a tiny gesture, probably something he forgot five minutes later. But because of that one moment, I have this special place in my heart for him. Because that's how kids are. The little things mean so much to them, and for me, that one moment meant everything. I only experienced it that one time but it made me really feel a lot differently about him and the world.*

*But now I am a father myself, and one day I was thinking about my own children, Prince and Paris, and how I wanted them to think of*

*me when they grow up. To be sure, I would like them to remember how I always wanted them with me wherever I went, how I always tried to put them before everything, including my albums and my concerts.*

*But there are also challenges in their lives. Because my kids are stalked by paparazzi, they can't always go to a park or a movie with me. So, what if they grow older and resent me and how my choices affected their youth? Why weren't we given an average childhood, like all the other kids, they might ask?*

*And at that moment, I pray that my children will give me the benefit of the doubt. That they will say, "Our Daddy did the best he could given the unique circumstances that he faced. He may not have been perfect, but he was a warm and decent man who tried to give us all the love in the world."*

*I hope that they will always focus on the positive things, on the sacrifices I willingly made for them, and not criticize the sacrifices circumstances may have forced upon them or the errors I have made and will certainly*

*continue to make in raising them. For we have all been someone's child and we know that despite the very best of plans and efforts mistakes will always occur. That is just being human.*

*And when I think about this, of how I hope that my children will not judge me unfavorably, and will forgive me my shortcomings, I am forced to think of my own father, and despite the part of me that denied it for years I have to admit that he must have loved me. He did love me, and I know that.*

*There were little things that showed it. When I was a kid I had a real sweet tooth—we all did. My favorite food was glazed donuts, and my father knew that. So, every few weeks I would come downstairs in the morning and there on the kitchen counter was a bag of glazed donuts—no note, no explanation—just the donuts. It was like Santa Claus. Sometimes I would think about staying up late at night so I could see him leave them there but, just like with Santa Claus, I didn't want to ruin the magic, for fear that he would never do it again.*

*My father had to leave them stealthily at night so no one might catch him with his guard down. He was scared of human emotion, he didn't understand it or know how to deal with it. But he did know donuts.*

*And when I allow the floodgates to open up, there are other memories that come rushing back, memories of other tiny gestures, however incomplete, that showed that he did what he could.*

*So tonight, rather than focusing on what my father didn't do, I want to focus on all the things he did do, and on his own personal challenges. I want to stop judging him.*

*I have started reflecting on the fact that my father grew up in the South, in a very poor family. He came of age during the Depression, and his own father, who struggled to feed his children, showed little affection toward his family and raised my father and his siblings with an iron fist. Who could have imagined what it was like to grow up a poor black man in the South, robbed of dignity, bereft of hope, struggling to become a man in a world that saw*



*my father as subordinate. I was the first black artist to be played on MTV and I remember how big a deal it was even then. And that was in the 1980s!*

*My father moved to Indiana and had a large family of his own, working long hours in the steel mills, work that kills the lungs and humbles the spirit, all to support his family. Is it any wonder that he found it difficult to expose his feelings? Is it any mystery that he hardened his heart, that he raised the emotional ramparts? What other choice does a man have when his life is a struggle just to get by? And most of all, is it any wonder why he pushed his sons so hard to succeed as performers so that they could be saved from what he knew to be a life of indignity and poverty? I have begun to see that even my father's harshness was a kind of love, an imperfect love, to be sure, but love nonetheless. He pushed me because he loved me. Because he wanted no man to ever look down at his offspring.*

*And now, with time, rather than bitterness I*

*feel blessing. In the place of anger, I have found absolution. And in the place of revenge, I have found reconciliation. And my initial fury has slowly given way to forgiveness.*

*Almost a decade ago, I founded a charity called Heal the World. The title was something I felt inside me. Little did I know, as Shmuley later pointed out, that those two words form the cornerstone of Old-Testament prophecy. Do I really believe that we can heal this world that is riddled with war and hate and genocide even today? And do I really think that we can heal our children, the same children who can enter their schools with guns and hatred and shoot down their classmates like they did at Columbine; our children who can beat a defenseless toddler to death like the tragic story of Jamie Bulger [murdered in England by two ten-year-olds]? Of course I do, or I wouldn't be here tonight. But it all begins with forgiveness. Because to heal the world we first have to heal ourselves. And to heal the kids, we first have to heal the child within each and every one of us.*

*As an adult, and as a parent, I realize that I cannot be a whole human being, nor a parent capable of fully committed, unconditional love until I put to rest the ghosts of my own childhood.*

*And that's what I'm asking all of us to do tonight. Live up to the Fifth of the Ten Commandments. Honor your parents by not judging them. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Understand that they had their own struggles, their own pains, their own traumas, and still did the best that they could.*

*That is why I want to forgive my father, and to stop judging him. I want to forgive him because I want a father and this is the only one that I've got. I want the weight of my past lifted from my shoulders, and I want to be free to step into a new relationship with my father for the rest of my life, unhindered by the goblins of the past.*

*Shmuley and I, who are launching this initiative tonight, are members of the Black and Jewish communities, both of which have confronted horrors and atrocities throughout*

*our histories. How do our communities forgive the horrors done to us without forgetting them altogether? By remembering. We pass along our stories. But we also rise above those stories. In a world filled with hate, we still dare to hope. In a world filled with anger, we still dare to comfort. In a world filled with despair, we still dare to dream. And in a world filled with distrust, we still dare to believe.*

*To all of you tonight who feel let down by your parents, I ask you to let down your disappointment. To all of you tonight who feel cheated by your fathers or mothers, I ask you not to cheat yourself further. And to all of you tonight who feel like telling their parents they can go to hell, I ask you tonight to extend your hand to them instead.*

*For in the exchange of pain the accounts are never balanced. Vengeance cannot bring restitution. By forgiving our parents, we are not denying that they may have wronged us. We are not whitewashing their sins or creating saints of sinners. But harboring resentment against your parents will never give you the*



*love you so crave. Getting even will not make our lives better. Perpetual pain, perpetual suffering, the cycle never ends. There is a Bakongo proverb that says, "To take revenge is to sacrifice oneself." And friends, our generation has sacrificed and suffered enough.*

*Rather, I am asking you, I am asking myself, to give our parents the gift of unconditional love so that they too may learn how to love from us, their children. So that love will finally be restored to a desolate and lonely world. Shmuley once mentioned to me an ancient Biblical prophecy which says that the time would come when "the hearts of the parents would be restored through the hearts of their children." My friends, we are those children.*

*Mahatma Gandhi said, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." Tonight, be strong. Beyond being strong, rise to the greatest challenge of all: to restore that broken covenant by teaching our parents how to love. We must all overcome whatever crippling effects our childhoods may have had on our lives, and in the words of Jesse*

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*Jackson, forgive each other, redeem each other, and move on.*

## A SETTING THE STAGE

### The Writing Was on the Wall: Talking About Dying Young

Shmuley Boteach: So would you say the best thing that's ever happened to the Beatles is the fact that they broke up, and that's why they had this longevity, because suddenly, kaboom!, they weren't around anymore, so you could never get bored of them? They never fizzled?

Michael Jackson: Yeah, Marilyn Monroe died young. You didn't get to see her grow old and ugly. I mean that's the mystery of James Dean.

SB: And people say about the Beatles, "I wish they were together." MJ: Yeah, yeah.

SB: And you [the fan] become part of the wish

then. The public keeps them going because they so badly want them back together.

MJ: Absolutely, or else they'd be funky and old now and you wouldn't care.

SB: So is that an argument, Michael, for you to say one day, "That's it," and quit?

MJ: Yeah, I would like some kind of way to disappear where people don't see me anymore at some point, and just do my things for children but not be visual. To disappear is very important. We are people of change. We need change in our lives. That's why we have winter, spring, summer, fall.

SB: Okay, but you want a long life and a healthy life. You don't want to disappear like, God forbid, the way some of these stars have disappeared, the way Marilyn Monroe has. You don't want to die young?

MJ: Um, you're asking me an interesting



question. You sure you want my answer?

SB: I do.

MJ: Okay, I'll give you my honest answer. Okay, um. My greatest dream that I have left—I have accomplished my dreams with music and all that and I love music and entertainment—is this children's initiative, is this thing that we are doing. But, um, 'cause I don't care about [anything else], I really don't, I don't care about [career], I honestly don't Shmuley. What keeps me going is children, or else I would, I would seriously. . . I've told you this before, I swear to God I mean every word. I would, I would just throw in the towel if it wasn't for children or babies. And that's my real, my honest [answer]. . . and I've said it before, if it weren't for children, I would choose death. I mean it with all my heart.

SB: Choose death the way Marilyn Monroe chose death?

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MJ: Some kind of way. I would find a way to go away off the planet 'cause I wouldn't care about living anymore. I'm living for these babies and children.

SB: You see them as really a part, a spark of God here on earth?

MJ: I swear they are.

SB: So for you it's the most spiritual thing in the world?

MJ: There is nothing more pure and spiritual to me than children and I cannot live without them. If you told me right now, "Michael, you can never see another child," I would kill myself. I swear to you I would because I have nothing else to live for. That's it. Honestly.

SB: So do you want to have a long life?

MJ: Let me take back that word swear, 'cause I don't swear to God. I take that back. I don't want to use that word. Say this question again?

SB: You said you want to disappear. Do you

think it's important to disappear?

MJ: I don't want a long [life]. . . I don't like, I don't, I don't. I think growing old is the ugliest, the most, the ugliest thing. When the body breaks down and you start to wrinkle, I think it's so bad. I don't, that's something I don't understand, Shmuley. And I never want to look in the mirror and see that. I don't understand it. I really don't. And people say that growing old is beautiful and it's this and that. I disagree. I totally do.

SB: So you would die before that happens?

MJ: Um. . . I don't want to grow old. I would like to get. . .

SB: What if you could stay young in spirit Michael?

MJ: Yeah, that's important to me.

SB: You may have wrinkles, but don't you want

to see Prince and Paris grow up?

MJ: Yes, I do.

SB: Don't you want to see their children?

MJ: I just don't want to look old and start forgetting. I want to always be youthful and have the energy to run around and play hide and seek, which is one of my favorite games. I wanted to play it so badly at your house the last time we were there 'cause you have a nice big house for it. Um, I hate to see people grow old, Shmuley.

SB: Haven't you seen people who grew old but kept their youthfulness. They behaved like they were still young?

MJ: Yeah, when they have a youthful heart, I love that. When they start to forget and wrinkle, [and] their body parts break down, it hurts me. Or when they get. . .



SB: Who has that happened to among the people you've loved? Does your mother grow old on you? Your father? Any entertainers that you know in the industry who grow old?

MJ: Yeah, people I love very much that died and I don't understand why. I was in love with this man, in love with him. And he was my friend, Fred Astaire, and I don't understand. You see Fred, since I was a little, a kid, Fred Astaire lived very close to our house and he used to talk to me all the time when I was little and you know he would teach me things, he would tell me you know, I was gonna be a big star and all this stuff that I didn't even think about when I was little. And to see him dance in movies, I was like amazed. I didn't know anybody could move so beautifully, you know? And, um, when I see him get to the point. . . One day he said to me, "You know Michael, I, if I was to do one spin right now, I would fall flat on my face. My equilibrium is totally gone." And when he'd answer the door when I'd come to his house, this is how he [walked], just like this Shmuley. Little tiny steps and it broke my

heart. That hurts me, and the day he died, it killed me, it killed me. It destroyed me. And that's. . .

SB: But what happened to [Princess] Diana, that was a great tragedy, Michael.

MJ: That was a great tragedy. That killed me. That killed everybody, I think.

SB: It's not good to die young. It may make you into a myth, Michael. But life is too precious, no?

MJ: Life is very beautiful and precious.

SB: So you think one day you're going to become just a myth.

MJ: See, why can't we be like the trees? That come, you know, they lose their leaves in the winter, and come back as beautiful all over again in the spring, you know? It's a sense of immortality to them, and the Bible says man was meant for immortality. But through sin and all this, we get death.

SB: But maybe you go to a different place, to a higher place, and your soul, being suddenly unrestricted, can actually move closer to the people. Think about it. God is here right now, Michael. We both believe that, even though you can't touch him or feel him. Are the souls of our loved ones very different?

MJ: I would love to come back as, as, as a child that never grows old, like Peter Pan. I wish, I wish I could believe that that's true, that I keep coming back. I hope that's true, I would like to

believe that, Shmuley.

SB: In reincarnation? You keep on being reincarnated as a baby? MJ: Yeah, even though our, my religion [the Jehovah's Witnesses Church], talks against it, that there's no such thing as [reincarnation]. . . When you die, the soul dies and it's like this couch, the dead, you know? But there's the promise of the resurrection and all that.

SB: But for the Hindus, they believe you come back.

MJ: I'd like to believe that, and I like what the Egyptians and the Africans do, how they bury [their dead]. . . I'd like to see, we would all like to see, what the other side looks like. Don't we?

SB: We wish we knew what lies after life, what heaven is like.

MJ: Yes, because there are so many concepts.

SB: Do you think there are children playing in Heaven?

MJ: Oh, God, I pray that that is what it is like.

SB: Are there adults playing there, too?

MJ: I would think so and I would think that

they are very childlike. Like Adam and Eve, it is just a happy garden, a perfect peaceful place. I pray that it is like that.

SB: Are you afraid of death?

MJ: Yes.

SB: We all are.

MJ: I always said I want to be buried right where there are children. I want them next to me. I would feel safer that way. I want them next to me. I need their spirit protecting me. I always see that in my mind and I see myself and I hate to see it. I see myself and I see children lying there to protect me.

## Childhood, Loneliness, Cartoons, and Brothers

Shmuley Boteach: Was there an age at which you realized, “Oh my gosh, I missed my childhood?”

Michael Jackson: Yes, I remember distinctly. . . It's like being on a ride you can't get off and you think, “Oh my God. What did I do?” and you are committed and you can't get off. It hit me before I was a teenager. I wanted so badly to play in the park across the street because the kids were playing baseball and football but I had to record. I could see the park, right across the street. But I had to go in the other building and work until late at night making the albums. I sat there looking at the kids with tears running



down my face and I would say, "I am trapped and I have to do this for the rest of my life. I am under contract." But I wanted to go over there so bad it was killing me, just to make a friend to say, "Hi." I used to walk the streets looking for someone to talk to. I told you that.

SB: How old were you?

MJ: It was during the *Thriller* album.

SB: So you were the biggest star in the whole world and. . .

MJ: I was looking for people to talk to. I was so lonely I would cry in my room upstairs. I would think, "That's it. I am getting out of here," and I would walk down the street. I remember really saying to people, "Will you be my friend?"

SB: They were probably in shock.

MJ: They were like, "Michael Jackson!" I would go, "Oh God! Are they going to be my friend because of Michael Jackson? Or because of me?" I just wanted someone to talk to.

SB: Did you find it?

MJ: Yeah, well, I went to the park and there were kids playing on swings.

SB: So that's when you decided that children were the answer. They are the only ones who treat you as a person?

MJ: Yeah. That's true.

SB: So that's the age that it hit you, "Oh my gosh. I did lose my childhood, because these are the only people I can identify with."

MJ: I suffered a lot in that way. I knew that something was wrong with me at that time. But I needed someone. . . That's probably why I had the mannequins. I would say because I felt I needed people, someone, I didn't have. . . I was too shy to be around real people. I didn't talk to them. It wasn't like old ladies talking to plants. But I always thought I wanted something to make me feel like I had company. I always

thought, “Why do I have these?” They are like real babies, kids, and people, and it makes me feel like I am in a room with people.

SB: Why were you too shy to talk to real people? Was it because you had only ever learned to perform and you weren't given the opportunity to hang out?

MJ: That's it. There was no hang-out time.

SB: Do you still feel lonely?

MJ: Not nearly the way I used to. No.

SB: Clearly you have your kids, which makes a very big difference. But there is a part of us that isn't only a parent. There is part of us that needs other forms of interaction.

MJ: What kind of interaction?

SB: Someone you can unburden yourself to emotionally in a way that Prince couldn't

understand or Paris couldn't understand.

MJ: Mmmm. Friends and certain people you can trust. Elizabeth [Taylor], or whoever. . . Mac [Macaulay Culkin], Shirley Temple [Black], people who have been there.

SB: So it is always people who have been there, all these childhood stars?

MJ: They [people who have not been childhood stars] say, "Yeah, I know what you mean," but they don't know what you mean. They are just trying to agree with you.

SB: Do you discuss with friends who were also child stars individual things that happened to them? Or do you not even need to say it: Do you sort of understand it?

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MJ: You know, it's like telepathy. I wish you could have seen Shirley Temple and myself.

Just a few weeks before this conversation Michael had been to visit Shirley Temple Black in San Francisco.

SB: Are you still in touch with her?

MJ: I am going to call her. I've gotta call her again. I kept thanking her and she was saying, "Why?" and I said, "Because of all you have ever done for me."

SB: Do you think you will ever dedicate a song to her?

MJ: I would love to.

SB: So Macaulay Culkin doesn't need to say to you, "I was on the set and this happened with my father." You don't even have to have conversations like that?

MJ: Oh yeah. There is this precious sweet little soul who is a baby,

Macaulay Culkin, who is wondering, "How did I get caught up in all of this? I never asked to be an actor." He always wanted out. You gotta watch that energy when he gets heavy on his

father, man, it tears into him and that's what happens, you know. Oh, but I saw it myself with him. [Michael screams] "Mac get in here!" the screaming. . .

SB: So that reminded you of what you had to go through? He made a lot of the choices that you did. He tried to hold onto his childhood for as long as possible. But there are other childhood stars who didn't, like Brooke Shields, whom you were once close to. What about someone like Brooke Shields who to the world looks like she didn't make childhood choices, she didn't try to rediscover her childhood. Do you think it will exact a price? Do you think that Macaulay Culkin and you and others can be healthier because you understand what you are missing and you need to compensate?

MJ: You know, with certain people I understand and with certain ones I don't. With her she started out being a model, so it wasn't like being on the set all day, every day. She did modeling. She wasn't a movie star until she did, I think it was *Pretty Baby*, and she played a female prostitute at the age of. . . I think it

started around twelve for her. There was a lot of photography, so it wasn't like all day like what we did, all day, from early to night. I think it affects people differently, but it is all the same. She is very sweet, smart. She is not an airhead. She is real smart. A lot of people think that when someone is beautiful they are like an airhead. She is very smart.

SB: What other childhood stars have you been close to?

MJ: Not a lot of them are left. That's what is scary. Most of them self-destruct.

SB: At age thirteen you became a character in a cartoon series. Was that hard to handle?

MJ: I woke up every Saturday morning. I couldn't wait.

SB: To watch *The Jacksons* ?

MJ: To watch *The Jackson 5* cartoon. I felt so honored that I had been made into a cartoon. I was so happy, you have no idea. We didn't have to do anything. It was someone else's voice. They just animated us and used our songs off the albums that we recorded and it played for



years and years. I remember I was in Brunei in a hospital doing a show for the Sultan. It was the most beautiful hospital I have ever seen in my life and I'm laying in bed and there's *The Jackson 5* cartoon playing on television and I'm like, I can't believe this. They show it all the time. The same company did *The Beatles* , *The Osmonds* , and *The Jackson 5* .

SB: So this is one of the things that you liked the most?

MJ: Oh, I loved it.

SB: Did that make you feel more connected with the children round the world? Because you know that children mostly are going to watch it right?

MJ: I loved it. It put me in another world. It was like, "God, I'm in another world." I felt special. I think I felt more special about that than the hit records and the concerts and everything. That impressed me more than any of the other stuff.

SB: Now, out of your five brothers you were getting more attention than any of them. You were becoming the star until you were spun off

as a solo artist. Was that hard for your brothers to handle? Was it hard for you? Was there any analogy to the story in the Bible about Joseph getting more attention than his brothers, until they hurt him?

MJ: It didn't come into my mind and I didn't see it until later and then it showed up later. My mother saw it, but she wouldn't bring it to my attention. But I think the wives kind of instigated it. It is what broke us up as a group. Wives are what broke up the Beatles. It is what broke up Martin and Lewis. It's what broke up all of the great acts. The wives get involved and they start saying to one member, "You're the star. He needs you. You don't need him." Then he comes into work the next day puffed up with pride and they start to fight. And that's what happened with me and my brothers. They really did. I saw it happen.

SB: That's what turned you off marriage a bit?

MJ: It really did. I said, "I don't want no part of this." I said, "I am not getting married." I said it for years.

SB: Was there any way to have stopped it? Could you have said to your brothers, "Look! What is happening to us?" Could you have stopped it? They married young. They must have been lonely as well.

MJ: They married young to get away from my father, to get out of the house. We begged them not to get married and they did.

SB: Why did you stick around the house?

MJ: I was there at the height of *Thriller*. I thought I was still this little kid. It's not time for me to go yet. I'm still a boy. It's not time for me to leave home yet. I really felt that in my heart.

SB: But you were still afraid of your father? How does that come together?

MJ: He wasn't managing me at that time, but he was getting a royalty check. He was a little calmer and he was proud of me. But he wouldn't say it.

SB: Did you want to hear it from him?

MJ: I needed it.

SB: More than anyone in the world?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: He still never said it. And he doesn't say it now? Do you think that he knows that you are the biggest star in the world, or do you still think in his mind he doesn't get it?

MJ: He knows that but he finds it hard to give

you a compliment and that's what made me into such a perfectionist trying to impress him. He'd be in the audience and he would make a face like this. He'd go [makes facial gesture] and it would scare the bejesus out of you and you'd think, "I can't mess up. He'll kill us." Everybody would clap and he would be like, "We're going to hit you hard. Don't you mess up." I'd be like, "God, I'm in trouble after the show."

SB: Given that there are two motivating forces in life, fear and love, could you have gotten even further if the motivation had been love? Like if your father had said, "Michael, I'll love you anyway, but you can do it." Sure, you can now decry the fear that your father instilled in you. But the problem with that is, you became the biggest star in the world. So maybe fear is a better motivating force than love. To be sure, I don't believe that. But does your example show that that's true?

MJ: I think there is a balance. Is it worth giving up fatherhood? Is it worth giving up the love I could have bestowed upon him, and having that camaraderie when we look in each other's eyes,

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walking through the park, holding hands? I don't think it is worth giving up all that. I am sorry. That's golden.

SB: If your career now suffers for being a hands-on father, you are prepared to accept that price?

MJ: No, I am not prepared for that. I can do both. I feel I have to.

SB: You feel that God gave you this potential, this gift, and you have got to do something with it?

MJ: I have to.

Michael Jackson: He did a brilliant job with training me for the stage as an artist, but [as a] father he was very, very strict. I hate to judge him, but I would have done things a lot different as a father. I never felt love from him. I remember being on the airplane and they used to have to carry me on the plane because I hated turbulence and I would be screaming and kicking because we would take off in storms. I remember it very clearly. He would never hold me or touch me and the stewardesses would have to come and hold my hand and caress me.

SB: Was he an angry man?

MJ: I think he was bitter. I don't know why. Man, he is not like that anymore, but he was tough. The toughest person I have ever met. SB: What if someone said to you, "Look Michael. You can't have it both ways. He was a great manager but not a warm and affectionate parent. He taught you how to move and he taught you discipline." Are you going to say that you would be prepared to give up being the biggest recording star in order to have had a loving childhood? Or do you feel the choice is



not necessary, that you could have been who you are without?

MJ: He could have done all the other things with me and had time to be a father sometime—play a game or catch a ball. I remember I told you the one time he put me on a pony. I don't think he even realized how that is marked in my brain forever.

SB: That was one of the most moving stories about fatherhood that I have heard. That a single gesture on the part of a father to a son could make such an indelible mark is astonishing and very moving.

MJ: I think about it today and I wish he had done a little more, just a little more. To this day I would have felt totally different about it.

SB: And maybe you wouldn't have been as eager to prove yourself. If you were shown a lot of love as a child, maybe you wouldn't need the world to love you and you wouldn't be the superstar. Would you be prepared to give it up in order to be more loved as a child?

MJ: No. I would never give it up. That's my job. I was given this for a reason. I really believe it

and feel it. . .

SB: . . . that God has chosen you, given you this special. . .

MJ: I really believe that. If you could see some of the faces around the world and people say, “Thank you, thank you for saving the life of me and my children. Can I touch you?” and then they start crying. It’s like healing. We are given this for a reason. . . to help people.

SB: So what Shirley Temple did for you with those posters [that you could put up in your hotel rooms to feel safe], you are doing for people around the world and to a much bigger extent.

MJ: Oh yeaaah. Oh yeaaah. That’s it and I just wanted to say, “Thank you” [to Shirley Temple Black for inspiring Michael in his low moments] and I started to cry so badly that I just couldn’t get the words out and she touched my hand and rubbed it like that.

SB: Michael, when you say to her that you didn't know if you could continue, and then you had a look at the posters of her movies when she was a kid, what was going to defeat you? What was it? The mean-spiritedness that people were showing? The fact that you always had to work to keep up to be the best? All those things?

MJ: Working hard, not having a chance to stop and play and have a lot of fun. We got a little bit in the hotels with pillow fights between me and my brothers and stuff like that and throwing stuff out of the window. But really we had hurt a lot. I remember we were on our way to South America and I was at home and it was time to go and I started crying so bad that I hid. I did not want to go and I said, "I just want to be like everyone else. I just want to be normal." And my father found me and made me get in the car and go, because we had to do a [concert] date. Then you meet people on the road, somebody on your floor, could be a family, and you know that you have to have as much fun as you can in a short time because you are not going to see

them again and that hurts. You know that the friendship won't be a long one. That kind of stuff really hurts bad, especially when you are a little kid.

SB: Your whole life you have had to put your career before your nurturing relationships. So do you have something nurturing in your life today? A car can't run without gas, and you can't continue without love being given to you. You can't just give love and never get it back. And to say you get it from the fans is not enough, Michael, because they love you for what you do and not for who you are. They love you for the electricity and excitement you bring into their lives.

MJ: I get it back through the happiness and the joy that I see in the eyes of the children. They saved my life so I want to. . . give it back [Michael starts crying]. They saved me. I am not joking. Just being with them, just seeing them. It really has.

SB: When you grew up, did you feel promises were broken to you? MJ: My father broke a big one that I'm angry with to this very day.

He cajoled me into signing a contract with Columbia when I was eighteen with the promise that I'd get to have dinner with Fred Astaire.

MJ: My father knew that I loved Fred with all my heart. He knew I would sign without reading the contract, and he walked away happy and he never did anything about it. He'd say he was sorry or whatever. It broke my heart that he did that. He tricked me.

SB: Did you ever tell him how upset you were?

MJ: No. He doesn't know to this day how much he hurt me. That's why I won't make promises I can't keep.

## Michael's Appearance

Shmuley Boteach: You have to live a long happy life. But do you really think that one day you will decide to become a recluse and disappear?

Michael Jackson: Yeah.

SB: Live at Neverland and lock up the gates. Will that be it?

MJ: Yeah. I know I am.

SB: But why? Because you don't want people to see you growing old?

MJ: I can't deal with it. I love beautiful things too much and the beautiful things in nature and I want my messages to get out to the world, but I don't want to be seen now. . . like when my picture came up on the computer, it made me sick when I saw it.

SB: Why?

MJ: Because I am like a lizard. It is horrible. I never like it. I wish I could never be

photographed or seen and I push myself to go to the things that we go to. I really do.

He was referring to the public lectures I was having him do, like Oxford University in England and Carnegie Hall in New York.

SB: Michael, some people have written that your father used to say that you were ugly. Is that true?

MJ: Uh-huh. He used to make fun of. . . I remember we were on a plane one time, ready to take off, and I was going through an awkward puberty when your features start to change. And he went, "Ugh, you have a big nose. You didn't get it from me." He didn't realize how much that hurt me. It hurt me so bad, I wanted to die.

SB: Was that a hostile remark aimed at your mother, "You didn't get it from me?"

MJ: I don't know what he was trying to say.

SB: Do you think it is important to tell children they are beautiful?



MJ: Yes, but not to overdo it. You are beautiful inside. Do it that way. Prince looks in the mirror as he's combing his hair and he says, "I look good." I say, "You look okay."

SB: Don't you think your father instilled in you a belief that you are not handsome? So you tried to change your appearance a bit, and you are still not happy. So really you have to begin to love your appearance and yourself and all of that.

MJ: I know. I wish I could.

SB: We all have problems with our appearance. Look, I have this scraggly beard. When I do TV appearances, the people I work with always tell me to cut it, to trim it. But my religion doesn't let me cut my beard, and it gets long.

MJ: Would you like to cut your beard?

SB: Yes, to be honest I would. Not completely. Just trim it. But God and my religion are more important to me than looks and appearances.

MJ: You are not allowed to?

SB: Essentially, no. I roll it up here. A lot of rabbis cut their beards and some don't. . . .

MJ: When they cut theirs, is that against the rules?

SB: The rules are interpreted differently by different rabbis. The Bible says you can't use a knife on your face. So some people take that to mean, literally, a knife. So these are the people who cut their beard with an electric shaver but not with a razor, a naked blade. To others the meaning of the verse is any kind of sharp object that cuts the beard. But my wife, Debbie, says, "I didn't marry a man who is going to try and conform to society. I married a man I wanted to respect and you are a rabbi. Be proud of who you are."

MJ: She doesn't mind the beard?

SB: Not only doesn't she mind, she would be very upset if I cut it at all. She said to me just this morning, "If you really love and respect me you would never say that because it bothers me that you want to trim your looks to fit in more." My wife wants me to live always by my principles.

MJ: That's amazing.

SB: The other night, Thursday night, you looked

fantastic. [Michael had gotten all dressed up for Denise Rich's Angel Ball cancer fundraiser]. You were the best-looking guy there. So you don't like being photographed?

MJ: I wish I could never be photographed and I wish I could never be seen. Just for entertainment so I design the dance the way I want it to look, and the film the way I want it to look.

SB: Now you want to do movies?

MJ: I love movies, but I can control it, you see. I can't control how those pictures come out with the lighting and my expression at the time. *Arggh* .

SB: If a child said that to you, "I hate being photographed," what would you say to that child?

MJ: I would say, "You don't know how beautiful you are. It's your spirit that's. . ."

SB: So why are you prepared to say that to everybody except yourself?

MJ: I don't know. [He said this in a voice of confusion and resignation.]

SB: You see from your fans that tons of women are throwing themselves at you. So that must mean that you are handsome and desirable. You feel all the time that they want to fall in love with you?

MJ: When I think about it—I would never say this on TV—but if I went on stage thinking about what goes through women's heads, I would never go out on stage. If I was suddenly to start thinking about what they were thinking about. . . sex, or what I look like naked, then, oh God, that would be so embarrassing. I could never go out. That's so horrible.

SB: A lot of people like being a sex symbol. You don't like it because you are shy about it. Do you know when some women speak to you that

it's what's on their mind?

MJ: Umhum. They tell me.

SB: I want to have sex with you?

MJ: Aha.

## Michael's Fear of His Father

Shmuley Boteach: You know, Michael, I used to judge my father a lot and one day I stopped judging him because he had his own challenges. He has had a very difficult life that began in abject poverty in Iran. And it wasn't easy for Jews growing up in Iran. Who knows what his childhood was like? Do you still judge your father?

Michael Jackson: I used to. I used to get so angry at him. I would just go in my room and just scream out of anger because I didn't understand how a person could be so vicious and mean. Like sometimes I would be in bed sleeping, it would be 12 o'clock at night. I would have recorded all day, been singing all day, no fun, no play. He comes home late. "Open the door." The door is locked. He said, "I am going to give you five seconds before I kick it down." And he starts kicking it, breaking the door down. He said, "Why didn't you sign the contract?" I go, "I don't know." He goes, "Well,

sign it. If you don't sign it you are in trouble." It's like, "Oh my God, why? Where is the love? Where is the fatherhood?" I go, "Is it really this way?" He would throw you and hit you as hard as he can. He was very physical.

SB: Did you begin to feel that you were a moneymaking machine for him?

MJ: Yes, absolutely.

SB: Just like Macaulay Culkin described? So you felt used?

MJ: Yes. And one day—I hate to repeat it—but one day he said, and God bless my father because he did some wonderful things and he was brilliant, he was a genius, but one day he said, "If you guys ever stop singing I will drop you like a hot potato." It hurt me. You would think he would think, "These kids have a heart and feelings." Wouldn't he think that would hurt us? If I said something like that to Prince and Paris that would hurt. You don't say something like that to children and I never forgot it. It affects my relationship with him today.

SB: So that if you didn't perform for him he



would stop loving you? MJ: He would drop us like a hot potato. That's what he said.

SB: Did your mother always run over and say, "Don't listen to him. He doesn't mean it."?

MJ: She was always the one in the background when he would lose his temper—hitting us and beating us. I hear it now. [Adopts female voice.] "Joe, no, you are going to kill them. No! No, Joe, it's too much," and he would be breaking furniture and it was terrible. I always said if I ever have kids I will never behave like this way. I won't touch a hair on their heads. Because people always say the abused abuse and it is not true. It is not true. I am totally the opposite. The worst I do is I make them stand in the corner for a little bit and that's it and that's my time out for them.

SB: I think you are right. I hate when I hear things like that the abused abuse. It means that you are condemned to be a bad person.

MJ: It's not true. I always promised in my heart that I would never be this way, never. If—and it can be in a movie or in a department store—I hear someone arguing with their child, I break

down and cry. Because it reflects how I was treated when I was little. I break down at that moment and I shake and I cry. I can't take it. It is hard.

SB: When my parents divorced, we moved away and my father lived 3,500 miles away from us. And it was difficult to be close to him. But I love him, and I try never to judge him, and I have made a great effort to be much, much closer to him. We have to take seriously the Bible's commandment to always honor our parents. The Bible doesn't say, "Honor them if they've earned it." It simply commands us to honor them. Just by virtue of them having given us life they have earned it.

MJ: I am scared of my father to this day. My father walked in the room—and God knows I am telling the truth—I have fainted in his presence many times. I have fainted once to be honest. I have thrown up in his presence because when he comes in the room and this aura comes and my stomach starts hurting and I know I am in trouble. He is so different now. Time and age has changed him and he sees his

The Michael Jackson Tapes

grandchildren and he wants to be a better father. It is almost like the ship has sailed its course and it is so hard for me to accept this other guy that is not the guy I was raised with. I just wished he had learned that earlier.

SB: So why are you still scared?

MJ: Because the scar is still there, the wound.

SB: So you still see him as the first man. It is hard for you to see him as this new man?

MJ: I can't see him as the new man. I am like an angel in front of him, like scared. One day he said to me, "Why are you scared of me?" I couldn't answer him. I felt like saying, "Do you know what you have done?" [voice breaks] "Do you know what you have done to me?"

SB: It is so important for me to hear this. Because as your friend and as someone who is asked constantly about you, it is so important for me to understand these things. It is so important for the world to understand this. You see Michael, no one would have judged you as harshly if they had heard this. They would have made more of an effort to empathize with your own suffering rather than just condemning you.

Do you call him Dad or Joseph?

MJ: We weren't allowed to call him Dad when we were growing up. He said, "Don't call me Dad. I am Joseph." That's what he told us. But now he wants to be called Dad. It is hard for me. I can't call him Dad. He would make it a point: "Don't call me Dad. I am Joseph." I love when Prince and Paris call me "Daddy," or when you hear little Italian kids call "Papa," or Jewish kids call "Poppy." Sweet, how could you not be proud of that? That's your offspring.

SB: From what age did he tell you not to call him Dad?

MJ: From a little kid all the way up to *Off the Wall*, *Thriller*.

SB: He felt he was more professional that way?

MJ: No. He felt that he was this young stud. He was too cool to be Dad. He was Joseph. I would hate him to hear me say this. . . .

SB: I read somewhere that your mother was thinking of getting divorced and she filed or something.

MJ: I don't know if she filed, maybe. No, no,

she didn't file. She wanted to, many times, because of other women and because he was difficult. But in the name of religion she only can divorce on the grounds of fornication. And he has been in that area before and she knows it. But she is such a saint that she won't part with him. She knows he is out doing other things and fooling around and she is so good and he will come home and lay next to her in the bed. I don't know anyone like her. She is like a Mother Teresa. There are very few people like that.

SB: So she is a long-suffering, saintly kind of woman. Do you feel that she has suffered too long? That she shouldn't have put up with it?

MJ: We used to beg her to divorce him. We used to say, "Mother, divorce him." She used to say, "Leave me alone. No!" We used to say, "Get rid of him." We used to scream at her, "Divorce him" when we were little. But many years we'd hear the car coming down the drive. He always drove a big Mercedes and he drives real slow. "Joseph's home, Joseph's home, quick!" Everybody runs to their room, doors

slam.

SB: You were that scared of him?

MJ: Yeah. I always said, "When I come home and walk through the door I want the kids to go "Daddy," and jump all over me and that's what mine do. I want just the opposite. I don't want them to run.

## Protective of Janet

Shmuley Boteach: Let me just share one thought. You said your father would humiliate you when you were in concert and he would make you cry and push you out on stage in front of all the girls who loved you. . . to do what? To show his power over you?

Michael Jackson: Well, um, no. He wouldn't do it on the stage. Like, after a show, there'd be the room full of girls. He would love to bring the girls in the room, my father. And after the show we'd have something to eat, or whatever, and the room would be just lined with girls giggling, just loving us, like "oh my god!" and shaking. And if I was talking and something happened and he didn't like it, he'd get this look in his eye like. . . he'd get this look in his eye that would just scare you to death. He slapped me so hard in the face, as hard as he could, and then he'd thrust me out into the big room, where they are, tears running down my face, and what are you supposed to do, you



know?

SB: And how old were you now? [Prince in the background, "We're three!". . . laughing]

MJ: Uh, no more than like, twelve. . . eleven, something around there.

SB: So these were the first moments that you felt shame in your life? Really humiliated?

MJ: No, there were other ones. He did some rough, cruel. . . cruel. . . I don't know why. He was rough. The way he would beat you was hard, you know? He would make you strip nude first. He would oil you down. It would be a whole ritual. He would oil you down so when the tip of the ironing cord hit you [makes noise mimicking], you know . . . and it would just be like dying and you had whips all over your face, your back, everywhere. And I always heard my mother like, "No, Joe! You're gonna kill 'em. You're gonna kill 'em, no!" And I would just give up, like there was nothing I could do. And I hated him for it, hated him. We all did. We used to say to our mother, we used to say to each other, and I'll never forget this. Janet and myself, we used to say. . . I used to say, "Janet,

shut your eyes.” She’d go, “Okay, they’re shut.” And I’d say, “Picture Joseph in a coffin. He’s dead. Did you feel sorry?” She’d go, “No.” Just like that. That’s what we used to do to each other as kids. We would like play games like that. And that’s how hateful we were. I’d go, “He’s in the coffin, he’s dead. Would you feel sorry?” She’d go, “Nope,” just like that. That’s how angry we were with him. And I love him today, but he was hard, Shmuley. He was rough.

SB: But did you know that that was part of being corrupted as a child when you start feeling that way—hatred? Did you know, “I gotta get rid of this somehow. I gotta do something about this”?

MJ: Yeah, I wanted to become such a wonderful performer that I would get love back.

SB: So you could change him, you thought. If you. . . so you thought that if you became a great star, very successful, and were loved by the world, and were very successful, your father would love you too.

MJ: Aha.

SB: So you could change him that way.

MJ: Aha. I was hoping I could and I was hoping I could get love from other people, 'cause I needed it real bad, you know? You need love, you need love. That's the most important thing. That's why I feel so bad for those kids who sit in those orphanages and hospitals and they're all alone and they tie them to the beds—they tie them because they don't have enough staff. I go, "Are you crazy?" And I go to each bed just freeing them, releasing them. I say, "This isn't a way to do children. You don't tie them down." Or they have them chained to the walls in some places, like in Romania. And they have them sleep in their own feces and their tinkle.

SB: Do you identify more with people like that 'cause you're also that sensitive?

MJ: Yeah, I always hold Mushki [my eldest daughter who was about 12 at the time] the most 'cause I feel her pain. She's in so much pain. When Janet went through her fat stage she cried a lot, my sister Janet. She decided to just lose it all, "I'm gonna lose this," and she did it. She used to be very unhappy.

SB: Are you very protective of her as a younger

sister?

MJ: Yeah, I was determined to make her lose weight. I was bad. I would tease her to make her lose it. I didn't like it on her. I didn't like it because I knew she would have a hard time.

SB: How did you get her to do something about it?

MJ: I said you have to lose weight 'cause you look like a fat cow. I would tell her and that was mean of me to say that. She would say, "Shut up," and I'd say "You shut up." But I was determined to make my sister look good because deep in my heart I love her and I want to make her shine and when she became a star on, you know. . . records, I was so happy and proud because, you know, she did it.

SB: Are you still protective of her as a younger sister?

MJ: Yes, yes. . . . I just wish that we were closer. We're close in spirit but not as family. Because we don't celebrate, we have no reason to come together now. I wish that was instilled in us. I love what I saw you guys do, that blessing thing that touches my heart a lot. I see why you're so

close to them, it's sweet.

On Friday nights, as the Jewish Sabbath comes in, my wife and I bless our children, one by one, to grow to be like the great figures of the Bible, the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Jewish people. Michael witnessed this several times as a guest at the Sabbath table at our home. He would always watch intently as we blessed our children.

## A Painful Blessing: All I Wanted Was to Be Loved

Shmuley Boteach: Has God always answered your prayers? Michael Jackson: Usually. Absolutely. That's why I believe in it.

SB: Do you feel that he has been with you through some of the difficult things in life?

MJ: There hasn't been one thing that I have asked for that I didn't get. It is not materialistic. I am going to say something I have never said before and this is the truth. I have no reason to lie to you and God knows I am telling the truth. I think all my success and fame, and I have wanted it, I have wanted it because I wanted to be loved. That's all. That's the real truth. I wanted people to love me, truly love me, because I never really felt loved. I said I know I have an ability. Maybe if I sharpened my craft, maybe people will love me more. I just wanted to be loved because I think it is very important to be loved and to tell people that you love them and to look in their eyes and say it.

SB: But the flip side of that, Michael, is that if you were given a huge amount of love as a child, then you might not have worked as hard to be successful.

MJ: That's true. That's why I wouldn't want to change anything because it has all worked out in its many different ways.

SB: So you were able to turn the neglect into a blessing?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: I remember a quote from Paul McCartney, who was asked about you when you became a big star. Someone said, "Michael Jackson, is he going to be like these other rock stars—God forbid, dead at thirty and drugs?" And



McCartney said, "No. Michael, his whole character is different. He doesn't swear, he doesn't drink." He said this about fifteen years ago. Did you know that about yourself, that you had a character that, if it continued like that, wasn't going to be destroyed by fame and success?

MJ: Yeah. I have always been kinda determined. I have always had a vision of things I have wanted to do and goals I have wanted to reach and nothing could stop me getting that. I am focused and I know what I want and what I want to achieve and I won't get side-tracked. And even though I get down sometimes, I keep running the race of endurance to achieve those goals. It keeps me on track. I am dedicated.

SB: If you are completely happy with who you are, what about. . . you said you wouldn't have done anything differently because you know that

whatever experiences you had in your childhood led to who you are today, your success. So you wouldn't do anything differently?

MJ: No. I am so sensitive to other kids because of my past and I am so happy about that.

## Rose Fine: Michael's Childhood Tutor

Michael and I were discussing Rose Fine, his childhood tutor who accompanied The Jackson 5 while they toured. Michael remained attached to her well after he had grown up and assisted in her financial support for the rest of her life. The conversation starts with me and Michael talking about air travel.

Michael Jackson: It left a terrible scar on me.

Shmuley Boteach: What?

MJ: Turbulence and being up there and thinking you are not going to live.

SB: Remember that story you told me about your Jewish tutor?

MJ: Rose Fine?

SB: You told me once on the phone that she used to say to you that if there was a nun on the plane that everyone was going to die.

MJ: She said, "We're okay, we're sitting on the plane and now we have so much faith. I have checked. . . there isn't a nun on the plane." I always believe that.

SB: Do you still look out for that nun?

MJ: I think about it! I never see a nun on the plane. She [Rose Fine] helped me a lot because she held my hand and cuddled me. After the show I would run to the room. We'd read and have warm milk and I needed that so badly. She would always say to me, "The door's open," and she would leave her door open.

SB: Is it possible if someone is not a biological parent to love a child as much as you love your own child? Do you love children as much as you love Prince and Paris?

MJ: Absolutely.

SB: I have always noticed one of the most impressive things about you is when I say something like, "Prince and Paris are beautiful," you always say, "No. All children are beautiful." You won't let me get away with just praising Prince and Paris.

MJ: They are to me. I see beauty in all children. . . they are all beautiful to me. It is so beautiful and I love them all—equally. I used to have arguments about it with people who didn't agree with me. They say you should love your own

more.

SB: Rose Fine, although she wasn't your biological mother, was able to show you a lot of motherly affection?

MJ: And boy did I need it. I was never with my mother when I was little, very seldom, and I had a wonderful mother. I see her as an angel, and I was always gone, always on tour doing back-to-back concerts, all over America, overseas, clubs, just always gone. That helped me a lot. We took care of her [Rose Fine] until the day she died, Janet and myself. She just died recently.

SB: Do you think she should be mentioned in the context of our children's initiative?

MJ: Please do. She needs to be remembered.

SB: How old was she?

MJ: She would never tell me her age. I think she was in her nineties.

She used to say, "When I retire from you I will tell you my age." But when she retired she still wouldn't tell me. She was with us all the way from the very first professional tour of The Jackson 5 until I was eighteen. The first tour

was after we broke big—the first hit single. She would always have the power, like some of the concerts would start late and she would always have the power to stop the show because the Board of Education would say, “You kids cannot go past your time legally.” She would always let it go on. She couldn’t hurt the audience.

SB: And then she would teach you during the day?

MJ: Aha.

SB: Regular subjects? Mathematics? English? She taught all five of you together?

MJ: Yes together, three hours. She taught Janet, all of them.

SB: Tell me a bit more about her.

MJ: Yes, Rose died this year. Janet and myself, we paid for her nurse and her hospital care, and if her television broke down or the electricity, or there was anything wrong with the house, we would cover her bills. Now her husband is sick so I am taking care of him, and because we felt she is our mother and you take care of your

mother.

SB: You really felt that?

MJ: Absolutely. She was more than a tutor and I was so angry at myself that when she died I was far, far away. I couldn't get there. I was in Switzerland and Evvy [Michael's secretary] called me on the phone and told me that she was dead. I went, "What? I am in Switzerland. I can't. . . ." It made me angry, but I did all I could.

It also hurt when I came to the door to see her and I went, "Mrs. Fine, it's Michael," and she would go, "You're not Michael." I would say, "It's Michael," and she would say, "Don't say you are Michael. You are not Michael." That kinda sets into the brain and they don't recognize you. That hurts so much. Growing old is not always pretty. It is sad.

SB: How would a child deal with something like that? You have tried to retain your youth, your playfulness, all the things that we talk about. Do you see it as a curse, growing old?

MJ: In a way, when the body starts to break down. But when old people return to childhood,



I have seen them, they become very playful and childlike. I relate very well to old people because they have those qualities of a child. Whenever I go to a hospital I always find a way to sneak into another room to talk to the old people. I just did it two days ago because I was in the hospital and they were so sweet and they just welcome you like a child does. They say, "Come in," and we talk. They are simple and sweet.

SB: So life is almost like a circle. You start as a child and then you go through this adult phase, which isn't always healthy. There are a lot of negative things about it, and you come back, in elderly age, to that innocence, you become a lot more playful. You have a lot more time the way children have. I guess that's why grandparents get along so well with their grandchildren.

MJ: Old people and children are very much alike. They are carefree and play—free and simple and sweet. It is just a spiritual feeling. I don't visit the old people's homes as much as I have the orphanages. A lot of them get Alzheimer's and they don't recognize. But I

have a great relationship with older people. I love talking to older people and they can tell you stories about when they were kids and how the world was in those days and I love that. There was an old Jewish man in New York a long time ago who said to me, "Always be thankful for your talent and always give to poor people. Help other people. When I was a little boy my father said to me, 'We are going to take these clothes and these pieces of bread and we are going to wrap them up and you run down the street and up the stairs and knock on the people's door and place it in front of the door and run!' I said, 'Why did you tell us to run?' He said, "Because when they open the door I don't want them to feel the shame. They have pride. That is real charity." I have never forgotten that [story of the old man]. That's sweet, isn't it? And he did that as a little boy all the time.

SB: So have you tried to do charitable acts that no one knows about?

MJ: Yes, without waving a flag. He [the man Michael is quoting above] is saying real charity

is giving from the heart without taking credit, and when he ran they didn't know who had left it. It was like God had dropped it there, you know? It was so beautiful. I never forgot that story. I was around eleven when I was told that. He was old, really sweet, a Jewish man, I remember.

In the Jewish religion the highest form of charity is when the benefactor does not know the identity of the recipient, and the recipient does not know the identity of the benefactor. Hence, the Jewish custom of putting money every day into a charity box at home or into a publicly administered fund that is later distributed to the poor.

SB: Was she [Rose Fine] a committed Jew? Was she observant of her faith? Or was she more of a secular Jew?

MJ: What does that mean?

SB: Did she refrain from traveling on the Sabbath, did she eat only kosher food, things like that?

MJ: Not that I remember. She taught me a lot about the Jewish way. I don't know if she ate the kosher food, but I always felt so bad for her

because her son suffered so badly. He was a doctor who died early and the day he died, I remember how deeply dark and sad she was. He was a wonderful doctor, went to Harvard, and he was tall and handsome. He had some kind of brain tumor. I can't imagine losing your own child like that, let alone losing any child.

SB: Did you find out anything about Judaism from Rose Fine?

MJ: She taught me about the Jewish culture and I will never forget when I was a little kid we landed in Germany, she got real quiet. I said, "What's wrong, Miss Fine?" You know how kids can tell when something is wrong with their mother? She said, "I don't like it." I said, "Why?" She said, "A lot of people suffered here." That's when I first learned about the concentration camps, through her, because I didn't know nothing about it. I'll never forget that feeling. She said she felt cold there, she could feel it. What a sweet person. She taught me the wonderful world of books and reading and I wouldn't be the same person if it wasn't for her. I owe a lot to her and that's why I am

dedicating the new album to her.

SB: Do you think she saw you as her son?

MJ: She called me her son. Whenever you go on the plane you see these seven little black kids and a black father, all got big Afros, and this white Jewish older woman would be in the back. They would stop her and go, "Who are you?" She would say, "I'm the mother." She would say it every time and they would let her go. Sweet story. She was special. I needed her.

SB: Did she show you unconditional love?

MJ: Yes.

SB: So you think unconditional love can be shown even by two people who are not related by blood?

MJ: Oh my God, yes, of course. I think I learned it through her and I have seen it and I have experienced it. It doesn't matter with blood or race or creed or color. Love is love and it breaks all boundaries and you just see it right away. I see it in children's eyes. When I see children, I see helpless little puppies. They are so sweet. How could anybody hurt them? They

are so wonderful.

SB: She died this year so that means you have to deal with grief. How does a child deal with grief? A child lives in a paradise, a perfect world that we are trying to describe. Adults are later largely corrupted through their wars and their jealousy and their cynicism, and suddenly along comes death and even a child has to deal with a death. So how do you deal with death? And how does a child deal with death?

MJ: Yes, I have had to deal with death and it is very difficult.

## PART 2

### JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES YEARS AND RELIGION

Shmuley Boteach: Do you think a hatred of pride is still a relic of your religious upbringing?

Michael Jackson: It hurt me a lot and it helped me a lot.

SB: How did it hurt you?

MJ: Er [long silence]. When I did certain things in the past that I didn't realize were against the religion and I was reprimanded for it, it almost destroyed me. Certain things that I did as an artist in my music I didn't realize I was crossing a line with them and when they chastised me, it really hurt me. It almost destroyed it. My mother saw it.

SB: Their disapproval, their rejection?

MJ: When I did the Moonwalk for the first time, *Motown 25*, they told me I was doing burlesque dancing and it was dirty and I went for months and they said, "You can never dance like that again." I said 90.9 percent of dancing is



moving the waist. They said, "We don't want you to do it." So I went around trying to dance for a long time without moving this part of my body. Then when I made "Thriller" with all the ghouls and ghosts, they said that it was demonic and part of the occult and that Brother Jackson can't do it. I called my lawyer and was crying and I said, "Destroy the video, have it destroyed." And because he went against my wishes people have "Thriller" today. They made me feel so bad about it that I ordered my people to destroy it.

SB: So you have seen two sides of religion, the loving side that teaches you not to like pride and humility, but you have also seen what you would describe as mean-spiritedness and judgmentalism.

MJ: Because they can discriminate sometimes in the wrong way. I don't think God meant it in

that way. Like Halloween, I missed out on Halloween for years and now I do it. It's sweet to go door-to-door and people give you candy. We need more of that in the world. It brings the world together.

SB: Do you take Prince and Paris trick-or-treating?

MJ: Absolutely, we have a family that we go with in the area and we give them the candy. I want them to see that people can be kind. We get it in a bag and then [whispering] *I exchange their candy for candy eyeballs* .

SB: I was speaking to Andrew Sullivan late last night, the journalist who was the editor of *The New Republic* . We had a debate together on homosexuality at a university and afterward we were talking about you and he was surprised to hear nice things about you and he said, "So why don't I know any of this?" I said, "I don't know." Insights like that, Michael, "the essence of Halloween." You should do press releases about things like that. "The essence of Halloween is for children to witness the kindness of strangers." I like that. It's a nice

thought. It elevates trick-or-treating into something more meaningful than sponging candy.

MJ: I cry behind my mask. I really do when I go with them and people say, "Open your bag," and I think, look what I have been missing. I didn't know that this.... I look at their face and they are giving you a gift. It's sweet. The kids come and they open their bags and then they go, "Oh look at this little one," and it is just sweet the way they respond. I think that's very kind. That part of America I am proud of.

## Did Michael See Himself as God's Chosen? Did He Have Special Healing Powers?

Shmuley Boteach: Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." He had all these amazing quotes about children and most saintly figures are seen around children. Do you identify with people like that? Do you feel that God has given you more than just a talent for music?

Michael Jackson: Yes, absolutely.

SB: . . . Wait. I think you do have something special to do here on this earth. Every human being does. And we can't ignore the fact that you have a level of renown rarely seen before. And we have to channel that celebrity in the proper way. That's when you become a teacher, Michael, not just an entertainer, you have to identify what it is, what positive message, you wish to impart to mankind. That's when your celebrity becomes redemptive. In fact, I think the word *entertainer* for you is a bit insulting. You are not an entertainer and you should

always strive to be much more than merely an entertainer. As you said to me many times, no one would do the things you do if you were just an entertainer. Eddie Murphy is an entertainer. He is great. He is funny. But no one camps outside his home. You know what I mean. So that's something very powerful and you have to determine what it is you want to achieve with that, to what healthy and Godly use can you put it? And it can't be about you. It has to be about something much larger than you—a goal that is lofty and goes way beyond entertainment. Do you see yourself in that guise? Do you feel that God gave you a certain healing power?

MJ: Yes.

SB: So when you speak to Gavin you are healing him, not just speaking to him?

MJ: I *know* I am healing him, and I have seen children just shower me with love. And they want to just touch me and hug me and hold on and cry and not let go. They don't even know me. You'll see sometime when you hang out, or we'll be in an open place, and mothers pick up their babies and put them into my arms. "Touch

my baby, touch my baby, hold them.” It is not hero worship, like religions try to say, like idol worship.

SB: It is *not* idol worship? Why, because they’re not worshipping you? Because they’re getting to feel better about themselves? By being closer to you they feel lighter than air, they feel like they can almost walk on water themselves. Why isn’t it worship?

MJ: Yes, because my religion taught us that you are not supposed to do that. If I had gone to my church they would have *never* treated me the way your church treated me.

When I took Michael to a synagogue for the Sabbath, the people greeted him very enthusiastically. In the Jehovah’s Witnesses Church, they made a point of never treating Michael any differently than the other worshippers. In the case of the synagogue, we purposely did not tell the congregants he was coming, as we wanted his visit to be low-key and I wanted Michael to experience the beauty and serenity of the Sabbath unencumbered by the noise of celebrity. But when people saw him, they rushed to welcome him and shake his hand.

MJ: They would have been kind after the

ceremony. “Hi Brother Jackson. Are you okay?” But hugging and, “Oh, oh, we love you,” they would never. They would feel that it was idol worship and you are not supposed to do that. It is wrong, that it is taking it too far. There is nothing wrong with saying, “Thank you, we love you so much. . . .”



## Connecting to the Divine

Shmuley Boteach: Do you have fun when you perform and do your music?

Michael Jackson: Yes. I love it. If it wasn't fun I wouldn't do it. I do it because I truly love it. There is no greater bliss than dancing and performing. It is like a celebration and when you are caught up in that place, where certain performers go when they become one with the music, one with the audience, if you are on that level it is like being in a trance, it just takes over. You start to play off each other and start to know where you are going before you get there. They have got to know where you are taking it and respond. It's like playing ping-pong. It's like when the birds go [migrate] and they all know when they are going. Or like fish. They are telepathic, they are on the same line. That's what happens when you perform, you are at one with the musicians and the dance and the music and you are in this trance. And man, you have got 'em. They are in the palm of your

hand. It's unbelievable. You feel you are transformed.

SB: What is that energy which takes you there? Is it divine?

MJ: It is divine, it is pure, it is revelation, without making it sound spiritual or religious, but it is a divine energy. Some people call it the spirit, like when a spirit comes into the room. Some people look down on it. Religions sometimes look down on it because they try to say it's demonic, it's the cult, it's the devil. It isn't; it is God-like. It is pure God-like energy. You feel God's light.

MJ: When I perform certain performances, like *Motown 25*, or when I did *Billie Jean* and the Moonwalk for the first time on the stage, and the audience, I'd do a little step and they would scream and you'd flicker your hand and. . . "Agggggghhhh," whatever you do. I am like caught in a trance with it all. I am like feeling it but I don't hear it. I'm playing everything off feeling. At the end of the piece when I am done and you open your eyes and see the response, you are surprised because you were in another world. I was at one with the moment, working moment, right in the moment.

SB: So you weren't doing it to conform to anybody. Maybe that's your power as a performer. It was never about what people wanted, about conditioning, about accommodating what other people wanted.

MJ: No.

SB: Can you teach people how to get there? If there was any bitterness or hatred in your heart in moments like that, if they are, as you say, divine, do you find it just empties out?

MJ: It just empties out. You are above it all.

That's why I love it because you are going to a place where [there is] nothing nobody can do. It's gone, the point of no return. It's so wonderful. You have taken off. You can feel it, and that doesn't mean. . . and everybody else who's up there with you play off of that, the audience play off of that. . . .

## Michael's Relationship with Religion

Shmuley Boteach: Michael, I saw in some article that you once compared the pressures on Jesus to those on a modern celebrity. Do you remember that?

Michael Jackson: No, I don't. When was it?

SB: I don't know. Could have been made up. Do you have a relationship with Jesus?

MJ: Jesus, yes. Absolutely. But you [addressing me] believe in Jesus, don't you?

SB: No, not in his Messiahship or divinity.

MJ: You don't believe that he existed?

SB: Oh, we believe that he existed. We believe he was a good man, a devout Jew, a great moral teacher. But we don't believe that he was the son of God or that he was the Messiah. I did a

Larry King show just recently with one of Billy Graham's daughters about this.

Do you feel an affinity with Jesus as a personality? Do you feel that he was a *Kidult*, because he is portrayed as a very gentle creature who had a beautiful moral message, and was soft and vulnerable on the outside? Was he like the stereotype of someone with a child at his center?

MJ: Yes, absolutely.

SB: And that's why he loved being around children?

MJ: I think if I sat in a room with him I would follow him everywhere he went, feel his presence. I would behave just like a child, like Gandhi.

SB: Can you see him laughing?

MJ: Yes, and Gandhi when he is giggling like a kid. . . it is so sweet.

This man came out of nowhere and he led the whole nation. He held no political rank, no government rank. I think that is real power. That's incredible. That was a

phenomenon—Gandhi. It's amazing, that was a phenomenal movie, did you see the movie? [I confirm that I did.]

SB: What biblical stories do you find inspiring?

MJ: I love the Sermon on the Mount. I love the story when the Apostles are arguing amongst themselves about who is the greatest and Jesus says, "Unless you humble yourself like this little child, be childlike. . . ." I thought that was the perfect thing to say. Return to innocence.

SB: Did anyone tell you that it appeared to them that you were trying to create a Garden of Eden here [the conversation was at Neverland], your own vision of a perfect paradise, a refuge from what you saw was the adult insanity of the world?

MJ: You were the first one.

SB: Does the story of Adam and Eve have any special meaning for you?

MJ: Of course. Of course.

SB: Did you see the childlike qualities in them straight away?

MJ: Yes, I wish I could have seen it. Was it



symbolism? Is it real? Did it happen? I'm confused sometimes that there is a loophole. I had questions that sometimes even the elders [of the Jehovah's Witnesses Church] couldn't answer.

SB: Did you ask them lots of questions about the Bible?

MJ: Oh yeah. I'm the kind of guy who used to grab the microphone and say, "Well, what about this and what about that?" They would say, "Brother Jackson, we will talk to you later." They would come up with this other funny kinda answer that wouldn't drive the point home.

SB: Adam and Eve are two perfect beings who were like children. They are created as adults, but their situation is unique because they are also children. They have just been born, just been created. So their perfection lay in how they are adults and children at the same time. They represent the amalgamation of the virtues of both. So this is a central story to what we're trying to develop, of people being adults on the outside, but always retaining their childlike qualities on the inside. So was this always a

story that meant something to you?

MJ: But [what doesn't make sense to me is that God] tested them [with the forbidden fruit]. And if you are God you should know the outcome. And if you are God, why test if you create a perfect being that should not be able to do any wrong? And why judge and thrust such anger on them and run them away and tempt them with a snake? Would a God do such a thing? Would I do that to your children? No I wouldn't. I am not here trying to judge God or criticize him in any way. But sometimes I think it is a symbolism to teach us certain lessons. I don't know if it really happened. I wouldn't take your little baby or any of them and have something see if they would do right or wrong. And then to have the two kids [Cain and Abel]. . . was it incest? And they were two boys, how did they have children? And all of those things that they couldn't answer for me.

SB: These are the questions you were asking the elders?

MJ: Uhuh.

## Religion and Finding God in Rituals

Shmuley Boteach: I always say that the main purpose of religion is to teach you in your twenties what you only find out in your seventies. Otherwise religion is not principally designed to offer cosmic secrets. It's straightforward and its profundity is found specifically in its simplicity: Be a good person, spend time with your kids, love God. You know all that at eighty, but you should know it in your teens and twenties, so you don't squander your life.

Michael Jackson: Right, I see it, I see it. That's what we're all talking about.

SB: You're one of the few people who seems to be religious without practicing, meaning, you have a very deep-seated sense of spirituality, but you don't undertake many religious rituals. You'll tell me things like, "Although I once believed God is in a church, I now believe that God is everywhere, he's in my heart. . . I now find God in those moments I spend with my

children, I find God in the innocent.”

MJ: Yeah it's true, it's true.

SB: See, you're very religious, but it's important to also connect with God through rituals. It's like [my wife] Debbie. Debbie's more spiritual than I am naturally. She just feels God more than I do. I need to do things to feel him often. I'm not the pure soul that she is. I am very different.

MJ: So you guys don't go to the. . . uh. . .

SB: We go to synagogue every week, yeah.

MJ: Every week?

SB: Absolutely.

MJ: What day?

SB: Friday nights and Saturday.

MJ: You do?

SB: Yeah, of course. Remember that service we had at my house?

MJ: And do all your children go?

SB: Yes, of course.

MJ: And how long do you stay?

SB: Friday nights, it's about an hour. Then about three hours on Saturday mornings. Then Saturday afternoon it's another hour.

MJ: And the children stay for three hours? And they do well? SB: Yep.

MJ: That's why they're so well behaved.

SB: They're very good about that. They're very good. And once a month I don't go to synagogue and I stay home with them and practice their prayers so they know what to say in synagogue.

MJ: So you have these prayers?

SB: We do services at home once a month.

MJ: They must be some beautiful prayers.

SB: Oh they're beautiful, yeah.

MJ: I know they must be very beautiful.

SB: They're very simple. Jewish prayers are not

about big things; they're about little things. The prayers condition us to find God in the minutiae of everyday life. He is all around us.

MJ: But they're beautiful aren't they?

SB: They're about thanking God for the rain, about thanking God for the cooling wind. They're about thanking God for all the miracles he gives the Jews in history.

MJ: Wow.

SB: The Jews have been around for a long time. He's looked after us. We're an ancient people.

MJ: Wow, and Mushki and everybody go? Baba? [Baba, our nickname for our daughter Rochel Leah, was three at the time.]

SB: Baba goes too. Baba doesn't go three times on the Sabbath, she goes once Saturday morning with Debbie. 'Cause Debbie's pregnant now, although she sometimes goes three times, now she just goes in the morning. You know, we walk, we don't use a car. We don't drive on the Sabbath at all.

MJ: How far do you walk?

SB: It's not that far. About a half a mile. It's not

that far.

MJ: All the kids walk?

SB: All of them.

MJ: Really?

SB: In Oxford [where I served as rabbi for eleven years], it was very far. In Oxford we walked three miles each way.

MJ: You and the children?

SB: It was always raining. It was always raining.

MJ: Shmuley, you guys walked three miles?

SB: Three miles.

MJ: And they didn't complain?

SB: No. Sometimes they complained if we'd come back very late 'cause we used to eat with the students for the Friday night Sabbath meals, and often we'd walk home well after midnight.

MJ: I love your family.



## Karma and Justice

Shmuley Boteach: I really like the fact that at Neverland the Security are called Safety... it's on their badges, uniforms, and hats.

Michael Jackson: I don't know.

SB: The fact that is says "Safety" rather than "Security," it's like, "We are not here to keep the world out, but simply to ensure the safety of everyone who is visiting here." It's less intimidating and more humane.

Children have a really strong sense of justice. The most common thing I hear from my kids is, "That's not fair." You just said that these people who did this thing at your performance got away with it. On the one hand children have this very strong sense of justice, and on the other hand we see how mean people get away with things and no one stops them.

MJ: It happens all the time. I think justice is important because there are many injustices in the world and I hate injustice. "I am tired of

injustice” is the opening to one of my songs on my last album, called *Scream* . That’s the first line I say. There’s a line where Janet [Jackson] says, “Oh my God I can’t believe what I saw on the TV this evening. I was disgusted by all the injustice,” because I wanted people to know about that and people get away with it and I don’t believe in karma. I think that is a bunch of crap, because so many mean-spirited, evil people are on top of the world and doing well and people love them, no matter how evil they are.

SB: I love it when you make strong statements like that.

MJ: Well, I’m sorry, it’s crap. Karma is a theory like any other theory that some human made up.

SB: Well, “what goes around comes around” is ok, because there’s great truth to that. But karma could actually be evil because karma says that handicapped children did something bad in a previous life.

MJ: That’s a fine line and I’m sorry for talking like that. But I hate whoever says some thing

like that. A child did something in a past life so God is going to handicap them? There were all these orphans in this one country coming to America to be adopted. The plane crashed. Every child on the plane died. Why? If you could save those kids, if you were in Heaven, you would say, "This one is not going down. Maybe another one, but not this one." I know I would.

SB: Did you ever have Eastern spiritual gurus who came to you and said, "Michael children get hit by trucks because they fornicated in a previous life?"

MJ: No, and if they did I would be furious and I would give them all the reasons why that is a bunch of crap. That's *doodoo*. That's a theory like any other man's theory about the universe. Some people believe in the Big Bang, which I don't, and some people believe in the Creation, that story with Adam and Eve, that this universe isn't an accident. To say this universe was created by a Big Bang or an accident is to say, "Okay, I want you to take a car engine and we are going to take each piece apart and we are

going to put it in a bath tub, and I want you to shake it up.” You can shake that tub 100 years and it will never become the perfect engine. All the pieces to come together and make an engine, that is like saying the Big Bang theory, and there was a big explosion and we got children, and trees, and plants, and the air we breath, and oxygen. Somebody had to create this, a designer had to create this. From our lashes to our mouths to our digestive system. Don’t you agree?

SB: That’s the most important of all religious beliefs, that God is the origin of life.

MJ: When I used to go door to door [Witnessing for the Jehovah’s Witnesses Church] and people would say, “We are atheists,” [I’d think] what? They don’t believe in.... I heard it a lot and I had a brother who was an atheist for a while but I think he isn’t now. Tito was an atheist even after being raised as a strict Jehovah’s Witness. I know some of the famous directors, the guy who directed *Singing In The Rain* and who won academy awards, Stanley Donen....

SB: So what arguments did you have for people when you were Pioneering when they told you that they were atheists?

MJ: I tried to bring out the miracles of life, the children, look into their eyes, our bodies, how it all works just right, this can't happen on its own, come on, no way. Then there are the questions I have about why we are here and why we are allowed to destroy each other. Because we are the only species who destroys their own. Every species on this planet... I don't understand how all that injustice takes place. Why didn't something in heaven stop the Holocaust or some of the great genocides that happen in the world, from the lynchings and slavery, to all the great problems, to Stalin, to...? I hate to say this but Napoleon, too. He gets praised for all his genocide [I assume Michael means all the wars he caused], whereas Hitler gets called the Devil, which he was. But they both did the same thing. But one was doing it for his country and the other one was too! But a lot of people died with Napoleon. There are statues of Napoleon.

SB: Well, no one was ever as evil as Hitler. And

Napolean, while being a man who started many wars, was still a benevolent dictator and in no way could he be compared to Hitler. Still, in his day, Napoleon was referred to by the English and by all the nations of Europe as "the beast." They called him the anti-Christ.

MJ: But he died a lonely man on an island all alone.

SB: Do you enjoy reading about history?

MJ: I do enjoy reading about history, but I don't know what to believe and what not to believe. Because I know how much that is written about me is twisted... about me... how much stuff in history is twisted. Because the way this country was taken away from the Indians and the way Australia was taken from the blacks and apartheid, how they killed so many blacks.

SB: You know that most of the death of the indigenous peoples here in the Americas, as well as most of the slaves who were brought from Africa, was through disease and germs. Almost ninety percent of Native Americans died because of European diseases. You see the Europeans had so much disease in their blood

they developed immunity to it. But the Native Americans had no such immunity and European germs killed off about eighty seven percent of indigenous peoples in the Americas, and something like ninety five percent of the Aborigines died of disease. They lived in more wholesome environments without all the European illness.

MJ: I hate it. I'm sorry I hate it.

SB: You know, when I was in Australia recently they had this big debate about whether the government should finally apologize to the Aboriginal people.

MJ: I know all about this. I told Frank about it, remember? [Frank Cascio was in the room with us during this conversation.] They say that if they apologize then they have to pay them the way they are paying the Jews for the Holocaust. And they don't want to pay them so they can't say they are sorry. They made a mistake because they are worried that they will stick their hand out and ask for money.

SB: Do you think they should?

MJ: Absolutely, and I give the Jews credit for



standing up for the past. Yes. The Germans paid the Jews \$47 billion a year in taxes because of the Holocaust.

SB: It's actually nowhere *near* that much. But the Jews were never paid for their slave labor and certainly never accepted blood money for the six million killed. Rather, they were compensated for the tens of billions of dollars in confiscated property that was stolen and destroyed by the Nazis and their collaborators, and even then only got a fraction of what they lost.

MJ: But I hate when people to this day think that all Germans are bad, because they are not.

SB: In the Bible there is horizontal, rather than vertical accountability. So, if I saw you beating up Frank and I didn't stop you, I am also responsible because I was here witnessing it but chose to do so without stopping you. But Prince wouldn't be responsible just because he is your son. We do not visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. So, horizontal accountability, but not vertical. He can't be accountable for what his father does. So we of course don't hold this

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generation of Germans responsible for what their parents did. But we do hold the generation who perpetrated it, and those who watched in silence, we hold them accountable.

## Racism, Religion, and Anti-Semitism

Shmuley Boteach: So you have been the voice for a lot of the people who have been left out. Like in the song “They Don’t Care About Us,” the main message being they don’t care about who? The poor? The third world?

Michael Jackson: Well I'd say, they don't care about us, those who are treated unjustly, those who have been bastardized, being called "nigger," being called the word that they misunderstood me for when I said those who say "kike" to people. When I was a little kid, Jews, we had Jewish lawyers and Jewish accountants and they slept in my bed next to me and they would call each other "kike." I said, "What is that?" and they said, "That's the bad word for Jews. For blacks they say 'nigger.'" I said, "Ohhh." So I always knew when people had been bastardized, they've been called "nigger," they've been called "kike." That's what I'm saying and they used it. They took it all wrong. I would never. . . you know?

SB: You were trying to stand up for those with no voice?

MJ: Yeah, who don't have a voice. I would never teach hatred, ever. That's not what I'm about.

SB: Are you proud to be an American? When you did all these concerts abroad in foreign countries, did you feel like you were some sort

of American representative?

MJ: I hope you don't take this wrong, what I am about to say, but I feel I belong to the world and I hate to take sides. Even though I am an American and I was born in this country and there are a lot of things about America I am proud of, and there are a lot of things I am not proud of. . . ignorance . . . like that [Norman] Rockwell painting of the little girl trying to get to school to learn and they were throwing stuff at her.

MJ: I don't understand racism. My mother—and she is an angel and a saint—she was pulling out of the market and it was a block from my house in Encino and she was in her Mercedes. And my mother loves everybody, and this white man in a car screams out, “Go back to Africa, you nigger.” It hurt me so much that that happened to my mother. . . this was no

more than five years ago, because he was jealous.

I know stories of my brothers in their Rolls-Royces get out of the car and lock the door and when they come back they find that some guy had taken a key and scratched the car because there is a black man driving it. I just hate anything like that because the color of a person's skin has nothing to do with the content of their character.

I love the Jewish babies and the German babies and the Asian and the Russians. We are all the same and I have the perfect hypothesis to prove it. I play to all those countries and they cry in all the same places in my show. They laugh in the same places. They become hysterical in the same places. They faint in the same places and that's the perfect hypothesis. There is a commonality that we are all the same. Because I have heard that the Russians are hard-nosed and the Germans have no feelings and emotions. They were just as emotional [at my concerts]. . . even more so. Some of my most loving fans are in Germany

and Russia. They will stand out in the cold and in the rain to get a glimpse. They scream, "We want to *Heal the World*. We love you." And these are young people, you know, who had nothing to do with the war and all that crazy conditioning. They are different, you know. The new breed is different. They are wonderful. I feel like a person of the world. I can't take sides. That's why I hate saying, "I am an American." For that reason.

SB: Do you think the fact that you were one of the first incredibly successful and famous black men affected your career to an extent? Some of the unfair things that people did, was that partially racism in the way that your mother experienced it?

MJ: Yes, because before me you had [Harry] Belafonte, you had Sammy [Davis, Jr.], you had Nat King Cole. You had them as entertainers and people loved their music. But they didn't get adulation, and they didn't get [people] to cry and they didn't get, "I am in love with you, and I want to marry you." They didn't get people tearing their clothes off and all the hysteria and

all the screams. They didn't play stadiums. I was the first one to break the mold, where white girls, Scottish girls, Irish girls screamed, "I am in love with you, I want to. . . ." And a lot of the white press didn't like that. That's what has made it hard for me, because I was the pioneer and that's why they started the stories. "He's weird." "He's gay." "He sleeps in a hyperbaric chamber." "He wants to buy the bones of the Elephant Man"—anything that turns people against me. They tried their hardest. And anybody else would be dead as a junkie right now, who'd been through what I've been through. SB: What gave you the strength to persevere?

MJ: Believing in children. Believing in young people. Believing that God gave me this for a reason to help my babies.

SB: So even though the older people were mean you still believed the younger generation had a kindness in their hearts?

MJ: Absolutely. I am still to this day trying to figure it out. I am having problems in my heart with the Jewish thing. I am having a big



problem with it.

SB: What Jewish thing?

MJ: When I found out the count of how many children in the Holocaust alone died. . . . [starts to break down]. What man can do something like that? I don't understand. It doesn't matter what race it is. I don't get it. I don't understand that at all. I really don't. What kind of conditioning. . . I don't understand that kind of thing. Does someone condition you to hate that much? Is it possible that they could do that to your heart? They can't do that to mine. Could they do that to yours? I'm sorry.

SB: They could only do it to us if we made ourselves susceptible or if we severed our connection with a God who demands righteousness.

MJ: Hitler was a genius orator. He was [able] to make that many people turn and change and hate. He had to be a showman and he was. Before he would speak, he would pause, drink a bit of water, and then he would clear his throat, and look around. It was what an entertainer would do trying to work out how to play his

audience. He would go into this fury of the first words he would say and he would hit them hard. But where did he come from? I know he failed school and he wanted to be an architect. He failed a lot of things. But I think it all happened in prison, the whole *Mein Kampf* thing, didn't it? I really believe that.

Michael's analysis of Hitler as showman was brilliant. I subsequently watched many of Hitler's speeches and Michael was absolutely right. Hitler would get up to speak, pause, make the crowd eager with breathless anticipation, and only then would he slowly begin.

SB: Where he first wrote the book and began to formulate his ideas?

MJ: Yeah, yeah. He built that anger, so strong, while [Nelson] Mandela did the opposite. He became a lamb in prison. He had no bitterness, to this day saying even though he is eighty and his youth is gone—because he was in prison so long—he doesn't regret any of it.

SB: But is his youth gone?

MJ: [No], he is sweet, very childlike.

SB: Does he like to giggle?

MJ: He loves children because when I went to see him I had some kids with me and people were saying the kids have to stay, but Michael Jackson can come. I said, "I'm sure Mr. Mandela wouldn't mind seeing children. I won't go in unless the children go too." I remember his representatives looked at me like this [makes stern and suspicious facial expression] and they went back and then they said, "Everybody come." The first thing Mandela did is run to the children and pick them up and hug them. I knew he was that kind of man and he loved them. He was talking to them and *then* he shook my hand. I knew I was right.

SB: Are you the opposite of Hitler? God gave you this phenomenal charisma and while he [Hitler] brought out the beast in man, you want to bring out some of that innocence and goodness in man. The darkest most malignant forces were unleashed within the Germans at Hitler's direction. Now God gave you phenomenal charisma as well. Are you using it to bring out the innocence and goodness in

man?

MJ: I believe that. You can change them because going to my show is like a religious experience because you [go in] one person and come out a different person. You really do.

SB: Is that one of your objectives, to try and pull that out of people, not just give entertainment?

MJ: Absolutely, and we do it. I wish you could have seen some of the things we have done in concerts. Like we have had a huge tank on stage like an army tank and a soldier gets out and points it at everybody. And then he aims it at me and then the whole audience starts booing. This happens in every country. . . and I take the gun and I put it down and they start screaming. And then a little girl—I always have a little peasant girl—with a flower comes up and brings it to the soldier, right in his face, and he breaks down on his knees and he starts to cry. And the crowd goes crazy every time. Then I start giving this speech, and another little boy comes forward and he starts doing this speech in sign language and you look in the audience and

everybody is crying. It happens in every country. That is part of *Earth Song*. I have been an ambassador of goodwill all over the world spreading this message. Then we do *Heal the World*, children of all nations circling this huge globe, and we have a big screen showing all the world leaders in the back and it is just amazing stuff. When other singers are singing about sex and *I want to get in a hot tub with you baby and rub you all over* and [yet I'm the one who] gets battered in the press as a weirdo. Does that make any sense to you? SB: No, of course, not right.

MJ: It is not right, is it?

SB: It is changing in front of your eyes.

SB: What if they wouldn't understand? What if they were like the Nazis, just evil people?

MJ: I can't imagine that I couldn't reach their hearts in some kind of way.

SB: So you believe that if you were face-to-face with Hitler you could . . .

MJ: *Absolutely* . Absolutely! He had to have had a lot of *yes* people around him who were afraid of him.

SB: You believe that if you had an hour with Hitler you could somehow touch something inside of him?

MJ: Absolutely. I know I could.

SB: *With Hitler?* Come on. Michael! Hitler?! So you don't believe there is anyone who is completely evil and there is no way to touch them. So you don't believe in punishing the wicked because then. . .

MJ: No, I believe you have to help them, give them therapy. You have to teach them, that somewhere something in their life went wrong. They don't see what they do. They don't understand that it is wrong a lot of times.

SB: But Michael, there are clearly people who are irredeemable. Like Hitler. He was evil incarnate. There was no humanity there for you to address. You'd be speaking to the abyss, to a

darkness like you never before witnessed. What about someone who has killed a lot of people? Don't you believe that there should be no therapy for them? They are murderers and they need to face extreme punishment.

MJ: I feel horrible about it. I wish somebody could have reached their hearts.

SB: What if they have done it already? They've already killed their victims.

MJ: If they have done it already, it is wrong.



SB: I am going to clarify this. The interesting thing about how you look at the world is that you view it through a child's eyes. Okay, the other side of that is that just as children would find it difficult to grasp that someone can be truly evil—which is why kids are so trusting—you have the same issue. Even when evil stares you in the face you want to say it has some good. So I wouldn't ask someone like you to construct a whole judicial system of punishment because that's not what your contribution to the world is, and frankly, you'd do a bad job. A punishment comes into the world once you have adultlike gestures that are cruel, and then you need punishment. But then in a child's world those things don't really exist so you don't need the same punishment. But come on Michael, do you really think you could have gotten through to Hitler?

MJ: Uhuh. Yes.



SB: By finding the good in him somehow?

MJ: Yes, I think I could have. I really do, I think. Nobody really talked to him. I think he was surrounded by, I hate to say this, brownnosers. But that's what they were. That's what he wanted. That's what they did.

SB: He was never challenged?

MJ: There were Germans against him. They even tried to kill him, remember?

SB: Yeah, Claus von Stauffenberg. But he and his plotters numbered, at most, a few hundred out of a population of tens of millions. On this one there is simply too much distance between us, Michael. Hitler was intrinsically evil. You could never have gotten through to him. The only thing to do with people like that is purge them from the world.

So you have forgiven everyone in your heart except for certain members of the press who are mean and people who hurt children?

MJ: Yes.

## Following the Golden Rule—With All People

Shmuley Boteach: Let's get back to justice. When you see so many injustices with no recourse to justice, when people are killed and their murderer is never found, when garbage is written about you and people get away with it, in fact they are promoted, how do you continue to believe in justice?

Michael Jackson: I don't believe in justice. I believe in it but I don't believe that. . . .

SB: You don't believe that the righteous are going to be rewarded and the wrongdoers will be punished? That good people should prosper and wicked people should founder and sink?

MJ: All these are man-made things. I think evil is in people's hearts. This is where you and I might disagree. I don't think there is some devil out there manipulating our thoughts. That is what I was taught.

SB: Judaism doesn't believe in the devil. So we don't disagree nearly as much as you might

think. Where we do disagree is in the belief that people who do very evil things eventually internalize those evil things to such a degree that it becomes an inextricable part of who they are. They may only start out *doing* evil, but after a while they *become* evil. A famous Jewish philosopher named Maimonides said “Habit becomes second nature” and they become one with what they have done. They become evil. There is no hope for people like Hitler. And no one, not even you, can get through to them. They are evil to their very core.

MJ: I thought the devil is very evil. He is in this room and he is behind all the evil in this world. The devil is awfully busy. Look how everyone is turning gay and look at how women are doing this. I think the devil is man himself.

On the gay comment, I think Michael was paraphrasing what people who blame everything on the devil might say, rather than expressing his own view. Certainly, Michael never made anything like a homophobic comment to me, and it would be highly out of his character to have done so. He was not judgmental in that way.

SB: How can we get people to sustain a belief in justice in such a cruel world?

MJ: Follow the Golden Rule. Be kind to your neighbors, love them as much as you would love yourself, do unto others. . . .

SB: How do you feel when you see people get away with cruelty? Are you angry? Do you say, there is no justice, these are mean people?

MJ: I get angry, yeah. But I know that is the way of the world. That's the theme of my world show: Be kind, heal the world. Let's walk out of here a different human being. Let's love. It's like going to church, but I do it without preaching. I do it through music and dancing. Marilyn Manson says onstage, "Kill God. . . take your Bibles and tear them. . . ." Yet the press doesn't attack *him*! And he has got breasts on just like a woman. . . .

SB: So when you see people who are mean, who are very prosperous, do you ever look at God and say, "I can't figure it out?"

MJ: No, because I know how I feel.

SB: So what do you do at moments like that?

MJ: I believe there are some good people in the world and I do believe there is a God. I don't believe that God judges. I don't think that He is upstairs going, "You are alright. But I am going to tear you up." I wouldn't do that.

SB: There is no hell in Judaism either. There is punishment for the sake of cleansing, but no punishment for the sake of damnation.

MJ: Really? I think that is all beautiful because we were all taught to believe in the devil and Lucifer and the burial ground, where you never get resurrection and judgment. There is a decision being made right now as we talk. Jesus is putting certain people on the left and certain people on the right, and when the end of the world comes all those people on the left will be swallowed up and they will be dead forever.

That's not fair is it? There are a lot of beautiful, good people in the world no matter what religion, no matter what race. If there was really such a thing as real true heavenly justice, I don't think Hitler would have got away with

what he did as long as he did. Then you get those people who say, "It happened for a reason, to teach the world never to let it happen again." My foot! You don't need a million of those little kids to die to teach the world. I am not going for it. They let him get away with it.

SB: One day when this is over we will get Elie Wiesel to take you to Auschwitz, where so many of those children died. That would be poignant. You have to read his book, *Night*. His book is one of the most influential books of the twentieth century. He was sixteen years old when he was at Auschwitz. He is the most famous Holocaust survivor in the world.

MJ: He is not bitter. He is like Mandela in that way.

SB: So you don't believe in justice? You have seen it subverted too many times to believe in it?

MJ: I believe there should be justice but I don't believe in the justice system. That's what I should say. You have seen the things that go on in the world and how people get away with them.

SB: The majority of the good people that you have met, have they prospered?

MJ: Absolutely.

## Thinking About Ambition, Success, and Honesty

Shmuley Boteach: So ambition can be a good thing so long as it is not ruthless, so long as it doesn't involve jealousy and envy?

Michael Jackson: Yeah, so long as it is not hurting anybody. Ambition is a wonderful thing. To know how the mind works and the power of thought and how we create our own circumstances in life. And to know all those goodies about the brain because we don't come with instructions when we are born. You have to find the truth to life and once you know those things, it's amazing you know your possibilities.

SB: So you want to foster that ambition in children, not stifle it? MJ: They have it. You have to just will them on.

SB: Another thing. Let's talk about honesty. One of the most childlike qualities is brutal honesty. Sometimes telling our children the



truth hurts. But they always say it like it is. Especially before they're old enough to learn how to lie. If you are fat they will say you are fat. If you are ugly they will say you are ugly. If you smell they say you smell. Is that always a good thing, or do we have to be more diplomatic?

MJ: I think we have to teach them to be kind and teach them how you can hurt other people's feelings. We went there [to the recording studio] yesterday, Prince and I. One of the musicians who works with me is fat, very fat, and Prince said, "He has a stomach which looks like a balloon." I said, "Prince, you are right. But if you see him don't say it in front of him because you could make him cry." He said, "Okay, I promise." Just teach him that you can't hurt people.

SB: Okay, but what about encouraging our children to tell the truth? So you are not saying to Prince that that is not true because that is not a childlike quality to make him lie. You are just saying sometimes you hold the truth inside. You didn't say to Prince, "He's actually fine the way

he is. He's not fat."

MJ: I did not.

SB: So it's important to be truthful. Let's say you have a musician who isn't up to speed and he is holding back the whole album. What do you do?

MJ: I just went through it in there with the string players. One lady was playing completely off rhythm and I told the guy, "Let her continue. But the next day we just can't have her come," and she wasn't told that she could come the next day. But we did it quietly.

SB: So you do sometimes have to deal with these difficult situations and you deal with it with honesty but without trying to hurt them.

MJ: You have to do it without hurting them.

SB: So there is a way of being truthful without being painful?

MJ: Absolutely. I don't go on the casting calls for my short films [Michael always called his music videos "short films"] especially when there are children being cast. I don't want to stand there and say, "Okay let's see what you

The Michael Jackson Tapes

can do,” and they do it and they don’t get a call back. Then they’ll say, “Michael Jackson turned me down.” I have somebody else tape everybody and I look at it at home and I decide. I cannot face the pain of them not being accepted. I always have to do it that way.

SB: So, honesty is very important in the way you raise Prince and Paris.

MJ: [Turning to Prince] Doo-Doo has been on that Prince. That’s full of doo-doo. Don’t put it on your hair. That’s the dog doo-doo shovel. Don’t put it in your hair.

SB: By the way did you hear what I said earlier that Paul McCartney has supposedly one of the biggest cartoon collections? You were saying about these great artists being childlike?

MJ: Yes, yes. He loves cartoons and takes them very seriously. He collects them. Mine is bigger than his now, if you go into the video library we have got rows and rows because I love cartoons. It is a great escape for me, the world of cartoons.

SB: [In thinking about your success] did you say something to yourself? "I was fortunate, it was from God, it is not just me. This is a divine gift. I have no right to be arrogant?"

MJ: Yeah. People always ask me how I didn't let it all go to my head. Um, because obviously it's not me. So how dare you think this is your

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doing, it's not me. It's not Michelangelo. He was touched with divine inspiration. That was a gift. I think you can cultivate something to a certain extent. But to be given real genius, that's like a gift.

SB: Judgmental people are always small-minded people. They are nitpickers. How did we go from being big to small, Michael? As we mature, our bodies get bigger but often our minds seem to get smaller. Do you feel that children have bigger hearts than adults? What causes them to shrink?

Why didn't yours shrink? The more famous

people become, the less love they have in their hearts because they become more self-absorbed. What makes people go from being big-minded to being small-minded, to being petty? Because they feel intimidated. They feel that their dreams were not realized and they become defensive. So your defense mechanism is to judge, to dismiss. What makes us get smaller and why didn't you get smaller? Why didn't you become more self-absorbed as you became more famous? Why do you care about the rest of the world? You have helicopters and private jets. Why would ordinary children suddenly figure in your life?

MJ: You know why, Shmuley? When you have seen the things I have seen and traveled all over the world, you would not be honest to yourself and the world to be that way. I just couldn't see myself not being touched by the things I have seen, like that village in China, and the things I have seen in Africa and Russia and Germany and Israel.

MJ: I remember this newborn baby fighting to live, newborn with all the things in the nose, in a hospital in Israel. How could your heart not go out to something like that? I said to everybody, the kids, everybody, "Come here kids. You have to see this," because I think they understand the sensitivity of how children are important, helping others, reaching out to the world, to the underprivileged. Being materialistic and showing this sense of me-ism all the time [is something I deplore].

SB: Why didn't your success go to your head?

You pride yourself on not being arrogant. How did you retain your sensitivity? Why didn't it go to your head? Why did you visit orphanages? Why didn't it happen to you? How did you remain large, how did you remain grand and nonjudgmental when you should have become more self-absorbed? It's happened to everybody else. You've seen it happen to your friends, I'm sure, who've had success.

MJ: That's hard to answer. I am just more sensitive to people's pain and love. I think it's just inside me.



## The Pain of Performing, the Pressure of Staying on Top

Shmuley Boteach: Do you always feel that you are always proving yourself, that you are always having to perform, that there is never rest, that you were never given that period where you could play without having to worry and to impress?

Michael Jackson: I love art. I love it too much. My mother knows that about me. I love painting and sculpting and all that stuff. I always got an A in Art and English. They were the two classes I always got an A-plus. I had very little school schooling other than my tutor. But the years I did have it, the teacher always used me as an example to the class of good English and good storytelling because we all had to write the same stories. But she used to make me go out front—which I hated—and read my story to the class and I would get huge applause. Not because of who I was but because they truly enjoyed the stories I wrote. I had a portfolio of

all of that stuff because I am an artist, too, and I like to draw and paint. And somebody stole it and it broke my heart because I always wanted to save it. One day it will pop up somewhere because I am a realist and I am not abstract. There are people that I am in love with, totally in love with them. I would die for them. I love Michelangelo. I love Charlie Chaplin with all my heart. I love Walt Disney. These are the people I am nuts over. These are my people. I love the great ones.

SB: There is this phenomenal pressure. Do you always have to be Michael Jackson, 100 million album sales?

MJ: And the press, they wait with knives.

SB: For you to fail?

MJ: Absolutely. They try and shred me apart so it has to be beyond expectation, beyond brilliant. I give everything I have.

SB: But it wears you out?

MJ: Yeah. Because when you are the top-selling artist of all time, the records that are broken, they wait. . . you are the target.

SB: What gives you rest, what gives you strength? Is it Prince and Paris?

MJ: Prince and Paris and children all over the world. Not just Prince and Paris—all children.

SB: Do you feel that if the next album is not amazing that you are not going to be special?

MJ: It would be a terrible blow to me [if I did not perform as well as I wish] because I put real pressure on myself and I demand the best out of myself. I really do. The best of the form or the medium that I work in, and I put a lot of pressure on myself. So to have that happen, if that was to happen, it would be psychologically destroying for me.

SB: But do you feel that people would still love you if you were not as successful? Would you still feel loved? A child has to feel loved even if he or she doesn't do well at school.

MJ: Yes, I would, because of the past work. But I wouldn't be comfortable with it. I try not to look at the past.

SB: Do you think that because of some of the things that you described to me, a very difficult

childhood—without the birthdays, without the Christmases—that is why success in your career has become so important?

MJ: Probably. I think so.

SB: Do you think you punish yourself a bit too much, that's why there is so much pain? You punish yourself immensely if things aren't perfect?

MJ: I really do. I know that's true. I'd rather be the one responsible for it because I have the final say and the final cut on everything. In the past it has been very successful. Oh God, but if that [diminishment of success] was to happen, I don't know what I would do.

SB: But don't you see, Michael, that's what you have to get over. MJ: I know, but I can't get over it. It's me. I'm not made that way.

## The Master of Mystery

Shmuley Boteach: Alright, I want to speak about something with you which is crucial to this book. Of all the things I've seen about you, I have to tell you, I have never seen anyone who understands the power of mystery the way you do. In other words, in the Jewish religion the use of mystery is very important. The prophet Isaiah says that angels, the Seraphim, have six wings. Why six? Well, "With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew" (Isaiah 6:02). Isn't that amazing? The angels are so modest, so mysterious, that they use their wings to cover up. Michael Jackson: That's beautiful.

SB: I've written about this extensively in my books, Michael. Mystery is one of the principal

ingredients that I prescribe for relationships. The holy is always mysterious. It's always covered. And the Torah scroll, the Bible scroll that we read from in the synagogue is kept covered and hidden away by multiple layers, in the ark, concealed by curtains, veils, and doors. It's like three things you need to take away in order to see it. And similarly when Rebecca and Isaac meet in the Bible, before they get married and fall in love, the first thing that Rebecca does upon encountering Isaac is to cover her face. The same thing is true when Moses sees the burning bush. What's the first thing he does? He turns away and hides his face from seeing God.

MJ: I love those stories.

SB: So in the Bible mystery is very important. I've never seen anyone who understands the power of mystery like you. I'll give you some examples and I want you to comment on them. Number one, my kids are walking around Neverland. There's candy everywhere. My kids love it because they've never seen this, there's popcorn machines and there's snow cone

machines, and as long as stuff is kosher, they're eating this and eating that. And although Prince and Paris are surrounded by all this stuff, you say to them, "No, only on your birthday you can have this." Grace told us they aren't allowed to use the swings and all that so that they don't get bored of it. And whenever we go to FAO Schwartz, Prince can buy toys but he has to wait to open them. And especially when it comes to your career, you've understood the power of being hidden. Like now, I look at all these new acts, even 'N Sync and even Britney Spears [whom Michael and I had just met in his hotel room], and I was watching them on *Entertainment Tonight* and they did an interview and I said, "My gosh are they short-sighted. You should do what Michael does. Never be ubiquitous." But they can't because they so badly need the attention, they can't hold back.

SB: So there are two things I want to ask you. Talk to me about mystery and what it means to you and how did you get the discipline to hold back when you know that every TV show wants you? I mean, gosh, we're being pounded by every single show in America right now to get an interview with you. How do you, where does that discipline come from? Especially Michael, this is important to comment on, because people, your detractors will criticize you and say, "Michael's a child, he behaves like a child" when really the only definition of maturity that everyone agrees on, is that maturity involves a capacity for delayed gratification. When other people act impetuously, and you can be patient and wait for things in their proper time, that's considered the essence of maturity and self-control.

MJ: Thank you.

SB: And your career is built on that and I'm not



just saying that to flatter you. It's true, I'm amazed at it. So talk to me about mystery. How do you know this, where did it come to you, the power of that which is concealed?

MJ: Wow, you're so observant. It's amazing how you notice details. Um, I studied. . . I love psychology, I love magic, I love. . . I love real beauty. I love real talent. I love when something's miraculous, when something's so beautiful you shouldn't get it. What I love about Halley's Comet, and I always say this to my lawyer, Halley's Comet is no more of a miracle than the moon or the sun. But we make a big deal about it because you see it once in a lifetime and everybody's out there to see it. You know astronomers and fans and people and it's this thing that circles around the solar system but you see it once in a lifetime. If it happened every night nobody would care, but to me the moon is just as miraculous. I always talk about deer and dogs and cats. A lot of people go, "There's a deer! There's a. . ." 'cause they're shy, they're always hidden. It's a big deal to see a deer, I mean, and I appreciate that, how

people should appreciate real ability and I always say I don't care if you're the most talented person in the world, if you come on the television everyday people will regurgitate you. You have to know how to play your audience. You have to know that and it's true, Shmuley. And it's not just a game. But it's real for me, it's real for me. It really is.

SB: How do you know that? For example, I had to be taught this. I write about this a lot in my books but I began to develop a lot of my ideas on it from insights from other writers, thinkers, philosophers, etcetera.

MJ: [If you remain mysterious, people will be] more interested, yeah. SB: Look if a woman is always taking off her top, no one's going to want to see her breasts.

MJ: That's right.

SB: But if she does it once in a while, that's what makes it so exciting. That's what makes it erotic.

MJ: That's right.

SB: But when it's, everyday. . .

MJ: That's right.

SB: Like you go to the African tribes and women walk topless, it's nothing.

MJ: Nothing, nothing. Leave something to the imagination. I believe in that and people are all.

. .

SB: Did someone teach you that?

MJ: No. No, it just, looking at. . . learning from nature and learning you know, just watching and studying, being a serious observer. And umm, you can say to somebody, you can go, "There's six doors, you can open any of those doors. But the fifth door, don't open it. Don't open the fifth door, no matter what." Of course everyone is going, "What's behind door number five?" because it's the great mystery. And that's, everyone wants to expose door number five because you know. . . And I love that and it's not like a game but I want people to appreciate talent and ability. I only do an album every five years. Other artists do an album every year and my albums outlast and outsell all the other artists. And people wait for it. There's like, you know, a whole pulse going on about this album.

[Michael was working on completing *Invincible* at the time.] Its like a fever, they're waiting, they're waiting. It's important to wait.

SB: So what is it about the hidden which makes it outlast the revealed? What is it about holding something back that people want it suddenly?

MJ: I just, I love, I do love the power of mystery, I really do. I think it's very powerful.

SB: Is it spiritual? What is it?

MJ: It's spiritual, it's, it's people conjure up all these ideas, people create it themselves. They conjure up all these ideas in their head about what's going on. I mean they used to say, you know, Howard Hughes is up there and he owns the hotel but he stays on that floor, he doesn't come down. He's in the dark, he's in the corner in the bed with long nails and hair down to here and he's hooked to an IV. So the brain would just go crazy conjuring up all kinds of crazy stories, and I love that. I love Howard Hughes 'cause he played this big thing. I mean, to me he's like one of my masters. But, I don't know, this is the first time I've ever said this Shmuley, I love Howard, he's a genius.

SB: Because what? Because he knew the power of mystery?

MJ: How to play people, yeah. He knew how to make the public interested. P. T. Barnum was pretty good at it himself.

SB: Is it a matter of just withdrawing? Is it that simple? For example, this book came along called *The Rules*, and I debated the people who wrote it twice. And they said the way you get a guy to marry you is by playing hard to get. He calls you up and you say, "Sorry, I'd love to go out to dinner but I'm too busy." He leaves messages on your answering machine and you never return his phone calls. You hear of the book? It's a very controversial book. Is it that simple?

I am actually a critic of *The Rules*, believing that manipulation is the worst approach to relationships and that there is a far better alternative, namely, for a woman to indulge her natural feminine mystique.

MJ: I don't, I don't totally agree. It depends on the individual.

SB: But with you, when you say it's become

about playing the public, is it as simple as withdrawal and they want more? And more ways how to reveal yourself?

MJ: It's rhythm and timing. You have to know what you're doing. Like you never see me on award shows saying, "The nominees are . . ." And I get asked to do every show. Now they don't even ask. They know I don't do it. Or to host the show or to come out and say like, "Coming up next, Michael Jackson to present the record of the year." You never see me coming out and doing the nominees. I don't do it. They know not to even ask me. It's not what I do.

SB: You will never do something which makes you be the means to another end. You're either the end or you're not. It's either about you or you're not going to be the road.

MJ: Yeah, and I'm not trying to say that I'm holy or God or. . . SB: But you're not going to belittle yourself either.

MJ: I'm not going to, I want. . . you know? People should respect, you know? Ability and talent, and it's all for the sake of goodness,

really 'cause my message is for goodness.

SB: I agree with you.

MJ: But really. I'm just trying to conserve and preserve. . .

SB: This, by the way, is a whole book unto itself, how you have learned the power of the hidden, of the mysterious. Look out there in New York. Right now as we speak there are hundreds of thousands of woman who want to get married and guys won't commit to them. And do you know one of the main reasons is because they'll have sex with them anyway.

MJ: Uh huh.

SB: Why would you marry her if you could have her without the commitment? If you wanted to borrow ten million dollars from the bank manager, and he says, "Here Michael, here's ten million dollars," would you then say, "Oh, by



the way, you forgot to ask me for collateral. Here it is"? You wouldn't volunteer it. So, you understand what I'm saying? And they might never get married and these women come in their hundreds to me, crying, writing about how lonely they are. They don't know the power of mystery. They go to bed on the first date; they don't know how to hold back. He never has to win them over. And by the way, that's what happened to Madonna. Madonna overexposed herself. She's still a celebrity but she's not what she was.

MJ: Yeah, I know.

SB: She didn't even overexpose herself, Michael, through TV and music. It wasn't that she gave too many interviews. Rather, she overexposed her body. She was a sex symbol. People wanted to know what her body looked like, and she did that stupid, sleazy, disgusting book, and all you had to do was buy the book. The mystery was permanently gone.

MJ: I know, I know. Exactly right.

SB: There are few people today who understand the power of mystery. You understand it



because there is an intuitive spirituality to your nature that is a real gift. Because this understanding of mystery, and your understanding of the power of timing, helps us understand the holy. God only reveals very sporadically and at very choice moments. Mystery and timing are central to revelation. MJ: I love that. That's one of my favorite things to think about too. SB: How hidden God is.

MJ: How hidden.

SB: You've got to find him.

MJ: You see all his miracles through him but you don't see his face, himself, you know? You see through the children.

SB: Which makes you more interested in him?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: You want to find him?

MJ: Makes you want to seek him out and find him. Absolutely. I love that. And some people just throw up their hands and go, "What is this all about, this whole universe and where is he? I want to talk to him and what is it?" You know I love that. He's the ultimate. He is. He's the

man.

SB: So this is how we stop people from being bored. First of all one more thing before we move on to boredom. So you instinctively knew timing, mystery? You just knew?

MJ: Yeah, it's true, Shmuley.

SB: It's not like a manager pulled you aside and said, "Michael. You can be a big star. Don't overdo it"?

MJ: No. No way.

SB: Did your brothers not understand it?

MJ: No, they don't understand it. They would jump on anything, any second. If anybody said, "I want to interview you tomorrow about Michael's new style of dress, "Sure." 'Cause they just want to be on TV, to be on TV. I think people appreciate you much more when you, you know conserve, just hold. . . you know.

SB: Hold back?

MJ: Hold back and build yourself and give yourself a certain kind of class and make them reach out for you and just. . . I love gates, gates to a house. I love huge big pillars and gates.

You don't know what's back there beyond the road. You just see these. . . You know, you go, "God who lives in there?" I love that. You know, you never see them but you see the gates and I love that.

SB: But the gates to Neverland are so simple?

MJ: So simple, that's how I wanted them. Because I don't want the gate to represent, you know, it's an act of almost psychology. I was gonna make them so, kind of, almost. . . what's the word? Umm, I can't think of the word I'm looking for. I was gonna have people swing them open and really kind of have them funky and tattered, just so psychologically you really feel like you're coming to a ranch, so that when you go around the bend I want it to change to Technicolor, like the Wizard of Oz does in black and white. SB: That's exactly what happened with us. First thing we said when we got to Neverland was, 'This can't be his ranch, what are those simple doors?' Then you drive through and you see the sign, "Welcome to Neverland" and then, kaboom.

MJ: Yeah.

SB: It just hits you.

MJ: That, see, that's important to understand in show business. If you open with too much of a bang, where do you go from there? You crescendo too big, you have nowhere to go. You can't do that. That's why I always say, in amusement parks, the guy who creates the roller coaster, the dips, you're going up at first, way up and you go, "Oh my God, why did I do this?" Then it takes you straight down and it takes you up a little bit, then down, and he's the real showman, the guy who creates the dips. You know the peaks and the valleys, then he takes you straight real fast and up and upside down. He's a showman. That guy's a real showman because he understands syncopation and rhythm and structure and that's important. That's real important as an artist of show business and most of your artists today know nothing about it.

SB: They all overexpose themselves.

MJ: At all. At all.

SB: Is that your professional greatest blessing, that you were born with that rhythm? You just

had that natural timing and you understood it?

MJ: Yeah, yeah. I think

SB: Is it part of your love for God and his hiddenness and all that, that it's all one, that you sort of tapped into that divine mystery and you know the power of mystery?

MJ: Yeah, I think, yeah, like you say, it's just something. . . like the way you speak. That's the power of God in you Shmuley. You do, I've never heard anybody speak like you, it's amazing. It's like God is working right through you. I mean it's like that, when I'm on stage it's the same way. I don't think about what I'm gonna do, I don't know what I'm gonna do.

SB: You just get into the zone, the timing.

MJ: You get into it, man. You become one with what God gave you. It's like talking, it's spiritual. It's between you and God and the audience is right there with you. How do you describe it, I mean, how do you dissect it, how do you analyze it? You really can't. People say how do you do it? "Well I work out and I train." Well, you don't.

## Advice on Fame

Shmuley Boteach: So yesterday, 'N Sync came to see you. The lead singer Justin Timberlake, and I don't know who the other guy was. What's his name?

Michael had invited me to his hotel suite to meet Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake, who had flown in to see him the day after they had jointly hosted the American Music Awards. I was, at that time, not at all enamored of Britney Spears for her sexualization of teenage girls in America. Still, I behaved myself and spoke to them briefly about our efforts to get parents to prioritize their children. Neither of them seemed particularly interested and we didn't really click. Justin said something about contacting his manager or agent. They were there to meet the superstar. I don't mean to be insulting, but I found them unimpressive and forgettable.

Michael Jackson: Wade is a choreographer for. .

.

SB: Oh, he wasn't from 'N Sync, Wade?

MJ: No, he's a choreographer for Britney Spears and 'N Sync. See I taught Wade.

SB: Really?

MJ: Yeah, I taught Wade. All the stuff you see Britney Spears and 'N Sync doing, that whole style came from me 'cause I taught Wade. Wade's from Australia and I brought him to America.

SB: So he's their choreographer?

MJ: Yeah, and he does music. He was on my record label. We signed him to MJJ. He raps, he does everything.

SB: So he was here with Britney Spears, one of the biggest stars in the world right now, and that lead singer of 'N Sync, and they're boyfriend and girlfriend. When you look at them, and you had a long conversation with them, what would you tell them, based on this idea we're trying to speak about in this book, childlike qualities? Would you warn them against anything that might happen in their careers? Would you tell

them, "You know, when I was your age I thought X, Y, and Z and now I've changed my view"? Is there any advice you would give them?

MJ: Just try to stay a child as long as you can. Don't force into adulthood. Don't force it, don't push it. Don't try to be cool and. . . go to Disney, hang out, enjoy your youth, 'cause you'll be old for, I mean you know, just keep your innocence. Have some fun and really be yourself.

SB: So what would you say to these people that are successful in the arts who are younger than you? The 'N Syncs? You would just tell them to be playful as well, don't take it too seriously? Would you tell them anything else? Don't take yourself too seriously or something?

MJ: No, I would tell them always perfect your



craft, always. I'm a very strong believer in working hard. But enjoy it, you know? Like be mild-spirited, playful, have some fun. You've got to have some fun, too.

SB: What about, you always say to me how proud you are that your show is a family show, that your concerts are appropriate for children.

MJ: Oh yeah.

SB: Britney Spears was heavily criticized by some in the last MTV awards, like she almost did a striptease on stage.

MJ: Oh. . . yeah, yeah, yeah.

SB: She took this off and that off and just threw off. . . Do you think she needs to use that much sexuality to get out her message? Or, if she's really talented she may not need that? Would you give her any advice on that? Or it's a part of the show and no big deal?

MJ: Umm, I don't want to condemn her for it 'cause it's a show. But she has to realize she has, you know, kids out there who want to be like her and they'll do whatever she does. I don't know, sometimes artists don't realize the danger

of what they're doing. If I took a picture of me with a cigarette, how many kids would start smoking that very day? You know, you have to think about all that. And I understand, well, it's just a video, I'm just acting a part, but you're like their god. I mean. . .

SB: You've always felt that sense of responsibility?

MJ: Uh huh.

SB: You've always known how the picture of you appears, people are going to emulate that?

MJ: Yeah, and I understand why some artists may be a little controversial at times. I understand it. You know, if the press start talking too much about her coming from the Mickey Mouse Club and being, you know, cutie Britney, she might think, "I want to give them some edge so I can strip this. I'm edgier, I'm tougher, I'm. . ." You know? So I understand. I think deep inside she's just a sweet person, you know?

SB: So you would say to her, keep your clothes on, keep it in balance here, 'cause there are kids who want to be like you and you have a

responsibility?

MJ: Yeah, 'cause I like edge.

SB: You always understood the importance of that responsibility, when you became famous? You knew you had a huge responsibility as an icon and as a trend-setter?

MJ: Yeah, 'cause I don't think, I don't think I've ever done anything offensive on stage. . . ever. Like some of these acts, you talk about how Bobby Brown would get a girl up there and he starts grinding her, you know, right on in front of everybody and police arrested him several times. Like having sex right on stage and all these kids in the audience. My show it's just totally different.

## Sexuality and Modesty

SB: In trying to preserve childlike qualities in your life Michael, you have shied away from talking about overt sexuality. Like when Oprah asked you about your sex life, you responded something to the effect that, "I'm a gentleman and I don't talk about that." Do you feel that we should be more respectful of the sexual side of our lives? Has it all become too overt? I mean you're naturally shy about this.

MJ: Yeah, I'm just naturally, um, 'cause I think that's. . .

SB: Private?

MJ: Yeah, that's my personal opinion. Other people who are exhibitionist, you know naturists, who go out nude and they feel different about it. Um, I don't know, I'm just different in that way.

SB: We don't have to misuse our sexuality to increase ticket sales and record sales?

MJ: No, that's crazy, like some of these singers

who put bulges in their pants, that's crazy. I don't understand that. That's like disgusting to me when they do stuff like that. That's embarrassing. I don't want nobody to even look at me down. . . like looking for that. That would just embarrass me so bad, oh God.

SB: Isn't that just a sign of insecurity though? They think that maybe their dancing isn't good enough and they need to highlight that other stuff.

MJ: Yeah.

SB: Would your message to someone like Britney Spears be, "Look, you're pretty and talented. You don't need the sleaze. You're so talented without pulling everything off so that people will look at you. Like Madonna, who's often been criticized for taking advantage of the male sexual drive to sort of get all these guys hunkering after her to make her popular.

MJ: Yeah, uh huh. Aha.

## Fears

Shmuley Boteach: Do you live with fears? You know people are going to shoot you down, metaphorically speaking. Does that make you afraid?

Michael Jackson: Not as an artist. I am like a lion. Nothing can hurt me. No one can harm me without my permission. I wouldn't let it bother me, even though I have been hurt and I have felt pain in the past, of course, I have been saved by a lot of that.

SB: You don't live in fear now?

MJ: No.

SB: Do you think children teach us not to be afraid? On the one hand they are afraid, they are afraid of dogs, they are afraid of the dark,

and so many other things. On the other hand they are not afraid to love and not afraid to need.

MJ: We listen, we watch, we learn. We open our hearts and we open our minds, open our souls. Yes, we can learn but you have to realize that. . .

SB: Adults live with more fear than children.

MJ: Absolutely. . . nervous breakdowns. And they have created their own circumstances in a lot of ways. To worry about something until it destroys your health. If there is something they want very badly, kids will keep on saying it until they get it because they have no other way of getting it. Until you give in, which is really sweet, it's adorable. I always say to them, "If that's the most important thing for you to worry about in life then you are a lucky person. If that's your biggest issue then you are lucky." You realize in the future. . . for them it's important at the time, which is sweet. It can be the simplest little thing, too. Sweet.

SB: So, the point I was trying to make was that on the one hand there are things that frighten

you [Michael had told me about his fear of dogs], and they are classic childhood fears. And, by the way your love of fear is very similar to that of Adam and Eve. They love danger, you know. God said to them “there is this fruit and it’s very dangerous,” and that’s when they want to eat it. On the one hand, you’re afraid of nasty dogs.

MJ: Yeah, I don’t like that kind of thing. That frightens me. Or if you cornered a mother cougar among her babies. . . I don’t know if they call them cubs or what. . . and she’s cornered and she’s very territorial, you don’t go there. You don’t cross that line. I don’t understand when people take the gun and they shoot the mother. . . and the baby elephants they do the same dance every time. They let off this screech and they turn in circles of confusion and the mother’s lying there dead, they spin in circles like they’re going crazy. And I don’t understand how man can do that. That hurts me so much. It’s so sad. SB: Did you do safaris when you were in Africa?

MJ: Yeah, yeah.



SB: You got close to some of the dangerous animals?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: And you weren't afraid. . . ?

MJ: No. No I love safaris. I love them so much.

SB: So you see the contradiction of this fear. You're afraid of things like spiders, things that children would be afraid of, but you're not afraid of a lion.

MJ: No, no. I'm fascinated by it.

SB: I mean, in Neverland I saw you get within like a foot of a cobra. Remember that?

MJ: Yeah, yeah. And the rattlesnakes. I mean, we stroked the rattlesnakes. And they're very, highly, highly. . . I mean, they could kill you.

SB: And you're not afraid of anything like that?

MJ: I'm fascinated by things that are dangerous to men and to just look at a shark. Why are we so fascinated by sharks? Because they can kill you. And you yell "Shark!" and everybody goes "where? What? Who?" You know, you say, "barracuda" and nobody cares, you say, "shrimp." It's about the danger and the legend

of it, it's about the folklore of it. And I love all that. . . I think I like what PT Barnum liked about it. You know, things that interest people, I love that kinda. . . that's what I love about magic, and Howard Hughes. I love all that.

SB: What are your biggest fears though? I know you're afraid of mean people. You don't like mean people.

MJ: I don't like big, mean, tall guys that are like aggressive. And that's what turned me off about you know who. That hurt me when he asked me, I didn't like it at all. How could a human being have that in him to be that harsh? If that's how he felt, keep it to himself, you don't say it.

SB: You don't like tall, angry, aggressive men. . . ?

MJ: No. In my life, they've been mean. Even though there have been some gentle giants. The tall ones have been turned off of me. SB: But your bodyguards are tall. . .

MJ: They are tall. . .

SB: But they're all nice. . .

MJ: I make sure they're nice. They have to be

gentlemen. And they all know, if a child comes up, you don't turn the child away. If a child comes up and asks for an autograph, you roll out the red carpet of courtesy to 'em. They all know that. Very important. I mean, Brando won't sign autographs for anyone unless they're children. Unless they're a little kid, he don't sign. I think that's so sweet, you know? SB: What other fears do you have?

MJ: What other fears? Um. . . .

SB: Dogs. I don't understand why children have certain fears. The other night we put on a DVD for kids and there was a monster and Baba started screaming and crying and she ran out of the room and she always pushes her bed time, but she said, "I want to go to bed." And she went to sleep. She just hated it.

MJ: What show was it?

SB: I think it was *Men in Black* or something.

MJ: Ohhh. On DVD? But the other kids were fine with it? They knew it was movie stuff and not real?

SB: Yeah. I don't really let them see stuff like

that but they got it and I was watching it with them, so. . . Baba saw the first guy and. . .

MJ: Yeah, it's not for Baba. It's not for her. Prince and Paris love Jurassic Park, even though there can be violence and guns. But I want him to see great movies if they're great. Not too many but great, great art.

## Life in a Fishbowl

Shmuley Boteach: What about celebrity? What about the negative things associated with celebrity? What are the negatives of celebrity? What do you dislike about being as famous as you are?

Michael Jackson: I dislike when you become an icon, being a celebrity and then becoming an icon, an international phenomenon which has happened to me—and I am not ashamed to say it—and the jealousy that is involved. I have seen some serious jealousy.

SB: Do you feel it around some other celebrities, and it is palpable, or do you feel it from a distance?

MJ: I have seen it but once they meet me face to face they always, always change. They see I am nothing like that guy. I have had people really start to cry in front of me after meeting me. There have been fans, and there are two kinds of fans. There is the fan who goes, “Oh my God! Oh my God! Oh my God!” And they

faint and you have to hold them. Then there's the other fan, who say an abrupt, "Hi." I go "Hi, nice to meet you. What's your name?" They give you their name, but they have got an attitude. I am just as simple and warm with them and then I see them start to cry. I say, "Why are you crying?" And they say, "Because I didn't think you would be this nice." And they go away a different person. I go,

"Well, what did you think I was like?" and they'd go, "I thought you would be stuck up and arrogant." I say, "Please never judge a person. I am nothing like that." They have been so impressed. I'm sure they go away loving you tenfold, a thousand times more. Nothing beats kindness and love I think. Just simplicity.

SB: Have you always been able to melt a hard heart with kindness and love?

MJ: Yes.

SB: What about jealousy from other stars. Is there a lot of jealousy in your profession?

MJ: Absolutely. They admire you and know you are wonderful and great because they are jealous, because they wish they were in your

shoes. And "M" is one of them. Madonna is one of them. She is jealous. She is a girl, a woman and I think that's what bothers her. I think women don't scream for other women. Men are too cool to scream for women. I get the fainting and adulation and she doesn't.

SB: Does jealousy have no role? Were you never jealous of someone in your career who made you work harder?

MJ: Never jealous. Admiration, complete admiration.

SB: So admiration can bring even greater goals than jealousy because it is positive and not negative. So you would look at Fred Astaire and say, "I want to be able to do that."

MJ: Yes, absolutely. Complete inspiration, never jealousy. It's wrong, but people are like that aren't they? It's true? Can't people look at somebody great and get totally jealous of them?

SB: Sure, but you have never felt that?

MJ: I don't understand a person who could do that.

SB: For you it has always been inspiration? You have been in awe and wonder of those with great talent?

MJ: Can a person become jealous of God?

SB: Sure. Look at Stalin and Hitler. They tried to be God. They wanted to decide life and death.

MJ: Wow.



SB: Because they lose the sense of awe and wonder. God doesn't impress them. He threatens them. They want to be all-powerful, so they can't submit to God's authority. They become enemies of God. [Aside from jealousy] what other things do you dislike about celebrity?

MJ: Being famous.

SB: Do you dislike when you can't walk down the street?

MJ: No, I enjoy when people recognize me and they are nice and say, "Hi," and there is a crowd or something.

SB: When I was with you in that van, and we had left your hotel, Michael, twice we saw a young black kid on a bicycle follow us for about four to five miles on the most treacherous streets in New York City, just to get your autograph. And you stopped the car and made sure he got his autograph. We saw three other kids who, after the dinner with President Clinton, chased us for about a mile on foot until you said to the driver, "Stop." And you gave them your autograph. So you see people do

that?

MJ: Oh God, Shmuley, hundreds of them sometimes. It is a trillion times worse than what you have seen. They start breaking things and it turns into a mob scene.

I was with Michael as we exited Carnegie Hall after our presentation on Valentine's Day, 2001. I can vouch for the fact that he was nearly torn limb from limb.

SB: Do you enjoy when people recognize you as long as they are nice?

MJ: I think our job as celebrities, I think anybody who has been blessed by God with any sort of talent—be it the sculptor, the writer, the painter, the singer of songs, to the dancer—is to bring some sense of escapism and enjoyment to the masses of people. That's our job, to bring joy.

SB: Anything else you hate about celebrity? Obviously, you hate the tabloid stories as well?

MJ: Hate them. I hate the jerks for doing that sort of thing. I think racism, jealousy, and just hate—evil—are part of it. They vent out their

## The Michael Jackson Tapes

frustration on people who are trying to do good and it is just sad. If anyone believes it, they are like crazy. I mean I wish there was a way to totally get rid of those kinds of things.

## Ambition and Patience, Jealousy and Forgiveness, Anger at the Press

Shmuley Boteach: I see how people will do anything to have a piece of you. They want to ride your coattails to fame. They want to be seen with you, photographed with you. But there are people who have gotten close to you who have harmed you, who have hurt you, who have sued you. Have you got any stories where they come to you and say, "I am really sorry, I used you. I am really sorry?" Do you have any stories about forgiveness?

Michael Jackson: I wish. I wish people were that sweet to admit to their own wrongdoing.

SB: Not one. Never? No one ever came to you and said, "Sorry Michael, but at that party the other night I claimed to know you better than I really did. I used your name to get ahead"? Have you heard stories like that, where someone has said, "Oh yes I spoke to this guy. He says he knows you so well. He says he's your best friend. And you have never even heard of the guy?"

MJ: I have that all the time. Sometimes not to break their heart I agree like I know who they are talking about, because I don't want to embarrass the person.

SB: So you'll say, "Yeah, yeah. I know who you are talking about?" MJ: [When really I am thinking is] I don't know who the heck you are talking about.

SB: No one who has ever hurt you has come and asked for forgiveness? There wasn't a reporter who ever came and said, "I wrote this stuff. I am sorry"? I said to the journalist from that newspaper, "How could you write that President Clinton [at the Angel Ball] was publicly distancing himself from Michael when

he mentioned him three times in his speech?" I repeated the speech references to him and he actually said, "I'm sorry, I was given the wrong information." He was a decent guy. He said, "I will correct it tomorrow." But have you never had to forgive anyone in your life, Michael? Have you ever forgiven anyone without them asking? Have you forgiven the people who have hurt you?

MJ: To their face?

SB: In your heart.

MJ: Of course.

SB: You have seen someone being mean and you have forgiven them anyway.

MJ: Yes, because I was taught to be Biblical: "Forgive them for they know not what they do." And you do it.

SB: Do you think you are a better person for it?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: So you have no anger in your heart at anyone today?

MJ: I have anger for the press. I am very bitter, mad and angry with them and I am angry at

those who deliberately inflict pain upon a child to hurt them. The stories about what they are doing in the wars to the kids. I always try and figure out a way to try and do something about that.

SB: What about forgiveness? There are people who have hurt you. Children do fight, but they don't bear grudges. Can you forgive people with your whole heart, people who have hurt you?

MJ: Yes.

SB: Even I didn't realize this. But when I mentioned Roseanne Barr to you, because I do her television show often as a guest, I later saw that she had made a negative comment about you for no apparent reason.

MJ: She has been mean with me. That was why I was hesitant.

Roseanne is a friend of mine and I served as her daughters' real-life matchmaker on her syndicated talk show. Roseanne, who is Jewish, wanted her daughters to marry Jewish husbands. Since she is a very devoted mother, I was looking to get her involved in our child prioritization initiative. When I mentioned it to Michael, he went silent. It was a mark of his gentlemanliness that he did not badmouth my friend to me.

Later someone shared with me the reason for Michael's hesitation because apparently Roseanne once made a negative comment about Michael. But then, I know Roseanne and it could be she made the comment facetiously.

SB: You could tell me that.

MJ: I didn't maliciously attack her.

SB: I saw that. Can you forgive them? There is no malice in their heart.

MJ: You know, "They know not what they do." Words of Jesus. They don't even know me. It has no foundation what they are doing. How can they say it. . . they don't even know me? Do you believe something you have read?

SB: So it is total forgiveness?

MJ: Yes, because Roseanne came to me later on, like a puppy backstage, praising, feeling bad about all of that.

SB: Have you got other examples?

MJ: Madonna has never apologized. She is jealous.

SB: She wants to be the biggest star in the world?



MJ: Yes, she is jealous.

SB: You can't understand that. You would say, "What are you jealous for? You do your thing. I do my thing. . . ."

MJ: But at the same time she will come to my concert and cry. She comes there and tears rolling down her face for the song and the presentation of the song. There are some good qualities in her.

SB: There are good qualities in her. But you're saying she allows her jealousy to mask them at times. But if someone does that, they don't even have to ask for forgiveness because you will just forgive them?

MJ: Yes.

SB: I saw that you made an overture to Jay Leno. You went to a charity benefit with Elizabeth Taylor and you were wearing a red suit. MJ: Brown suit.

SB: So you saw Jay Leno and. . . ?

MJ: He was sitting at my table with President

Ford, Sylvester Stallone, Elizabeth Taylor, Sydney Poitier. When he came to sit down I just walked over to him and started like playfully choking him [because he always makes negative jokes about Michael] and he was like, “Urgghh. Urrrggghh.” And then Elizabeth said, “Have you been saying mean things about Michael?” And he went, “Huh?” Later on in the evening he shook my hand with a warm expression in his eyes and the next day he sends a letter to the office saying, “Michael said he would come on the show. Can you set it up so that we can have him on the show?” I never said that. So I don’t know how to take it from here. But instead of taking him to one side and saying something nasty back to him, I wouldn’t do that. I couldn’t help doing what I did to him [Laughs].

SB: That’s cute. Everyone saw?

MJ: Yeah, they saw it. He has a big neck too. I couldn’t get my hands round.

SB: What is it about Elizabeth Taylor that is so endearing to you? She is like your closest friend for many years. What is it about her, in the context of these childlike qualities?

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MJ: We are both from the same place. . . .

SB: She's loyal, right.

MJ: She's loyal. We are from the same place. She can relate to the world I have come from. She's curious. You just look in her eyes and you know. It is like speaking telepathically. You can feel it, it's true, without saying a word and I felt that seeing her the very first time. It's like that with Shirley Temple [Black]. We are from the same world.

## Michael and His Fans' Love: A Two-Way Street

Shmuley Boteach: Let me ask you this. Given that you were somewhat disadvantaged as a child, not being given the love that you needed, how do you overcome what you weren't given? How did you learn to make up for the basic tools that you were deprived of?

Michael Jackson: I think music and dance helped me a lot, like therapy. To be able to express your feelings through songs and your emotions on stage and getting all that love back a thousandfold through the fans.

SB: That compensated for what you didn't get?

MJ: Yeah, 'cause when a fan walks up, I mean honestly when somebody walks up to you and says, "I love you so much," it makes my heart feel so good. I could never get tired of it.

SB: Really? Do you not sometimes feel that a sicko fan, a stalker, takes it too far?

MJ: No, nope. I just love it. I just love my fans.

I love them to pieces and what makes my heart happy is when I see they support my beliefs about family and children. They have these big billboards of children and babies and they're with me, they get it, you know? They get what I'm saying.

SB: So what you didn't get from your parents you get from your fans, but there's one big difference. Parents are supposed to give you unconditional love, even if you don't deserve it. Bill Clinton's mother, Virginia Kelly, was once asked which son she loved more. Bill, who made her real proud as president of the United States, or Roger, who had drug issues and was accused of being a deadbeat dad.

MJ: One of her kids?

SB: Roger, Bill Clinton's brother.

MJ: Has a drug addiction?

SB: Sure, I'm almost positive he was in prison for selling drugs. MJ: Really?

SB: And he was a deadbeat dad, didn't pay alimony and stuff like that. And she was asked, "One son is kind of a bum and the other is

president, do you love Bill more?" And she said, "What? Are you crazy? I love both my children, I love them equally." So there's got to be a difference, Michael, between how the fans love you, and how your family does. Parents love you unconditionally, but the fans love you because you can sing and because you can dance, or do you feel unconditional love from your fans?

MJ: That's hard, 'cause I'm not in their skin. Umm, I think after discovering who I am and how I see them and make them feel good about themselves, they love me unconditionally. I know they do. . . I feel it, I see it. You go with me sometime and we go out and you're gonna run into the diehard fans, you're going to see something. It's unbelievable, it's like a religious experience. They sleep on the street, hold up candlelight and they have their families out there, it's just so beautiful. I love seeing the children come, that makes my heart so happy.

SB: So it's the case of originally they loved you because of song and dance, but then they went beyond that point.

MJ: Yeah, they discovered what I'm about, what

I'm trying to say. . . There's a message in the music that's more than just a beat and a rhythm. There's some real depth.

SB: Why do you have such fanatical fans? Can I tell you how fanatical they are? I haven't even shown you, but that one article I published about you, after Neverland and your birthday, has generated so many hundreds of letters by email to us. You've got to see it. Half of these people run their own Michael Jackson website. There's something like hundreds upon hundreds of Michael Jackson websites.

MJ: Yeah, yeah.

SB: How do you account for that? I mean everyone has fans. It's like when we talked about the Spice Girls the other day. Sure they had fans, but where are the fans now? Why are yours such diehard fans?

MJ: I think 'cause they, I've been given the gift that God has given me and I haven't been a "here today gone tomorrow" artist and it allows people, the public, to grow up with me. When they grow with me it's more an emotional contact and they feel attached to me like I'm

their brother. I have people walk up to me [and say] “Michael!” start talking, grabbing me just like they’re my brother or sister. I play as if, you know, you’ve got to go along with it. They really feel that you belong to them.

SB: You’ve known them for their entire life?

MJ: Yeah, all my life and I have to go right along with it. ‘Cause I’m on their wall, they hear me every morning, and pictures are everywhere. It is like a shrine and some religions say it’s idol worship but I don’t believe it’s idol worship.

SB: Okay, why isn’t it idol worship?

MJ: I have never written once, nor have I heard, [the fans claiming that I’m a god.] Perhaps there were some banners that say, “You are God.” We do have footage like that but we don’t show it on television. We have banners that say that. I don’t think it’s anything bad ‘cause what I’m talking about is love, let’s restore the family. . .



## PART 4

### THE KATHERINE JACKSON INTERVIEW

Shmuley Boteach: So I just want this to be more of a conversation. First of all, I wanted to meet you and it's a great pleasure. I'm friendly with Michael. He always talks about you. In fact, you're one of the central figures in the book.

Katherine Jackson: Oh really?

SB: Oh he adores you. When we went to visit Neverland we saw the Katherine Train and Mount Katherine. And when he talks about you his eyes close and he almost goes into some rapturous ecstasy.

KJ: [Laughing] He is such a good son. He really is a good son.

SB: Oh he worships you. I mean you are one of the great matriarchs in America. I mean, who can claim to have had a family that has achieved the things your family has achieved? You must be very proud of your children.

KJ: I am. I am very proud of them. But, you know, you have to pay the price.

SB: If you ever want me to turn this tape recorder off, I'm happy to. KJ: You mean whenever I want to?

SB: If you ever want me to turn it off, I'll turn it off.

KJ: That's all right. Just whatever you want to ask me, I'm ready. SB: You mean pay the price in terms of fame?

KJ: Yeah. When it comes to fame, you know, you pay the price. Some is good and some is bad. People like to hear bad things. People make up things about you and it hurts in a way because you find a lot of people. . . they get on television and they say a lot of things about you they don't even know about. And it's not true and this is what happens. So you have to be strong to get through this.

SB: How do you account for the extraordinary musical talent in your family?

KJ: Well, I've always loved music. My husband did too. My sister and I when we were young we used to sing together all the time and now the funny thing about it, my father, coming from Indiana. . . East Chicago, Indiana. That's where

I was raised. My father used to keep the radio station—we didn't have television in those days—used to keep the radio station on a station called, "Supper Time Frolic." And every night it would come on and it was all country western.

He [her father] gave my son Tito a guitar. After I got married and I moved to Gary, my father brought a guitar over for Tito as a gift. And the boys what they did, after they got television, they used to watch, whenever Temptations, you know they would come on, that was back in the sixties. It really started when I used to sing with them.

SB: That I haven't read. You used to sing with them?

KJ: You haven't read that? Yes. No, no, not professionally.

SB: No, I understand. At the house. . .

KJ: When they were little, when they were very young. I don't even think Michael was born at the time and whenever. . . We had [to pay] for a month of TV. And you know, how you get that and then you pay so much a month. And our

TV broke down and it was snowing and cold and we didn't have. . . the kids didn't have anything to do. So we would sing songs. They were songs like "Old Cotton Field Back Home." I don't know if you're familiar with those songs, folk songs really. And even before then when my husband and I first married we used to sing together just around the house doing nothing, harmonizing, and we always loved music and my husband's family was musical. He plays the harmonica, he used to, and the guitar and his brother played the saxophone and the other brother played the trombone and my father played guitar. So we just love music and I guess that's where it stemmed from.

SB: So you don't see it as something genetic?

KJ: Well it could be because my. . .

SB: There's no real family that has this record of. . .

KJ: My grandfather or great-grandfather, I would say grandfather, my mother used to tell me stories about how they would keep old wooden windows where they used to throw the windows open, you know, and they would sing

and you could hear their voices echoing across the countryside and there was nothing else to do. That was the cheapest thing you could do was entertain and entertain yourself and your family because there was not much money in the black families at that time so they entertained themselves with music. Guitars and harmonicas.

SB: So do you think those families were happier than the families today with money?

KJ: Oh yeah, I think so. I really believe that. Because even when I was in Gary I think I was much happier, in a way. I'm happy today but . . . the families are closer and I think that every family feels that when they're poor, they're closer.

SB: Some of the questions that I have. . . Let's first begin with Michael. He wanted me to meet you because he said many times that you can tell me the kind of stories that he may have forgotten. For example, what made him who he is? And I don't mean the musical side. Most Hollywood stars who have made a lot of money and who are world-famous are arrogant and

self-centered. They're not interested in kids. That's the last thing they're interested in. They're interested in themselves. First of all Michael lived at home until he was about twenty-seven years old, which is amazing. I mean who's ever heard of. . . Macaulay Culkin moved out when he was like eleven [I was exaggerating]. How do you account for his softness, his gentility, his love of animals, his love of children, his sensitivity to life? He's like a boy, things surprise him and startle him. How do you account for all of that?

KJ: You know all those questions you ask it's hard to answer in a way. But, they used to own a cat each and I said, "You can have a cat but you can't bring them in," and things like that for years before we came to California.

SB: So here he was already demonstrating this from the earliest age.

KJ: The love of animals from an early stage and Janet was another one that loved animals even when she was [young]. We don't have a law but you had to keep your animals out there. Animals just run stray. Animals everywhere.

After we came to California he was able to get animals, so they had snakes and he had sheep. Here in Encino we had a little zoo. We had a giraffe.

He loved those things. You know I think it's because. . . I'll tell you what I believe. That it was because when we were back in Indiana, it was really a bad place. Gary, Indiana, was really a bad place. And my husband, he wouldn't let the kids go out and be with. . . the neighborhood kids.

SB: Why didn't any of this go to Michael's head? Why did he stay at home? He said to me, "I'm old fashioned, you stay home until you get married." Did you raise the values with him? Was it the religious faith he was raised with? Michael is a fundamentally soft, sensitive person. Where does that come from?

KJ: I'd hate to say it.

SB: Are all your kids like that?

KJ: Most of them, yes. I'd say that—and I hate to say it. I used to tell him all the time that he was too much like me and I didn't want him to be that way.



The Michael Jackson Tapes

SB: That's exactly what he says.

KJ: [laughs] I used to tell him, "I don't want you to be that way. You're a man. You have to be strong. You know. But he's gentle. He's just a gentle person.

SB: So what you're saying is that his softness comes from you. He was much more attached to you than he was to his father.

KJ: Oh yeah.

SB: So he took after your example.

KJ: Oh yeah.

SB: And he actually believes in being soft and he'd rather be hurt than inflict pain.

KJ: Nothing bad.



## Religion in Katherine's and Her Children's Lives

Shmuley Boteach: And are you "soft" like that because of your religious faith? Michael talks about your religious faith all the time.

Katherine Jackson: No, I've been like that all the time. I wasn't a Jehovah's Witness all the time.

SB: You were a Jehovah's Witness when you were young?

KJ: I was not. I used to be Baptist. My mother raised us going to church school every Sunday and being in the Junior choir.

SB: So you were raised Baptist?

KJ: Yes.

SB: And did you go to church? Were you a religious Baptist?

KJ: Yes, I went to church but I didn't like what I saw in the Baptist church. And so after I got to judge religion by the way the people act and they were doing it and that's why I got out of it.

SB: And where was this?

KJ: In East Chicago, Indiana.

SB: 'Cause you saw things that turned you off and you decided to seek a better religion at the age of what. . . Twelve? Thirteen?

KJ: Yeah. Twelve, thirteen. My sister and I were studying to be a Jehovah's. . . Well, we were just studying with the people next door who were. 'Cause Jehovah's Witnesses come around and they teach the Bible to people. My mother found it and she got angry with us and made us stop. So after I got older, and I got married, and moved away, I remembered that. And that's when I started to study.

SB: Were you married?

KJ: I was already married.

SB: So you were exposed to the Jehovah's Witnesses when you were a teenager.

KJ: Yes.

SB: But your parents felt this was something they didn't want.

KJ: Right.

SB: So they dissuaded you. But it stayed with

you internally. So when you had more independence and freedom, you got married young? KJ: Nineteen.

SB: Nineteen? My wife got married at nineteen. My mother got married at nineteen. It's like a number in the family.

KJ: Mmmm.

SB: So you got married at nineteen and you moved with your husband to Indiana straight away?

KJ: To Gary, Indiana? No, when we first got married we stayed and two months later we moved to Gary, Indiana.

SB: So it was at that time that you went to find the Jehovah's Witnesses again?

KJ: Yes, but it was, I guess, about ten or twelve years later.

SB: And what was the appeal for you? I know a little about it that I've read. Did you feel you found greater sincerity?

KJ: Well, what it is about Jehovah's Witnesses is it's a religion that goes strictly by the Bible and they believe in doing right. Like, if you commit

adultery or anything like that, you get disfellowshipped. If you're married and you commit adultery, which is wrong, then you get disfellowshipped from the religion. A lot of things make me believe in it. I believe in it because I believe it's a true religion. I do. There's a Creator who cares about you and then we have examining the scriptures daily.

SB: Every day you have something to read?

KJ: Aha.

SB: Old and New Testament?

KJ: Aha.

SB: And you take these books wherever you go?

KJ: Well, not that one [she points to a book]. But these are just testimonies by people about what they went through.

SB: You feel it's based on the Bible so it's very authentic. Therefore, it's a true religion, so it really spoke to you. And you then formally converted?

KJ: No, I studied. You have to study the Bible.

SB: Did your husband walk this path with you?

KJ: He studied also but he didn't become one.

He thought it was too strict for him. My oldest daughter was baptized. Michael was at one time.

SB: No other kids?

KJ: No. No others.

SB: And why was that? Why some and not others?

KJ: I guess they did but I never forced anything on them. It was up to their own free will if they wanted to be.

SB: So at a certain age you spoke to Michael about the religion and he took to it?

KJ: No but, I guess he wanted to and he went with me to the Kingdom Hall.

SB: Were you proud of the fact that he became a Jehovah's Witness? KJ: I was very proud that he became a Jehovah's Witness.

SB: And by this time was he already famous? Or he was just a boy?

KJ: He was already famous, in a way. Yes, he was famous because The Jackson 5 was very famous at first.

SB: Right, so this was that age already with The Jackson 5.

The Michael Jackson Tapes

KJ: Right, right.

SB: But he was the only one of The Jackson 5 who was baptized? KJ: He was the only one.

SB: And he used to go with you on Sundays to church?

KJ: Oh yes, aha. And he used to go on his own.

SB: I asked Frank to show you this beautiful article that Michael and I wrote about Pioneering and the Sabbath. A beautiful article. [It was published on the well-known spirituality website Beliefnet.com.]

KJ: Oh, really?

SB: Oh, it was covered everywhere.

KJ: Oh, really?

SB: Oh, it was huge. It's a shame he doesn't show you these things. It was a beautiful article.

KJ: Oh why didn't he show it to me?

SB: It's a beautiful article about how he loved the Sabbath.

KJ: Mhmm.

SB: So he would go with you. He told me that what he liked about them was that they never

treated him differently. That although he was now a star, they would call him Brother Jackson.

KJ: Aha.

SB: They would go out of their way not to treat him differently, not less than, but not more, than any other.

KJ: Yes.

SB: Did you see that as well?

KJ: Yes, they did. That's how they think. There's a lot of entertainers that are Jehovah's Witnesses. I can't think of the name of the group, you know, Benson, Ronnie Loss. Just, I can go on and on with a lot of entertainers that are Jehovah's Witness. And they treat them the same. They don't treat them any different. Just like one of them.

SB: Did Michael like that? That he could just finally be himself?

KJ: Yes, I think so.

SB: He also told me that they were very good. That if reporters followed him to church they didn't make a big deal about it. [laughing] In

the article, we write jokingly “even reporters are children of God.”

KJ: [laughing] That’s true.

SB: Okay, so you have all these children, a few of them took to the religion and Michael was one of them, even though he was a big star. It has always seemed to me in our conversations that Michael has a natural spirituality, that he has a natural closeness to God. KJ: Yes, aha.

SB: Could you comment on that at all? Did you see that from an early age?

KJ: Aha.

SB: Did he pray before he went to sleep at night?

KJ: Yes, I believe he has. Like I have some children. . . I don’t know if they even, I don’t know, I can’t say because. . .

SB: Are you comfortable with talking about this?

KJ: I’m fine. But I know Michael is [spiritual]. He’s always been a quiet, loving child. And he just loved people, loved children. And we’d sit there and both of us, we’d just sit and cry when



we saw. . . because it's very sad and I knew then, you know. . . and he used to always tell me, "I know I can't heal the whole world, Mother, but I can at least. . . I can make a start."

SB: I was discussing this with Michael yesterday. Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays.

KJ: No.

SB: And is there a reason for that?

KJ: Yes. . . Jesus' death is . . . the only holiday that. . .

SB: Okay, so there's Easter. Do you call it Easter or do you call it something else?

KJ: Uh, we don't call it. . . we don't celebrate Easter.

SB: That's the resurrection. You celebrate the actual day that he died. KJ: Yes.

SB: Right, okay. Good Friday.

KJ: And that's the only day he said to keep. Not the resurrection, he said.

SB: Do you read the Bible every day?

KJ: Yes.

SB: So this is. . . this is your life, your religion.

It's absolutely central to who you are.

KJ: Well, yes, in all the Kingdom Halls [I attend five meetings a week]. SB: Five meetings a week?

KJ: But you don't have to meet. We have a meeting on Sunday night, which is where we go and they teach and we learn, things like that. You never stop learning the Bible.

SB: Right.

KJ: Do Jewish people read it all the time too?

SB: Absolutely. Oh absolutely, we read it. . .

KJ: After reading it day and night. I know you know all about that. SB: We read the bible every single day.

KJ: Aha.

SB: I mean, by this age already, I'm thirty-four years old, I've studied it my whole life. I know, I mean, I'm not trying to brag, but just from reading it I know a lot of it by heart by now.

KJ: Oh.

SB: At least the five Books of Moses, that is.

KJ: Aha.

SB: Which is what we focus on more than anything. More than Psalms or the prophets.

KJ: Right.

## When Michael Left the Jehovah's Witnesses

Shmuley Boteach: How did you feel when Michael began to feel distanced from the Jehovah's Witnesses?

Katherine Jackson: I felt really bad because it bothered me so much. I cried about it, I prayed about it. And I really felt bad about when he disfellowshipped himself from the religion. They didn't disfellowship him. And he thought that would be better because he thought that he would be doing things and. . .

SB: But what was their exact objection? That he was a pop star and didn't fit in anymore?

KJ: He would've fit in. But I guess, I really don't know why he decided to disfellowship himself.

SB: He disfellowshipped himself.

KJ: Right.

SB: Up until that time he was still going with you to church on Sundays?

KJ: Yes.

SB: So he disfellowshipped himself and did he

discuss it with you before he did that?

KJ: No. I heard that later. No, that's what hurt so bad. Not that he was. . . I just didn't want to see him disfellowship himself from the religion.

SB: He felt that would give him greater artistic freedom, probably. KJ: Probably so.

SB: Like with "Thriller" he had to do that thing at the beginning.

KJ: Aha.

SB: Did you call him and say, you know, you should think about this?

KJ: No. No, I didn't because he disfellowshipped himself before I knew it and it was too late then.

SB: But do you still feel that he. . . It seems to me that he still has a very spiritual core, I mean like he talks about God with me all the time.

KJ: Yes, yes. He really is. And I wish he would come back.

SB: Do you talk to him about raising Prince and Paris with some of the spiritual tradition?

KJ: Well, I bring the literature to Grace [the children's nanny].

SB: Right.

KJ: And I bring the little. . . we have a book of Bible stories for children and I brought both of them one and she has them and she reads it to them. And I don't think he has anything against her teaching them or reading to them.

SB: Right. As Michael became more famous, did you see any changes at all, away from the. . .

KJ: The religion?

SB: Yeah.

KJ: No, I didn't see anything against. . . No, I didn't. The only thing he was doing was the way he was dancing at the time when he did "Billie Jean." They always said the way he had. . . he was grabbing his crotch, and things like that.

SB: Right, well he always jokes with me about that. He laughs at it.

KJ: I know [laughing].

## Providing a Sense of Safety

Shmuley Boteach: Okay. Did you feel extra protective over him because he was very soft? Did you feel the need to look after him more?

Katherine Jackson: Yes. He was pretty strong in the way of taking care of himself in so many ways but I guess that's what made me feel close to him because I feel that he's soft. Like, when they were talking about him like with the child molestation thing and everybody was telling me, "Don't say anything, you're gonna make it worse." And Michael's office would say, "Don't say anything. You're gonna make it worse." And I said, "It can't get any worse than what it is. I don't care what you say, I'm going on television." And I did, because he needed someone to help him, to protect him from this stuff. Not that I could protect him, but at least I could try to set matters straight. Even though they didn't believe me, I had spoken. But they all came out for money. They knew they were lying, and I went on television again and I said,



“These people work for me, not for Michael.”  
People try to make money any kind of way they can.

SB: And when he was younger, did you also feel the need to protect him? Did you immediately see that of all your nine children that he was softer than the others, that he was more sensitive than the others, that he was gentler than the others?

KJ: You know, I see him more sensitive than the others but. . . I think he’s kind of strong when you have to be. Don’t you see that? Or do you?

SB: Oh, absolutely, I saw it yesterday. I told you. Michael and Frank had this whole clash about how much he should do tomorrow night at Carnegie Hall. Absolutely, yeah, he is very strong when he has to be.

KJ: Aha, that’s how he is.

SB: So you saw that as well. You saw there was a softness, but a strong core.

KJ: A softness, but strong too in a way. And he can be hurt very easily, you know, because

people think a certain way or say certain things about him. But I think he's kind of hard now because he's had so many things thrown upon him.

SB: Absolutely.

KJ: He's got a hard shell.

SB: He had to endure a lot. Absolutely. When he chose to stay at home. . . he was now big, even after *Thriller*, he was now one of the biggest stars in the world.

KJ: Aha.

SB: Can you talk about that? About that at all? Did you. . . I mean,

I find that very moving that in this day and age when people go to college at like seventeen and they're not close to their parents anymore. . . And here was this guy who could obviously afford to live anywhere he wanted. But he wanted to live at home. Um, so we were just talking about Michael staying at home. As your children. . . your children got married young, most of them, I mean the older boys.

KJ: Yes they did.

SB: Michael didn't.

KJ: No.

SB: And were you happy to have him at home?

KJ: Yes. In fact, I didn't want to see any of my children leave home, but that's how mothers are.

SB: Right.

KJ: You know, but they have to leave and go away.

SB: Well did you say to him, "That's good that you're staying home. You're right, this is the correct decision. Stay here until you get married"?

KJ: No.

SB: Or did you say to him "You're a superstar, you really should be. . ."

KJ: No, no. I never believed in pushing children out or you know, like the mother bird. . . you know, push them out and say fly? But I did believe in them being strong and being able to go, but whenever they got ready. . . twenty-four. . . twenty-five.

SB: He always felt very protective about you?

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KJ: He said, "I'm gonna buy you a house."

## Being Michael's Mother

Shmuley Boteach: There are a lot of stories he tells me about when he was a boy, about you. Like for example, he said that he always used to dance. . .

Katherine Jackson: Aha.

SB: And he would leave scuff marks.

KJ: Mhmm [laughing].

SB: And everyone would say, "Michael stop dancing." Or, "You're making too much noise." And you used to always say, "No, let him dance."

KJ: Yes.

SB: He sort of credits you with bringing out his musical talent more than anyone else because you. . .

KJ: Oh, really?

SB: Yeah, he always tells me. One of the stories that we have in the book is that he always used to dance and leave marks and be making noise and you would always say, "No, let Michael

dance. Always let Michael dance.”

KJ: Yes.

SB: Do you remember that?

KJ: Yes, yes. I think Michael was born with it because even when he was a little kid, three years old, and the kids used to sing and he would be. . . that’s what made me notice that he was a singer. He was over in the corner, and they were singing and perfect harmony came from him and I thought, “My God where did he get this from?” And then when he was about five years old, they would be wondering, “Now what move can we put with [this song]?” You know how they do the choreography. And he was doing that. He would tell them, “No, let’s do this and let’s do that.”

SB: Almost like he had it inside him?

KJ: He did. He had it inside him. I don’t know where it came from and it startled me. Just like some things you see in Prince now and you just don’t believe it. And that’s how it was with him.

SB: There was something just last week saying that Michael's chin was surgically implanted, and that's how ridiculous it gets. How do you feel about all that stuff as his mother?

KJ: People saying things about him?

SB: When you read this stuff. . . anything. . .

KJ: Oh it upsets me. It makes me angry.

SB: But do you also say to yourself at that time "I believe in God and I believe that everything is done for a reason?" Do you find strength in your spiritual faith that ultimately none of this will matter, that God's will will be done?

KJ: I do feel that way. If it wasn't for my faith, my spirit and my belief in God, I don't think I could've made it with all the stuff that goes on about my family and about Michael. It really hurts. But you have to pray about it. That's the only way that you can. . . SB: So that's what's gotten you through it?

KJ: Yes.

SB: And did you say to Michael in 1993 or in any of those times, "You have to be close to God. You need that faith. This is what's gonna

get you through it”? That it’s not the money or the success or the fans. That it’s a strong relationship with God?

KJ: Right, right, it is. And I feel that and I feel that. Uh [sigh], well, I can’t say it.

SB: Well, for most people, as they become more successful, they become less religious. It’s a trend. With you it seems that the more successful the family became, you became more religious. You held on tighter.

KJ: Aha. Yes. There’s nothing else out there to me. I’m proud of my children, proud of what they’re doing, and they have a talent for it. But as far as anything else out there in the world, there’s nothing. Because Satan is. . . and you might not believe me. . .

SB: Oh, please speak openly. . .

KJ: Mhmm.

SB: There are things in my faith that you wouldn’t agree with. [Both laugh.]

SB: But we’re both people of faith.

KJ: Well, I believe that Satan is the god of the system. The reason I say that is because. . . all



the news you hear, bad news. . . all the people are doing crazy things. And the Bible speaks of children, these last days, of children how they are disrespectful, lovers of money rather than lovers of God and, how children are disrespectful to their parents and parents are disrespectful to their children. And that's what's happening. Don't you think so?

SB: Absolutely. Well, that's why you should come tomorrow night [to the joint lecture Michael and I were going to deliver at Carnegie Hall]. It's going to be a big blow against the side of Satan. You should really come. I couldn't agree more. What drew me to Michael, and you should see the speech he's giving tomorrow, is how he speaks so movingly about how nobody eats dinner with their kids anymore and how no one reads their children bedtime stories. And every time there would be a shooting in the schools, he'd call me up at home when he was in California and I was in New Jersey. And he'd say, "Did you hear? Another kid got shot." Now in America, it's "Oh, another kid got shot." And you'd turn the page to another story. But

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Michael cried.

KJ: Mhmm, mhmm. That's Michael.

SB: On my birthday, we brought the national leukemia poster child. Michael came to my birthday party and she sat next to him, this little girl seven years old. And when the mother told him her story, Michael cried like a little baby. It was unbelievable. Do you do that as well?

KJ: Yes, I do.

SB: So he really is most like you. I mean, if I want to understand him, I have to understand you.

KJ: Aha, mhmm. And I hate that about myself and Janet does it too. [Laughing]

SB: Michael told me about you—you can't say no to anybody. People will ask you for things and you can't say no. [Laughing]

KJ: Mhmm, it's hard. And he's the same way and I told him you have to learn to say no.

SB: Now does that come from your parents? Were they very kind people?

KJ: Mhmm, yes. Especially my mother. My father was too.

SB: So you transmitted this tradition of kindness to your children. Kindness was the most important thing.

KJ: That's how I felt. Sometimes when you're poor and you have nothing else to give, give your love, give of yourself. And whatever you had, like poor people always do. When I was raised up, they would always invite people in to eat, that's all they had, you know.

SB: Are you treated differently in the church as the mother of the Jacksons?

KJ: Oh no, no, no, no, no, no.

SB: And do you like the fact that you can just be yourself there?

KJ: Yes. I like that fact. I could be myself. And we have the girl that's in our congregation too that always sits next to me and my friend and all the time who was on tour with Diana Ross. And uh she's. . . [pause in tape] her name is Linda Lawrence and you know they had to quit their tour but she went on tour with Diana, took Mary's place. And she's been traveling as a Supreme. You know, they have a lot before Diana and she's treated the same way. And my

daughter's in the congregation, and she's treated the same way.

SB: Which one? Rebbie?

KJ: Rebbie.

SB: She lives also. . . she lives near you?

KJ: She used to. She lives in Las Vegas.

SB: I want to ask this question as well. . . I can turn this off, or not. But Michael has had a tortured, he's had a tortured relationship with his father. I'm not saying anything new. I mean, this has come out, as you know, in interviews and things like that.

KJ: Aha.

SB: You probably know that there's uh. . . I don't know how much he spoke about his father in public but one of the famous things that he said publicly was that once his father walked into the room, he felt like throwing up 'cause he was so afraid of him. Do you remember that?

KJ: I know! Yeah, I remember him saying that. He used to tell me and when I used to go on the road he always said, "Don't bring Joseph." I'd say, "Why?" and he said, "I literally. . ."

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SB: I could turn this off if you want me to.

KJ: Yes. Could you, please?

SB: Of course.

## PART 5

### DOES AN IDEAL WOMAN EXIST ?

#### Relationships and Wannabe Girlfriends

Shmuley Boteach: You know how children are always making mock weddings. They tell you they have a crush on someone in their class. Children seem naturally romantic. Have you always been romantic?

Michael Jackson: Not on purpose, but not unromantic, I don't think so. You just be yourself.

SB: Children always have this puppy love thing going on, and they have crushes on each other. They're always passing notes in class.

MJ: I think that is so sweet and cute.

SB: Do you like creating romance? Are you a matchmaking kind of person?

MJ: No, I don't do that. I am too shy to do all that stuff. I am a lot like my mother. We used to ask my mother, "Do you kiss Joseph?" She goes, "Don't ask me those questions." We go,

“Mother, do you kiss him?” She goes, “I don’t want to talk about it.” We go, “Well, how did you meet him? Who asked who to get married?” She says, “I don’t want to talk about it.”

SB: So you were brought up to be shy and modest about things pertaining to love and romance?

MJ: Yes, we don’t talk about it.

SB: You have been married twice, Michael. Do you still believe in romance, or have you had some negative experiences and it is therefore more difficult to believe?

MJ: No, I believe in it, but I am shy about it. None of us have invited our parents to our weddings. We don’t believe in it. We are too shy. I wouldn’t dare in a million years to have my mother at a wedding of mine. I can’t have myself walking down the aisle and my mother sitting there. That’s why we all ran off and got married secretly and my mother reads it in the paper and she doesn’t mind. Because we are just like her. She would have done the same thing.

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SB: So love has to be something hidden and concealed?

MJ: It's like private, like mushy stuff.

SB: And mushy stuff is always private?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: Well, I also believe that romantic love thrives through mystery and concealment. But we can't overdo it. Your parents should definitely be at your wedding. So romance is something you believe in but you have been taught to be shy about it?

MJ: I am shy. I don't know how good I am at it because I am shy. I am very different in that way. I have heard guys be really poetic with girls and, "Oh baby, this and that." I am not like that. I am like straight to the point and say it simply.

SB: So what do you do in things like music videos when you're expected to portray romance and do love scenes and things like that?

MJ: That's why it is my job to cast the girl, because it is my job to think they are cute. So I can do it if I really like them, like some of the



girls you see in my videos. I have cast them because I really like them and it caused a problem afterwards because they start to really like me, and I don't want to get that serious, and it becomes a problem sometimes.

SB: You probably face this all the time because not only are you famous, but you are the kind of guy who women want to be around—soft, gentle, not afraid to express his emotions. [This was obviously said before Michael's arrest and the torrent of allegations about him that later come out.] Women die for guys who aren't afraid to show vulnerability and softness, whereas a lot of the guys in Hollywood are stereotypically self-absorbed, self-obsessed, and can't commit. So do you often find that this happens, that women get clingy?

MJ: What do you mean?

SB: Like you said, it is supposed to be a professional thing. You just film something with a female costar, but afterwards they become attached.

MJ: Yes, it happens.

SB: How do you break the news to them that

you don't reciprocate?

MJ: When they see me running the other way. Yeah. Some of them follow me around the world and it is so hard.

SB: That probably makes them chase you even more because they probably are drawn to that boyish shyness. To be sure, many women like "bad" boys. But for the same reason, a lot like shy guys. In the same way they believe that they can redeem the bad boy and polish up this coarse diamond, they believe the same thing about the shy guy. They think, "Only I can bring him out of his shell." But I guess after a while, with you running halfway around the world from them, they get the message. But you never tell them directly?

MJ: No, because it would hurt them too much.

## Crushes and Puppy Love

Shmuley Boteach: What did Cindy Crawford want from you last night?

Michael Jackson: I have seen Cindy from afar several times, and she was with other guys, and we have met up at other functions . . . from afar. I think she felt this was her chance to really meet me. She probably admires me. A lot of the people come over. What you saw was nothing.

SB: You have seen celebrities behave like that, like a pack of dogs, chasing after someone who is more famous than them? It was so degrading.

MJ: Yes! It's worse.

SB: What did she talk to you about?

MJ: [Imitating Crawford] "How are you?" I go, "I'm all right." "Oh, you sure you are okay? Oh,

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I just love your work, and I love what you do. How long are you in town?" I said, "I am working here. I'm recording."

SB: Do you think there was a romantic interest?

MJ: Yeaah. I kinda think so.

SB: Was she asking you out?

MJ: Those girls flirt. . . they flirt. She is pretty.

SB: It was blatant. A banker who was with us at the table said to me, "Cindy Crawford, when she is up close, she is just another gal." I said, "But what is she doing here?"

MJ: Did you see Donald Trump come over?

SB: Now he is an interesting man.

MJ: A woman I really liked and respected was Princess Diana. SB: Why?

MJ: Because she was classy and sincerely cared about people and children and the plight of what was going on in the world. She didn't do it for show. I like the way she made her kids wait in line to get on a ride for something.

SB: Can we say that there was an ever so innocent slight romantic attraction? Or do you not want to say that? Do you just want to say that you thought she was a very special woman?

MJ: I thought she was very special.

SB: Was she a feminine kind of woman?

MJ: Very feminine and classy. She was my type for sure, and I don't like most girls. There are very few I like who fit the mold. It takes a very special mold to make me happy and she was one of them. For sure.

SB: Because of her love of kids?

MJ: It takes a lot to find a mirror image, a mirror image. People always say that opposites attract and I think that is true, as well. But I want somebody who is a lot like me, who has the same interests and who wants to help and they gotta go to hospitals with me and care about Gavin [Michael's later accuser]. That's why you saw Lisa Marie and me at those kinds

of things. She cared about that stuff, too.

SB: Did you ever think of asking Princess Diana out?

MJ: Absolutely.

SB: So why didn't you have the nerve to ask her?

MJ: I have never asked a girl out in my life. They have to ask me. SB: Really?

MJ: I can't ask a girl out.

SB: If she would have asked you out?

MJ: Absolutely. I would have gone. Brooke Shields asked me out every time you saw us out together. It was her idea to go out and do it every time. I sincerely liked Brooke Shields too. I liked her a lot.

SB: Does she like kids?

MJ: Yes. My first girlfriend, Tatum O'Neal, she'd won the Academy Award for *Paper Moon* . . . I was sixteen, she was thirteen. And was I naïve. She wanted to do everything and I didn't want to have sex at all, because there were a lot of values associated with being a Jehovah's Witness. I said, "Are you crazy?" One

of those was to be kind to everyone. When I held Tatum's hand it was just magic, better than anything, kissing her, anything. Her, Ryan O'Neal, and myself went to this club and were watching a band and underneath the table she was holding my hand and I was melting. It was magical. There was fireworks going on. It was all I needed. But that means nothing to kids today. She grew up too fast. She wasn't into innocence, and I love that.

Now Brooke Shields, she was one of the loves of my life. We dated a lot. Her pictures were all over my walls and mirrors. I was at the Academy Awards with Diana Ross and she just came up to me and said, "Hi, I'm Brooke Shields. Are you going to the after party?" I said, "Yeah, and I just melted." I was about twenty-three. . . during *Off the Wall* . I thought, "Does she know [that photographs of her are] all over my room?" So we get to the party and she says, "Would you dance with me?" And we went on the dance floor. And man, we exchanged numbers and I was up all night, spinning around in my room, just so happy. She

was classy. We had one encounter when she got real intimate and I chickened out. And I shouldn't have.

Lisa. . . we're still friendly, but she's running around. She just changed her number and we don't have the new one yet.

SB: Can you immediately tell innocence?

MJ: Right away, although I find it harder to tell with women because they're so smooth. But with men, I can usually tell, because they're more open and like puppies, while girls are more like cats. You know how if you've been on vacation and get home and a puppy is all over you, while with a cat, it's, "Hey, I don't need you. You walk over to me and pick me up." They give you attitude. They'll walk right by you even though they haven't seen you in three months. Women are very smart. Walt Disney always said they're smarter than men, and [he] always hired more women.



## Thinking About the Perfect Woman

Shmuley Boteach: The same principle of not being overexposed. Would you advise women in relationships to do the same thing? Would you say to people today who get bored of one another, “You know, fifty percent of marriages end in divorce and so much of it is that husbands and wives just get tired of one another. They get weary and bored. Would you say that if there was more mystery, if they learned to hold back and leave room to discover one another, then there would be more adventure in their relationship?”

Michael Jackson: Yeah, yeah. I think going away is good. Like they say, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” I totally believe in it. Going away is really important. I don’t understand how people can be together all day with each other and be totally fine. I think it is sweet and beautiful. . .

SB: Have you seen marriages like that?

MJ: I have seen couples, yes. I don’t know how

they do it. Because creatively they have to do so many things.

SB: So the women you have dated, the ones who were smart enough not to throw themselves at you, were they the ones that you were more interested in, the ones who weren't always available and you had to chase them a bit?

MJ: The ones who were classy and quiet and not into all the sex and all the craziness because I am not into that.

SB: They are the ones that you are more interested in?

MJ: Aha. I don't understand a lot of things that go on in relationships and I don't know if I ever will. I think that is what has hurt me in my relationships because I don't understand how people do some of the things they do.

SB: Mean things?

MJ: Mean things and vulgar things with their bodies. I don't understand it and it has hurt my relationships.

SB: So for you love is something very pure?

MJ: Very pure. It shocked me some of the

things.

SB: What was it about Diana, that kind of a woman, her dignity, that kind of innocence? Do you see that often in people where they have a regal bearing to them?

MJ: No, we don't see it and that's what I love. I think she truly cared about people's feelings and really tried to make the world a better place. I really believe that her heart was out for other people. You could see it in some of the photos where she is touching those little baby's faces and they are sitting on her lap and she would be holding them. That is not faked. You could see it. When you see the queen come out she has got these gloves on and she is waving from a distance, you can see the heart. You can see. You put your money where your mouth is and you go in those huts and go in those ditches and sit with them and sleep there. That's doing it, that's what I do. Remember when you said you saw my picture in China in some hut, some lady's hut. I go in there and I touch the people and I see them.

SB: When you are in a meeting, are you able to see who is the hard-nosed businessman, bottom line is everything, he'll manipulate, lie, whatever it takes, and the ones who are pure, more innocent, who you want to do business with? Can you see immediately? Or, on the contrary, do you see with a child's eyes and see goodness in everybody, which is why you have sometimes ended up with people who aren't the nicest people?

MJ: That's true, too. It works both ways, but you can detect it and feel it in another person. There is this man in LA and he works in a vinyl record shop and he has got to be in his fifties and he has the spirit of an eleven-year-old boy. I always stare at him and he stares at me and there is like this telepathy going on. He talks like a kid and the way he moves his eyes. I say to myself, "This is so interesting." I'd like to get to know him better and find out what is this. I mean it. It's amazing. I feel it. I feel it in

children right away, of course. I pick up on it like that and children can tell it in you.

SB: It's almost like a relief. Here is someone who understands me? MJ: Yeah. Their eyes light up when you come over and they want to play and they feel it.

SB: Michael, have you never met a woman like that who loves those same things, who'd play hide and seek with you, who'd love the water fights with you?

MJ: Not yet. The ones I have had are jealous of the children. All of them. They get jealous of their own kids and start competing with them. That rubs me in a bad way.

SB: Theoretically, if you were Adam in the Garden of Eden and you found an Eve like that, would that be your ideal woman?

MJ: Absolutely. I haven't found it [women who want to play]. . . I think more guys are more apt to goof off. Even when they are much older, their thirties, and a woman will come in and say, "What are you doing? Don't do that. Are you crazy?" The guy will go, "What, we are just having fun?"

SB: Women almost feel that it is immature if they behave that way, no? MJ: Yes, but if you look in history you never see real serial killer women.

SB: Yes, but they don't play the way boys do.

MJ: I know they don't.

SB: Even at a younger age they are playing with dolls and they are marrying Barbie and Ken. In other words, the quintessential thing is that if boys are shooting spit balls at each other, the girls will say, "Stop doing that." Even then they want to be older. It is almost against their gender. Have you ever found girls who like the practical jokes that you like? Have you ever found a woman who collects comics?

MJ: It is a rarity. If I find one I will go nuts. Especially, if she has those qualities and is beautiful inside. It would be a home run for me. That's why guys hang out. Because they can do that.

SB: Thinking about mothers and fathers, mothers are really good at doing homework with their kids and being more nurturing. But the rough playing is what the fathers do. They

get on the floor and get dirty, wrestle, build castles with them in a sandpit. Isn't that interesting? It creates an imbalance in the book to an extent. On the contrary, it is the girls in school that are always ridiculing the boys for being immature. "Look at those boys. Look at the way they are behaving." Maybe the women need to be taught the art of playfulness as much as the men.

MJ: Do you not think it's embedded in them biologically? Biologically, as a breed, don't you think women are just a different species?

SB: They are definitely different, but the question is, "Why don't they want to play?" The funny thing is this: when they play, it's when they flirt. In other words, if you chase them round the room and there is something romantic going on, then they will run around with you and laugh and giggle. But it's specifically when it is romantic. They don't do it with each other. You don't see two girls running round the room, playing hide and seek or wrestling each other, the way they're prepared to suddenly when it's a boyfriend. A lot of



fans—the women who are interested in you—would do all these things just to make you happy. But you don't know if they were doing it because they are really enjoying it. It seems that it's only romance that makes women playful. But then, sometimes it bothers men, because the women become like a tease and, you know, they have this power over you with these little games they play. I have got to find four or five women who fit into this opening chapter who are very successful but who have retained child-like qualities and, so far, we have come up with one. When you think of Bill Clinton don't you think of a guy as being pretty playful? He goes to McDonald's and he jogs and. . .

MJ: Riding his bike at the White House. Did you see it? He was riding his bike in the White House to get him to the next meeting. A great shot of him in *Vanity Fair*. Can you think of Hillary doing that? Nope, not in a million years. I can think of little girls who would join in with play. Girls who are tomboys.

SB: Okay, when they are tomboys. But when they get older, do they still play to the same



extent?

MJ: Do you think it is in their heart that they can just be themselves and be dignified?

SB: What women seem to look forward to more than anything else is falling in love. They don't look forward to the playfulness in the same way. But once they're in love a carefree playful side is released.

MJ: I have to play.

SB: Is there a difference in how your male fans and female fans relate to you?

MJ: Sometimes. But I am finding today, and it is so true, that guys today are really changing and I have watched it happen through my career. Guys scream with the same kind of adulation that girls do in a lot of countries. They are not ashamed. They are shaking, "I love you." We have guys chasing us around.

SB: But the fanatics are the women.

MJ: Yeah, they are loyal, women. They have been loyal. They are activists. They will fight you about me.

## Motherly Figures

Shmuley Boteach: Do you find it easier to be closer to motherly figures in your life like Elizabeth Taylor, your own mother, who you always praise, and your sister Janet? Do you find that women are more child-like than men? Are they gentler, are they less competitive, less mean? You have been around some mean women, as well, who behave in a masculine-aggressive way, like Madonna. You told me that she can be mean. Is that a feminine trait or do you feel that she has a real masculine streak in her? Do you find it easier to be closer to women?

Michael Jackson: In some ways, yes, and some ways, not. It depends on the age. I have seen some women who are very bitter and mean and they become ladies later. They come into their own and they become good people. I have seen it in my brothers' ex-wives who were horrible. They were like nightmares when they were young. With time and age they become good

people. But they were horrible, just horrible. Then with time they just level out, that's what I like when they become truly good.

SB: But, intuitively, do you find women easier to get along with? Are they softer than men? I mean, I personally find women more naturally nurturing, more refined, possessed of a greater nobility of spirit, I have to tell you.

MJ: I am trying to be real honest with you.

SB: But many of your closest friends seem to be women.

MJ: Women are softer than men. Yeah, that's true.

SB: Do you think that a child star as cute as Shirley Temple, do you think a boy star could be that cute?

MJ: Yeah, but he wouldn't have the same. . . Shirley Temple just had something that was meant to give us bliss and make us smile. SB: Are you more protective of Paris because she is a little girl? MJ: Paris can stand [on] her own sometimes much more. Prince won't stand up for himself. People can push him about and he

won't stand up. She won't take anything from anybody. She fights. She's tough, very tough. It's true, man. Prince will let people take complete advantage of him and won't say anything.

SB: He is more like his father, like you.

MJ: I was like that. My mother always told me, "Don't let people hurt you. You are too much like me." She would cry, "You are too much like me. I don't want you to be like me. I hurt so much." Because people take advantage.

SB: But you never toughened up. It seems that you would rather be taken advantage of than do the taking advantage of. It hurts to be taken advantage of. But it doesn't hurt as much as being a mean and aggressive person. Mean-spiritedness is a form of internal corruption and it makes it impossible to be happy. Notice that evil people never seem happy. They are miserable and they seek to make other people just as miserable as they are.

MJ: Yeah, I'd rather suffer. I hate to say it because I have suffered a lot. God, have I suffered. But I would rather suffer.

SB: You have seen the ugly side of people.

MJ: I have seen the worst. . . the nightmare of the human condition, the human soul. I would never even think that common man would be capable of behaving in such a way.

SB: Children never did that to you, Michael. You never saw the ugly side of them? Unless they were influenced by their parents.

MJ: Unless you see a bunch of kids together and they are picking on each other and just to impress each other that they had a bad upbringing. If I were to raise the kids to do some of the things that you hear about in the news, they would be totally different kids. They wouldn't conceive of doing such a thing. If I was raised in Jamaica I would have a different accent. If I was an English kid I wouldn't . . . it is all about environment. But genetics plays a

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big deal and teaching and holding and touching and looking in your eyes and saying, "I love you, I need you, you're here because I love you. I bought you this because I love you." Like I say to Prince and Paris, "You know why I bought you this?" They say, "Because you love me." I say, "Yes, that's why I bought it." They need to know that. I wish I could have heard that more. My mother is great. She is a saint. She is a real saint.

## Women and Trust—Lisa Marie Presley and His Brothers' Wives

Shmuley Boteach: How do you feel about men who are not faithful to their wives?

Michael Jackson: I don't think it is good. But I understand it. I know that is a strange answer.

SB: You find women fall in love with you all the time as this mega star, so you don't judge men who are unfaithful, because sometimes you'll ascribe it to women who make themselves available?

MJ: I don't judge them because women can do some things that make guys very unhappy. I have seen it with my brothers. I have seen my brothers crying, in tears and pulling the grass out of the lawn with frustration because of their wives.

SB: Do you think a lot of their wives were more interested in their success than in them?

MJ: Absolutely. They were after their money. That's why I said to myself that I would never

be married. I held out the longest. I stayed at home until I was twenty-seven, twenty-eight.

SB: So was part of the attraction to Lisa Marie that she had her own money and her own fame and you didn't have to be anxious that she was interested in you for the wrong reasons?

MJ: Absolutely, and she didn't take a penny [when we got divorced]. She didn't want anything. She makes about a million dollars a year from Elvis memorabilia and selling all that stuff and she has her own thing. She is not here to take, you know.

SB: So that means there was almost like one girl in the whole world that you could marry because even a rich woman would want your name. You needed someone with money *and* a



name. You were down to a Presley or a McCartney or something like that.

MJ: I know. Lisa was great. She was a sweet person. But it is hard to tie me down. I can't stay in one place one time so that's why I don't know if I [can] really be completely married all the time.

SB: Did you want to be a father to her kids?

MJ: Yes.

SB: Do you still stay in touch with the children?

MJ: Yes, and with her.

SB: But marriage is too confining?

MJ: Yes. I don't know whether I am disciplined enough because I am such a rolling stone. I have such a life when I am always on the move and women don't like that. They want you to be settled in one place all the time but I have to move. I have been in the same city as where my house is and I'll check into a hotel just to feel like I am going somewhere. My house is right there. I guess I am just moving all the time, moving.

SB: You have gotten used to it. That's your lifestyle.

MJ: I love being on the move, love it.

SB: It impresses me that everywhere you go you take your children with you. So you are on the move but it is almost like your household moves with you. Prince and Paris aren't unsettled because of it because their source of security is always with them. But what about the families who don't have the resources for that, and most don't? They don't have enough to be able to fly the kids around here and there. Businessmen who have to travel, they fly economy just to afford their own fare, and they can't possibly bring their kids along every time. Should they

not travel?

MJ: I feel bad for their children. I feel bad for their children. I always ask pilots and stewards how do they do it? The children suffer. Absolutely. They suffer.

SB: You wouldn't be doing this if Prince and Paris were going to suffer as a result. You are doing it because you have the resources to bring them where you are.

MJ: I couldn't hurt them like that.

SB: Do you want to find them a Rose Fine kind of figure, a bit of a motherhood figure?

MJ: That would be nice. That would be sweet. If the person is completely sincere like Miss Fine was, who would read to them and teach them and give them the right values and teach them that there's no difference and that we are all the same people. She used to always rub my face and I never used to understand why. She

used to say I had beautiful hands. And I used to say, "Why, don't all hands look alike?" But now I see what she means because now I do it to my kids. I rub their face like that because they are so sweet. [Laughs] I never understood why she did it to me. Then you grow up and you realize that it is an endearing thing to do, to say, "I love you."

## Celebrity Relationships Gone Wrong—Madonna and Others

I asked Michael about his celebrity friends. Why could he connect with them more than noncelebrities?

Michael Jackson: Yeah, but I don't really have Hollywood friends. I have a few.

Shmuley Boteach: Why don't you? Why don't you hang out with more celebrities?

MJ: Because I don't think they are all real people. They love the limelight and I don't have anything in common with them. They want to go clubbing and afterwards they want to sit around and drink hard liquor and do marijuana and do all kinds of crazy things that I wouldn't do. We have nothing in common. Remember the line I told you? Madonna laid the law down to me before we went out. "I am *not* going to Disneyland, okay? That's out." I said, "But I didn't ask you to go to Disneyland." She said, "We are going to the restaurant and afterwards we are going to a strip bar." I said, "I am not

going to a strip bar.” Guys who cross-dress! Afterwards she wrote some mean things about me in the press and I wrote that she is a nasty witch, after I was so kind to her. I have told you that we were at the table eating and some little kids came up. “Oh my God, Michael Jackson and Madonna. Can we have your autograph?” She said, “Get out of here. Leave us alone.” I said, “Don’t ever talk to children like that.” She said, “Shut up.” I said, “You shut up.” That’s how we were. Then we went out again and went to the Academy Awards and she is not a nice person. I have to say it. She is not a nice person.

SB: Did the people around you feel that it was important to be seen with her?

MJ: They knew nothing about it. This was totally between her and me.

SB: So you gave it a chance and it didn’t work?

MJ: Yeah, I gave it a chance like I try and give everything a chance.

SB: You basically saw that your values do not match those of most Hollywood people.

MJ: No, they do lots of crazy things that I am

not into and at the time I was with Madonna she was into these books, a whole library of books of women who were tied to walls. She said, "I love spanky books." Why do I want to see that?

SB: I think a lot of it is the image. She once said something to the effect that she would much rather read a good book than have sex. I think the other vulgar stuff is part of the outrageous image she tries to cultivate.

MJ: She's lying [about preferring to read a book]. I can't judge. I don't know if she has changed or if she [is] trying to claim she has changed.

SB: Why does she say mean things?

MJ: I think she likes shock value and she knows how to push buttons on people. I think she was sincerely in love with me and I was not in love with her. She did a lot of crazy things and that's

how that went. I knew we had nothing in common. But I am pretty sure that having a baby has to change you. I don't know how much she has changed. I'm sure she is a better person than before.

SB: She has two children now.

MJ: Yeah, I know. How would you like getting a phone call and she is telling you that she is putting her fingers between her legs. I would say, "Oh Madonna, please." She said, "What I want you to do when I hang up the phone is to rub yourself and think of me." That's the kind of stuff she says. She does. When I see her she says, "This is the finger I used last night." Wild, out of control.

SB: But you were raised that all things romantic should have a certain modesty. . . the values you were raised with are very similar to core Jewish values. That kind of thing that Madonna was saying is only shocking at first. Then it quickly becomes humdrum and boring. That's why she has to push the envelope and become more and more shocking just to sustain our interest in her. When people have their breasts out the whole



time then you stop looking. Do you see that as vulgar?

MJ: What she does? Absolutely. She is not sexy at all. I think sexy comes from the heart in the way you present yourself.

SB: Have you ever found women who are a bit more modest to be more attractive for that reason?

MJ: Yeah. I don't like the women who are always saying, "My nails need to be done. I have to do my toes. I need a manicure." I hate all that. I like it when girls are a little bit more tomboyish. If they wrestle, climb a tree. . . I love that. It is sexier to me. I like class, though. Class is everything.

SB: If a woman walks round with all her cleavage showing. . .

MJ: Frank *loves* it.

Michael gestured to Frank Cascio, who was sitting right next to us. We all laughed.

SB: A man might want to have sex with a woman like that. But it doesn't mean he would

want to fall in love with a woman like that.

MJ: Of course you want to look. I am in love with innocence and I tell Frank that.

SB: Have you met women who have that innocence or by and large would you say that this generation is cultivating women who are not innocent, who are not encouraged to preserve their innocence?

MJ: I wish they were.

SB: Celebrities are targets for people who marry them for the wrong reasons, their fortune and their name. But don't you know when someone is interested in you for the wrong reason?

MJ: You don't know.

SB: The ancient rabbis said that words that emanate from the heart penetrate the heart. That sincerity cannot be faked. You can't tell when someone is faking it and is full of it?

MJ: It is hard because the women today can do a good job of faking it. I mean a real good job. They are so smooth. Look in the Bible. Women have taken the most powerful men down to nothing because of what is between their legs.

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Samson, nobody could cut his hair, and he had sex with Delilah.

SB: Monica Lewinsky and Clinton. . . what everyone overlooks is that she went after him, which doesn't excuse Clinton, but she's not off the hook either.

MJ: Didn't I say that the other day? One woman did so much pain to this president. How much can a woman do to try and hurt a president? Look what she caused, and that's why I don't like Barbara Walters because she instigated a lot of it. She made it all on television. She tried to come here today and I cancelled it.

MJ: I don't like clubs now, I did all that when I was eleven, eight and going back—nine, eight, seven, six. Fights break out, people throwing up, yelling, screaming, the police sirens. Our father never let us become a part of it other than to perform and leave. But sometimes in having to do that you would get caught up in some of the craziness. I saw it all. The lady who came on right before, when The Jackson's were little,

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“And now next, The Little Jackson 5,” was the lady who took off *all* her clothes. Threw her panties into the audience and the men would grab them and sniff them. I saw all this. Her name was Rose Marie and she put these things on her breasts and moved them around and she showed everything. So when I became sixteen, seventeen and guys would say, “Let’s go clubbing,” I would go, “Are you crazy?” And the guys would be like, “No, are *you* crazy? We can get girls, we can get liquor.” But I had done that. I did that when I was a baby. Now I want to be a part of the world and the life I didn’t have. Take me to Disneyland, take me to where the magic is.

## Loneliness, Wanting Children, and Lisa Marie Presley's Second Thoughts

Shmuley Boteach: Let me ask you about loneliness. So wherever you travel, you, thank God, have an entourage. People you've been with for a long time, Frank and Skip [Michael's bodyguard at the time, a very pleasant and decent man from New Orleans]. But it's still not like having a wife in your life or something. Do you get lonely? Or is there so much going on in your life that it doesn't really happen?

Michael Jackson: Like lonely for like a wife? For like a mate? Like that?

SB: Yeah.

MJ: I've been through two bad divorces and I just got out of the second one. Even when married to those women that I was married to, I'd go to bed hurting. I was hurting. I was crying last night as I went to sleep and I didn't sleep good last night. And I cry, Shmuley, because I feel this. . . and I'm not trying, I'm telling you

the honest truth and if you don't believe me you can ask Frank. Frank knew how I was hurting. I just was feeling all the pain of the children who suffer and I was hurting so much. That's why I was trying to reach any child I knew who had pain, from [Michael mentions a little girl who was battling cancer and whose family he met at our home] to Gavin [Michael's later accuser]. I was trying to like, calling, dialing and I woke up the first thing, the first person I called was [the little girl's] house and she had gone already. It hurts me. But I think that's where my real love comes from, Shmuley. If I can help in that way, I'm fine and I don't need the other [romantic love]. You know if I meet some girl somewhere and I think she's beautiful, which I see a lot of them, that's great. I mean, I'll go on a date or something. Nothing wrong with that. Jennifer Lopez looked awfully good the other day, she did. I was shocked 'cause I never thought. . . She looked good [Michael laughs as he says this].

SB: But have you given up on women understanding you? You tend to think that

children will understand you a lot better?

MJ: I'm not easy to live with in that way for a wife. I'm not easy and I know I'm not easy. Because I give all my time to someone else. I give it to children, I give it to somebody sick somewhere, to the music. And women want to be the center. And I remember Lisa Marie would always say to me, "I'm not a piece of furniture, I'm not a piece of furniture. You just can't . . ." I say, "I don't want you to be a piece of furniture," and, you know, there'd be some sick little girls calling on the phone and she'd get mad and hang up on them. And, you know, I feel that's my, that's my mission, Shmuley. I have to do it.

SB: What if you found a woman who was that soft, who was incredibly soft?

MJ: Like a Mother Teresa or a Lady Diana or . . . That would be great. It would be perfect.

SB: Would that be better than having to do it on your own?

MJ: Absolutely, and Lisa was great with going to the hospitals with me, and she was so sweet about that. They would tie the babies to the bed



or chain the children down. We'd go unchain. . . we'd go free all these babies. I hated that and she, she discovered a lot of that injustice with me. Countries like Romania and Prague, Czechoslovakia and all that, Russia. You should see what they do to the children in those. . . you'd be shocked. They chain them to the wall like they're animals and they're naked and they slept in their tinkle and their feces too. It's just so sad, it made me sick. So we brought clothes and toys and just love and love. I love them and I went back every day visiting them, hugging them, wanting to take each and every one of them to Neverland.

SB: When you started becoming this childhood star, did you realize that your childhood was slowly slipping away? You won a contest at age eight. In 1964, you were chosen as lead singer for the family band. Did that make you feel excited or were you worried? Did you think to yourself, "Where is all this headed? What's it going to lead to?"

MJ: I didn't think about it. I didn't think about the future. I just took each day as it came. I

knew I wanted to be a star. I wanted to do things and make people happy.

SB: Did you know what the cost was going to be in terms of childhood?

MJ: No way. No way.

MJ on phone: Tell the guys to let the music talk to them and not to, like, jump on it right away. Listen to it a couple of times and let the melody create itself. That's the thing, let the music speak to them. Alright? Goodbye.

SB: Is that your dream that one day, like part of the messianic future, as far as you're concerned, that all these kids will come and live in Neverland and live happily ever after?

MJ: Yes.

SB: And if you had the resources truly you would just. . .

MJ: I would do it, Shmuley. I would do it. I would love it.

SB: Lisa Marie was good about at least visiting. So she had no problem going and doing some of the compassionate things of giving these children love and making them feel special?

MJ: She had no problem doing that but her and I had several big arguments 'cause she's very territorial with her children. Her children were [her major concern]. . . and I said, "No, all children are our children," and she never liked that coming from me. She was very angry about that. Plus, she had a fight with me one time when two little boys in London killed this other kid and I was going to visit them 'cause the queen gave them adult sentencing of life. These were like eleven- and ten-year-old boys and I was going to go to the prison and visit them. She said, "You idiot. You're just rewarding them for what they did." I said, "How dare you say that." I said, "I bet if you trace their life you can find they didn't have parents around, they didn't have any love, nobody there to hold them look in their eyes and say, "I love you." They

deserve that, even though they're going to get life, I just want to say I love you and hold them." She said, "We'll, you're wrong." I said, "No, you're wrong." Then the information came out that they came from broken families, were never watched as little kids, attended to. Their pacifier was those *Chucky* movies with the stabbings and the killings. And that's how they became conditioned to that.

SB: Did she admit then that you had a point?

MJ: Nope, she thinks I'm rewarding bad kids.

SB: Did she want you to be a father to her children?

MJ: Well that was once asked of her. She was asked that question on TV and she said, "No, they have a father. Their father is Keogh," that other guy. But I was really good to her children. Every day I'd bring them home something and they'd be waiting by the window for me and hug me. I love them. I miss them so much.

SB: Did she get used to living in Neverland or was it too isolated?

MJ: Lisa didn't live at Neverland. We visited

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Neverland the way. . . I lived at her house in the city and every once in a while we visited Neverland. It'd be like our big fun weekend.

SB: And her children liked it?

MJ: Are you kidding me? They were like in heaven.

SB: And you were happy to show it to them?

MJ: Mm hmm.

SB: Did it have more meaning to you suddenly when you had a family you could show it to?

MJ: Yes, yes. It's just a place to make families, to bring them together, to bring people together through love and playful spirit and nature. It makes families closer, Neverland. It's healing.

SB: Since you idolize the family was it very hard for you when you had to go through that divorce then?

MJ: Which one?

SB: With Lisa.

MJ: Was it hard for me?

SB: Did you see the writing on the wall? That you were different? Meaning my parents divorced when I was eight. So I really, really

romanticized marriage.

MJ: Really?

SB: Oh phenomenally. It's what all my books are about, marriage. Because I couldn't deal with. . .

MJ: So you really believe in marriage and all that? You love marriage?

SB: It's what I believe most in the whole world. I believe in family, I really do.

MJ: I do too, Shmuley.

SB: It's what I didn't have. I even wrote about you in one of my books in the context of marriage, even though it was before I ever thought we'd meet. This was the main point, this was the beginning of the book. Chapter one, the very first chapter. How does it start? "At the heart of all our lives is a strong and potent mystery. Michael Jackson steps off an airplane and thirty thousand fans await his arrival. He feels mighty special. They all excitedly shout his name. They've taken off time from their work to greet and cheer his arrival. But then off the same airplane steps Mr. Jones.

There aren't thirty thousand people waiting for him to disembark. In fact, there is only one woman, Mrs. Jones, who's been waiting. But while everyone walks by, even when Michael Jackson himself walks by, she ignores them all. To her Mr. Jones is even more important, more thrilling than the world's biggest pop star."

I used you as the ultimate example of how marriage makes one person into a celebrity. In other words to my wife, I'm a celebrity. She waits for me to come home, she has a picture of me up on the wall, you know? You feel special to one person. And in life all you need is one real fan.

MJ: That's right.

SB: And the secret to life is you don't need thirty thousand, a hundred thousand. You have that, Michael. But you can count on one hand the people who have that in the world. But the idea with marriage is you get one fan. One big fan who puts you first. And that's all you need. One sincere and loving fan who loves you for who you are, rather than tens of thousands of people who love you for what you do. That was

the first thought in the most important book I ever wrote, *Kosher Sex*.

MJ: It's beautiful, Shmuley. Thank you.

SB: I never knew I'd meet you back then, but I've been talking about this. Your name has come up in every lecture around the world on the subject. In other words, my whole point was, marriage is where you make one person feel like they're a superstar like Michael Jackson.

MJ: That's beautiful.

SB: But I'm a big believer in marriage. So when your relationship with Lisa started to fall apart was it very hard? Your idealism about the family, everything you believed in building the intimate family you always wanted, especially because you knew. . .

MJ: I wanted children and she didn't.

SB: She felt she had her kids.

MJ: Yeah, and she promised me that before we married, that would be the first thing we'd do was have children. So I was broken-hearted and I walked around all the time holding these little baby dolls and I'd be crying, that's how badly I



wanted them. So I was determined to have children. It disappointed me that she wouldn't keep her promise to me, you know? After we got divorced she would hang out with my mother all the time. I have all these letters saying, "I'll give you nine children. I'll do whatever you want," and of course the press don't know all these stories and she just tried for months and months and I just became too hard-hearted at that point. I closed my mind on the whole situation.

SB: So she thought maybe you could get back together?

MJ: Uh huh.

SB: But children were a major, major issue?

MJ: Of course.

SB: She had the kids and that was it.

MJ: She had hers and I wanted us to feel like we all were one big family and have more. Just. . . my dream is to have nine or ten children, that's what I want.

SB: You're still very young. Do you think that will happen?

MJ: Yeah.

SB: But then it means getting married again.

MJ: Yeah.

SB: Are you happy to do that?

MJ: Uh huh. . . or adopt.

SB: Is it possible Michael, that you're attracting the wrong kind of girl because of your celebrity?

MJ: It's hard. That's why it's hard, it's hard for me. It is hard. It's not easy for celebrities to be married.

SB: Do you think that you could only really marry celebrities so that they don't need you as much?

MJ: That helps, in my opinion. And they understand what you go through. They've been there.

SB: They help you for the right reasons, then?

MJ: Yeah, they're not after, you know? What you've made [the money] or, you know? [singing] "That's what you are. . ." [He won a Grammy for that.]

SB: Right, right.

## Looking for True Friendship

Shmuley Boteach: Love and fear, as I said, are antithetical. They are like fire and water. The more of the former, the less of the latter. The more valuable you feel, the less you fear your destruction. The more love you have in your life, the less room there is for fear.

Michael Jackson: That's right. I used to walk the street asking for people to be my friend. It's true, in Encino right down there. People would look at me and go, "Michael Jackson!" I just wanted to talk to somebody. I was up there alone in the house and my mother and father were downstairs watching television. And I was up in my old room and all my brothers and stuff

had moved out because they were married and stuff, and I was up there all alone and you can't go anywhere. You feel like a prisoner and you feel like you are going to die. And that's it. I am walking and I would just go walking down the street and traffic would get backed up and people would be taking pictures. I knew I looked sad and some people would come up and talk, and they would go, "What are you doing?" I'd go, "I am walking." They'd go, "Why are you walking? Where are all the guards?" I said, "I don't feel like all that. I just want to walk and I am looking for someone to talk to me." So they would talk to me. I've done that many times. I'd ask people to be my friend and they'd say, "Sure." It's true. I'd go to the parks. Then I realized that that could be dangerous too, but I was hurting that much.

SB: Were they intimidated when you asked them to be your friend? Did they say, "I can't be your friend. . . you are Michael Jackson?"

MJ: I would even ask for their phone numbers. Then I realized it is hard to find a friend because they are befriending you as the thing

that they see. Are they a *real* friend? So it became difficult.

SB: But you have found some real friends like Elizabeth Taylor.

MJ: Yes.

## Michael and Shirley Temple Black: Kindred Spirits

Shmuley Boteach: We were talking about Shirley Temple Black. She said to you that in you she found a kindred spirit because you were a child star and she was a child star?

Michael Jackson: Absolutely.

SB: So you arranged to go and see her?

MJ: Well, a good friend of hers is a good friend of mine. I have known this guy for twenty-five years, and he is such a nut. [Michael is referring to producer/promoter David Guest, best known, outside Hollywood, for marrying, then divorcing, Liza Minnelli.] But he has become a real powerful person because he produces a lot of shows and does all these celebrity events, and

he is a great guy. So I went up there with him. We also went to the Memorabilia Convention a lot because I love movie memorabilia. I was in disguise there every day but I think they knew it was me. But it was fun. I had a great time with Shirley Temple.

SB: How long did you spend with her?

MJ: We spent several hours. I went to her house. I left there feeling baptized, I really did. I didn't know that I would break down crying when I saw her and I just broke down. I said, "You don't know how you've saved my life." She goes, "What do you mean?" I said, "So many times I have been at the end of my rope and I have felt like throwing in the towel and I just look at your picture and I feel there's hope and I can survive this." She said,

"Really?" And I said, "Yeah."

I [used to have] a guy who would travel with me. His job was that before I got to every hotel, [he] was to set up the whole hotel room to Shirley Temple. I would do this for many, many years. All her pictures and cut-outs, that was what he did. So that when I walked in I would

see her. I would have her taped to my mirror backstage. She was so happy. She said, "I love you, I want us to be closer." She said, "I want you to call me, you understand me?" She looked at me and said, "I'm sorry I grew up." I said, "You are not to apologize, because I know what it is like, I have been there."

There was a time I was in an airport—and I will never forget this as long as I live—and there was this lady who said, "Oh, The Jackson 5. Oh my God! Where's little Michael? Where's little Michael?" I go, "Here I am." She went, "Urhhhg! What happened?" They want you to stay young and little forever. You go through that awkward stage and they want to keep you small. She [Shirley Temple] had it bad because not only did she go through the stage, it was the end of her film career. But I have graduated to other things. Most of the child stars don't make it because they become self-destructive. They destroy themselves because of that pressure.

SB: What's the pressure?

MJ: The pressure is that they were so loved and liked and they reached an age when studios



don't want them anymore. The public [doesn't] recognize them anymore. They are a has-been. A lot of them don't make it past eighteen or nineteen, or in their twenties. . . that's the truth—like all the *Our Gang* kids. Bobby Driscoll who played *So Dear to My Heart*, *Song of the South*, died at eighteen. All these people and you trace their lives and it's the same thing, and it's tough.

SB: Did you discuss that with her?

MJ: Yes. We discussed it.

SB: How did she transition from being a huge star to getting older and not being cute anymore?

MJ: She said she was very strong and it was real hard and she cried a lot. And you do cry a lot. I cried a hell of a lot. She was just real strong with it, and it is hard. She is writing another book. She has done one. She is doing another. Her first was called *Child Star*. I haven't read it. I am not ready for it.

SB: Do you feel that she is one of the few people who understand you because you had no childhood and she had no childhood?

MJ: I said to her, "Did you enjoy it?" She said she loved it and I said, "I loved it too." I loved being on stage and I loved performing, but there are those like Judy Garland who were pushed out there, who didn't want to do it, and that got really tough. Elizabeth made it through. She has been to hell and back and she was a child star, and that's why we understand each other so much. We really do.

SB: Are all child stars like you? Do they all love children?

MJ: They all love children, they all do. They have these playful things around them and they act like kids because they never got a chance to be kids. They all have this fun stuff in their house and nobody understands it. There has never been a book written about it because there are very few of us who have made it and can talk about it. It's not easy. . . it's really not easy.

SB: So you feel confident being around her? You said you felt baptized. Do you feel redeemed being in her presence?

MJ: Mmmm, yeah. [He starts crying.] I don't

know if you understand.

SB: To be honest I don't completely, but I want to.

MJ: You really don't, do you?

SB: I have been trying. Just explain to me where does the pain come from? Can you explain it, or when you are around Shirley you don't have to. She just understands?

MJ: It's like telepathy. You can feel each other speak and look into one another's eyes and I feel her and she feels me that way. You pick it up and you detect it so fast. It is like communicating silently. It really is and I knew I would feel that way when I saw her, I knew it. It's the same with Elizabeth [Taylor].

SB: What's the source of your pain, Michael? When you break down like that, what is hurting?

MJ: What is hurting is that it all happened so fast and time has gone by so fast. You feel you missed a lot of things. I wouldn't redo any of it. But the pain comes from the fact that you didn't really get the chance to do important simple

things and that hurt. Simple little things, like you don't know. . . I never did birthdays or Christmases or sleepovers or none of that simple, fun stuff. Or going into a shopping market and just grabbing something off the counter, you know all those simple things like going out in society and being normal.

SB: So the whole world dreams about being in front of one hundred thousand people at a concert and you're dreaming about the little things that everyone else gets to do?

MJ: That's why when I befriend people it's usually not the celebrities, it's usually the simple normal family somewhere. I want to know what their life is like. That's why I went to that hut in China or going to some of the mud houses in South America. I want to know what it is like. I have slept in crazy places where people say, "Are you nuts?" And I say, "No, I want to know what it's like."

SB: What do you feel that you have missed? Do you feel that you missed out on something essential to life? It is almost like in your childhood you can just be loved without having

to prove yourself. Is that what you miss? That you always had to work, to prove yourself, you could never just be? You had to be evaluated, judged, stared at. You were a curiosity item?

MJ: Yes, and you get tired and it just wears me down. You can't go somewhere where they don't manipulate what you do and say, that bothers me so much, and you are nothing like the person that they write about, nothing. To get called "Whacko," that's not nice. People think something is wrong with you because they make it up. I am nothing like that. I am the opposite of that.

SB: Someone once said that the essence of loneliness is to feel that you are not understood. Do you get lonely in the place you're at for that reason?

MJ: Yes, of course.

SB: You are there all by yourself, and you feel moved when you are with someone like Shirley Temple because she is in that same lonely place?

MJ: Yes, she gets it. And you can talk to her. It is hard to make other people understand it

because they haven't been there. You have to feel it, you have to touch it, to know what it is really like.

SB: Did Shirley Temple Black retain her child-like qualities the way you have? Is she playful, or did it take you to bring that out in her?

MJ: It was just there, she came to the door with her apron on. She was cooking in the kitchen and after we ate, she kept touching my hand at the table and rubbing it, as if she knows what to do, do you know what I mean? Afterwards we sat at the table and we talked, we just sat and talked. I was looking at these wonderful pictures. She had each movie that she has ever made in picturesque form in this bookcase and they are originals by [George] Hurrell, the great photographer, and you go through these things and it is amazing. She had every dress she has ever worn in the movies. She has everything. I promised her I will do a museum for child stars and she [will] give all her stuff to the museum and I would get other stuff, all the pictures, everything, to honor child stars. People don't know what happened to them. I don't think

people know that Bobby Driscoll went missing for about a year and nobody recognized him. His own family didn't know that he was the one in the pauper's grave with a heroin overdose. He was a Disney giant, the voice of Peter Pan. He played in *So Dear to My Heart* . He won an Academy Award for *The Window* and *Song of the South* . I just see those kids and I can relate to them like that.

SB: Are you going to see her again?

MJ: Oh yes. I'm going to invite her to Neverland. She told me to make sure to say hello to Elizabeth. She kept asking about her.

SB: Do they know each other?

MJ: They have seen each other and spent some time together. But I told Elizabeth today and she said, "Ohhh. You must say Hi from me." I told Elizabeth I spent the weekend with her,



and she says, "You did?" I said, "Yes." And she was shocked that I went up there. It was great.

SB: What was it about Shirley Temple, her specifically, that touched you so deeply, and do you think that every little girl can have a Shirley Temple inside her?

MJ: Her innocence, how she made me feel good when I was so sad. It wasn't so much her dancing and singing. It was her being. She was given a gift to make people feel good inside. All children have that but, man, she is so angelic to me, and every time I see her, it can be on a film or a picture, I feel so good. I have her pictures all in the room there. It makes me so happy.

SB: Did you see Shirley Temple in Shirley Temple Black when you met her? Was she still the little girl? Was she like you? Did she retain that child-like innocence, or did you bring it out in her? MJ: It's still there. She is so sweet.

SB: How many people do you meet who are like that? Is it realistic? Do you meet a lot of adults around whom you can be defenseless and who you don't have to have your guard up for, or feel intimidated by?



MJ: Very few.

SB: So very few have achieved this. Is it people like Elizabeth Taylor, specifically childhood stars? People who didn't have a childhood spend their lives trying to regain it and that's what makes them child-like?

MJ: Yeah, and some people just have it naturally. A lot of creative people have it, and they had great childhoods. I have met them and worked with them, like directors and writers, and it's like we are all the same in that way. We all collect the same stuff, are fascinated by the same stuff. I see it. I go to George Lucas's basement and all the stuff he collects is the same stuff I collect. Steven [Spielberg], same stuff I like and collect. We swap notes on collecting things. It's simple things like old bubblegum cards or certain magazines. . . to original Norman Rockwell paintings. I mean I was at Steven Spielberg's house today and he has got the most beautiful original Norman Rockwell painting. It's so big and beautiful.

## Elizabeth Taylor: A Special Bond

Michael Jackson: Elizabeth Taylor is very childlike. There's nothing that you can do when she'll say, "I don't want to do that." When *Bug's Life* came out, she bugged me over and over to fix my schedule so we could see the cartoon. So we had to go to a public theater at about 1:00 o'clock. She makes me go out every Thursday because she says I'm too reclusive. Everybody's at work, so there's no one there and we never pay. . . we come with nothing and they always say, "Oh, my God, Elizabeth Taylor and Michael Jackson." We get free popcorn, everything. She loved *Bug's Life* and loves Neverland. She'll go on the carousel and the Ferris wheel, but not the scary rides.

There are other childlike qualities of Elizabeth Taylor. She was in *Jane Eyre* around eight or nine. Our fathers were very much alike, tough, hard, brutal. She's playful and youthful and happy and finds a way to laugh and giggle even when she's in pain. She's ready to play any game, go swimming. She's very good with children. She loves toys and cartoons. I get to learn so much from her. She'll tell me about James Dean and Clark Gable and Spencer Tracey and Montgomery Clift, because she did movies with all these people. She tells me what they were really like, the ones who were nice people and the ones that

weren't.

We were in Singapore—she came on most of the *Dangerous* tour with me—and we decided we wanted to go to the zoo. And we hung out and had our own private tour and we had fun. She's Prince and Paris's godmother and Macaulay's their godfather. She's just retained that little girl quality. That little child you see in *Jane Eyre* and *Lassie Come Home*, that's still in there. It's in her eyes. She has this glow like a child. It's so sweet. But Shirley [Temple Black], too. She says, "You get it, don't you. You're one of us."

[Elizabeth Taylor and I] we're like brother and sister, mother and son, lovers. . . it's a potpourri. . . it's something special. We go through this whining thing on the phone. . . "I need you. . . ." "Oh, I need you, too." We can talk about anything. She's been my most loyal friend. She says she adores me and would do anything for me. She says Hollywood has to write a movie for the two of us. We just have to do something together.

Shmuley Boteach: Do you get jealous when she dates other men? She got married in your backyard.

MJ: Do I get jealous? Yes and no. I know that if we ever did anything romantically, the press would be so mean and nasty and call us "The Odd Couple." It would turn into a circus and that's the pain of it all. You know, I push her in a wheelchair

sometimes, when she can't walk. It's none of their business what we have together. I have to be with people like me. Some rappers will say to me, "Let's hang out. Let's go down to a club." And I'll say, "What? Let's hang? I don't think so." That kind of thing's not a party for me.

On that tour [*Dangerous* ], she fed me because I wouldn't eat. When I get upset, I stop eating, sometimes until I'm unconscious. [The molestation allegations had just been lodged against Michael while he was on tour in 1993. Hence, the reason for his upset.] She took the spoon and opened my mouth and made me eat. She said she wouldn't let me go without her, and her doctors advised her not to go. She went to Thailand and followed the tour all the way to London. I ended up at Elton John's and he was really sweet hiding me. He's one of the sweetest people you could meet on this planet. He and I took care of Ryan White, all his medical expenses.

Then they started doing it intravenously. I go through these serious food crises when I could go weeks without eating. I take stuff to keep weight on. What turns me off is that I don't like eating anything that used to be alive and now it's dead on my plate. I want to be a strict vegetarian, but my doctors keep trying to throw in chicken and fish.

## Can Children Teach Us Love?

Shmuley Boteach: Do you think children can teach us love?

Michael Jackson: Yeah, in a different way because they are so affectionate. They can teach us affection and it is quintessential affection and it is pure innocence. That's why I love them so much. I was telling Frank the other day, "Frank,

I am in love with innocence, that's what I'm in love with. That's why I love children so much." Innocence is God. To be that innocent and approach things with such a sweet outlook on life, with truly just sweet. . . Where a kid will walk around the house and you'll go, "What are you doing?" and they answer, "I don't know, playing." It's so sweet. I love that. That's why [in] the painting [on a wall in Michael's house is a picture showing hundreds of children playing at Neverland]. . . one kid is screaming in the wind because he is feeling so good. He is just screaming to be screaming. I *love* that. Romance. Romance.

SB: Almost like they believe in love, they are not afraid to get hurt. People are afraid to love today.

MJ: [Are] love and romance two different things? That's why I am getting confused. I see romance as something that is longed for. You long for that out of a stage.

SB: Do you see romance as contrived by Hollywood movies?

MJ: Yes. Very.

SB: Kids are a bit romantic. They have romances in kindergarten. MJ: You mean like crushes on other kids?

SB: Yes.

MJ: Yes, they do. They can teach you to be loving and sweet and they teach us in that way that probably. . . They give everybody a chance and I teach Prince and Paris to love everybody.

## Why Michael Remained Childlike

Shmuley Boteach: When people use the expression *adult*, it can mean mature, balanced, educated, temperate. It can mean patient. But it also has negative connotations that I want you to comment on. It can connote being cynical, untrusting, scheming, manipulative, corrupt, judgmental, scarred. Tell me some of the negative things that adults learn as they grow older.

Michael Jackson: They just have so many problems, adults. They have been so conditioned by other people's thoughts and feelings. That's why I don't trust most dogs. It's not the dog. It's because people in-still what they believe and all their anger and frustration is embedded in that dog and he becomes this vicious, crazy thing. And I don't know what kind of package he is bringing to me when he comes up to me and sniffs me. So it's like another adult. That's why I get afraid.



SB: So you want to know what the person's motives are. You want to know if he has a vicious nature or. . .

MJ: *Yesssss*. But that is the perfect representation of what people have let themselves become. Somewhere along the line they have gotten lost and I believe in just

staying childlike and innocent and simple. As Jesus said, "The greatest among me is like this little child here. Be like him and you are the greatest in my eyes." When a lot of adults first come to me, they look at me and they are checking out what you are wearing and who you are with. I see it. Then once they speak to me and they see that I am just a simple person who wants to be a friend, their heart melts. I see it.

SB: So children are accepting initially. They don't judge.

MJ: Yes, they let it all hang out. Kids go, "Oh my God, it's Michael Jackson." And I go, "Hi." An adult will smile and go, "Hi." Then, judging it a little bit, they go, "I like your stuff," but they won't let it all come out. [They won't let themselves appear impressed.]

SB: Why won't they? Why do they bottle up their enthusiasm? Are they trying to show, "I'm not going to be won over by you. . . I'm a person, too." Is it insecurity?

MJ: They are having a psychological warfare going on, how to approach me, what to say, what not to say. [But what I want them to know

is that they should] just be yourself, be like a child. Be innocent. Be the way you were when you were born.

SB: Maybe what you are saying to them is this: "I am not trying to be bigger than you. I am who I am, and you just be who you are."

It's almost as though you are saying that children are more of your equals than adults are.

MJ: Of course they are. I can relate to them much easier. They don't come with all the baggage or stuff. They just play. They don't want anything from you. You don't want anything from them but love and innocence, and to find true happiness and magic together.

SB: It's also like adults make you into someone you don't want to be. You don't want to be defensive and artificial and you don't want to have stupid small talk. When kids come to you with all this enthusiasm you are Michael. But around adults you come with another agenda. You give the analogy of the dog. You don't know how to react so you get defensive. They make you into someone you don't want to be.

MJ: That's right. That's why I have become. . . not to say that I have let them win the war, but I just don't care to be around them. You can put the message out there. We will change a lot of people [to be more childlike]. We will literally and mentally baptize them with our words and our books, whatever we are doing. But there are so many out there who have shut the door mentally and they don't want to be changed and they refuse to see the light. But we could help a lot of people, a lot of them are just very, very hard. They have been so conditioned. But I believe you can change a lot of people. That's what's so wonderful about it all. You can show them. There are grown-ups who come to Neverland and they say to me, "You know, I haven't done the things I have done here in years. . . you can let your guard down and be a child again." I say, "That's what Neverland is for. To return to your innocence. To have fun."

## God Heals Through Children

Shmuley Boteach: All the pain that you have endured with all the attacks, and I have seen it firsthand, and I say to people, so much of the garbage that is said about you is invented and unfair. So why haven't you just become a cynical adult, and thrown in the towel?

Michael Jackson: I'll tell you. Because with the pain, and the arrows that people have shot at me nobody else would have been able to take it. They would have probably committed suicide by now. . . they would have become a drunk. Because they have been very cruel and rude to me. And if they don't think I hear it and see it, I do. I do. It's been the children. I am holding on for them or else I wouldn't have made it. I really wouldn't have made it.

SB: The children have given you the support to continue? Or are you saying you continue because you believe that God gave you a mission to try and care for these neglected children?

MJ: God gave me a mission, I feel, to do something for them and they have given me the support and the belief and the love to hold on, hold on. When I look in the mirror I feel healed all over again. It's like being baptized. It's like God saying, "Michael, everything will be ok," when I look in the eyes of a child.

SB: So as far as you are concerned, you seem to be saying that you have completed every mission apart from your greatest mission and you are hanging on for that great mission and that is that you can bring care to children. Does that mean that you no longer have the same musical ambitions?

MJ: Are you kidding? It is heightened a trillion-fold now, from dancing to music, it inspires me even more now.

SB: But can you show love to adults, do you still trust adults?

MJ: I trust adults. . .

SB: But you are still wary initially. . . you have to be.

MJ: Yes, because they have really betrayed and

deceived me in so many different ways and at so many different times. I have had adults with tears coming down their face, saying, "It's a shame what you have been through and I would never ever ever *ever* hurt you or do anything. And they turn around and they hurt me. Honestly, that's the kind of crap I have been through. . . tears rolling down and hugging me. And they end up a year later suing over some ridiculous. . . like a photographer over some pictures, or some person who gets terminated and I didn't terminate them, but I get sued by them and I didn't do it. This is the sort of silliness.

SB: At that moment they probably meant it and that's the problem. A day later emotion can change. But deep down you can still trust. You may have cause to feel betrayed and let down, but you have to overcome the fear you have of people. That is extremely important. I wouldn't be your friend if I didn't believe that. You've taught me more about appreciating my kids, and I want to teach you more about being fearless.

MJ: Ah, that's sweet. I have had so many

## The Michael Jackson Tapes

parents come to me, because when their kids see me, they fall in love with me. They go nuts. They wanna play and climb trees and I do all that with them. They take me aside with tears in their eyes and go, "Michael, I don't know my children. You have taught me to really spend time with my children. I need to learn that." They tell me that all the time.

SB: But children bore most adults, especially if they're not their own.

MJ: But how? Honestly, tell me the truth, do they really bore them?

SB: Yes. First, because children need a phenomenal amount of patience and most adults do not have patience. Second, children ask so many questions, and, the adult thinks, "I want to get on with my work!" Because parents have decided that making a million dollars is important, but the child wanting to know why a cat has four legs is not important. Do you like those questions from children? Do you think that children know what is important even more than adults?

MJ: It depends on value, on what we consider



to be truly important. In my true opinion, to be an entrepreneur and climb the corporate ladder and all those other, worldly things that people do, that's worldly to them. I think children worship fun, love, they worship attention. They want a fun-filled day, things that when you experience it with them you have a special place in their heart forever. It changes who they become and what our world becomes, the totality of what happens in this universe becomes. It is the future.

SB: But what if someone says, "Fun isn't serious. We have to work. We have to cure diseases. We have to build houses and find out what the weather forecast is for the weekend. And fun doesn't do any of that. Children have to grow up to know that they have responsibilities, that they have to do work."

MJ: I think we learn through play, through having fun and after having fun I think magic happens. Or during having fun, magic happens. I know for me it does. I wrote one of the prettiest songs I've ever written when I was playing with some children, for this album. It

completely came from them and when I had my songs laid out I go, “Ok, this one came from this kid, and this one came from this kid.” They inspired it. It came from their being and their presence and their spirit. It’s true.

SB: So children are like a swimming pool and the water represents Godliness. And as you get older and grow up the water begins to freeze until it becomes ice. And children are just this reservoir of warm, free water and you can just play, whereas ice is hard and cold and not inviting. So you want to get adults to thaw, as it were, melt the pool again.

MJ: That’s why when I direct movies—and I am going to start directing again soon—I see everything through the eyes of a child. All my stories are going to be about issues about children, how they are affected by the world and how they see the world through their eyes, ’cause that’s all I can relate to. I can’t deal with some court story or murder crime. I don’t understand that. I can understand if a kid were involved in a crime and tracing his life and what happened and why it happened and how he is

feeling being sentenced to life and what goes on in that little heart that is pounding. I can understand that. I can direct that, I can write about that because I feel that.

SB: How can an adult get that feeling? Is it a gift? Can I acquire it? Being around you I do feel it more.

MJ: That's really sweet.

SB: I love my kids very much, but I don't love other people's kids as much. But when I see Prince, he melts my heart because he is such a warm and loving kid.

MJ: That's how I want them to be. Since they were very little I taught them to love everybody.

SB: How are you going to preserve that as they grow older? You are going to have to protect them, obviously, from that *News of the World* thing.

MJ: I teach them to love everybody and to be kind and to be good in their heart. But they have that naturally. I didn't have to program it. . they have it naturally.

MJ: What you don't know about me is how much I love film and art and I want to direct so badly. I could scream, I want to show the world through the eyes of a child because I understand them so much. Their pain and their joy and their laughter and what hurts them. And I see the world through their eyes and I want to portray that on film. That's my real passion. I love it. It's too much.

SB: So as a director you can give the whole world your view of how children are because they can see it through your eyes, even if you do a movie for adults?

MJ: Yes, and I searched my heart many times and I said, "Can I do a real serious film for

adults?" And I know I can. But I don't think I would enjoy it. I don't think I would enjoy it. I know I can do it, but I wouldn't enjoy it.

SB: If there was one movie that you could have directed, which one would it be?

MJ: *ET*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *400 Blows*, which is a great movie by François Truffaut. I love *Shane* and I am crazy about *To Kill a Mockingbird*. That's the story that I see and every time I see it I have a lump in my throat in the same place. Have you seen it? Oh, I can't wait to show it to you. Please see it with me. We'll turn off all the phones and we'll just watch it.

SB: Can the kids watch it?

MJ: Absolutely, they will learn. It's about racism in the South. It's about a man who is put on trial saying that he raped a white woman. There are some hard areas but it is seen through the eyes of children. Man this movie will wear you out. I love it too much. It is definitely one of the best movies. I wish I had directed it. Oh God, it is so sweet.

## Musical Talent

Shmuley Boteach: Let me ask you a question. . . Well, but I mean, that's what makes you unique—that you are talented across the board. Do black people have more rhythm than white people? When you speak about dancing and everything. . . I mean, it's like a joke, but it's not just a joke that white people have no rhythm. When you speak about, like, the natural rhythm and everything and the way these black kids in the ghetto, the way they dance, you always talk about that. It's like natural. . . you always see it around here in Manhattan? These kids on the street who busk. It's amazing!

Michael Jackson: It's amazing, and it is natural. . . they have a natural rhythm that nobody can explain. It's a natural talent.

SB: Do you see white people having that rhythm?

MJ: It's not the same and I'm not saying it out

of being. . .

SB: But the sense of timing. . .

MJ: Stan would always tell me, and he would go to all the black clubs. . . he would sit in the Apollo Theater, he called it Cut-time rhythm. He said he had to have the black rhythm so he hung out with the blacks to get that cut-time rhythm [mimicking noises]. You know that's what rappers do now—they do cut-time rhythm. That's what it's all about, it's that natural rhythm thing.

SB: That reflects their inner rhythm?

MJ: Yeah, yeah. But you take a little black child and they got the rhythm of a grown-up, like a real dancer. And it's just a natural ability, you know?

SB: Without trying to penetrate this too deeply, traditionally, Africa was more childlike than Europe. Europe prided itself on its sophistication, its perfumes, its fancy clothes. Africa was dismissed as “more primitive” but therefore much more natural, more organic. They were much closer to the earth. So it could be that they never detached themselves from

those natural rhythms?

MJ: But how does that become genetic?

SB: I don't know.

MJ: Could you take a Scottish or Irish child and put him in that same situation, let him be born in Africa among those. . .

SB: Well, that's the whole question about Elvis, right?

MJ: Elvis always hung out around blacks.

SB: And he acquired that rhythm, right?

MJ: Yeah, he acquired that rhythm, he wanted to do the steps, and he talked black and acted black. We knew Elvis very well and Lisa Marie and myself always talked about how. . .

SB: Had he not been a white man, you don't think he would've been as successful, right?

MJ: Not nearly. Not nearly because it would've been expected of him. Remember the slogan that Philips, who owned Sun Records, he said, "If I could only find a white man with a black man's sound, I could make a million dollars," and in come walks Elvis Presley.

SB: Now, you ask an incredible question: "How



does that become innate, you know?" And especially science today doesn't believe in acquired characteristics. You can't transmit characteristics to a child that have been acquired in a lifetime. So, if you have great musical talent, you can give it to Prince. But if someone taught it to you, you can't give it to Prince. He'd have to get it on his own. It's not in the genes.

MJ: Yeah, yeah.

SB: When I was in my preaching competition, the first year, when I came in second, I lost to this Caribbean preacher and we were so close. I lost by like 3 points out of 130 points and everyone said to me, "He had timing, you didn't." He knew like, you wait, you know the way a preacher has to build up. And all my friends said to me, "Shmuley, he had rhythm."  
[both laughing]

MJ: But you're amazing.

SB: No, but I mean he had it. I told you, the black preachers are the best in the world. They're the best speakers. Look at Martin Luther King. There is no other. . .

MJ: I cry when I hear him talk. I get goose bumps.

SB: Or even Jesse Jackson, or some of the preachers here. Reverend Floyd, here in Manhattan, is supposed to be the best in the country. . .

MJ: But you're so eloquent. I mean, you paint pictures with your words and it makes you think. . . You go everywhere. It's brilliant.

SB: But it's about being moved by the spirit and kids are moved. MJ: But where do you get the

words?

SB: You know, I was describing in the book what happened on Friday night when you came to our house for dinner. It was fascinating.

MJ: What happened?

SB: All of us adults started having dinner and you went upstairs to play hide and go seek. And you were like the pied piper, kids came to you immediately. Little by little. . . the adults came to the third floor, the second floor. They really felt like they were missing out, like everyone was having fun and they weren't. They were having their political conversations. It's like the pied piper, and they want to pretend they're only going up there for the kids.

MJ: I loved when your friend attacked you . . . I loved that! I loved when he did that.

America's most admired and successful leaders.

SB: He's very innocent and he's attacked for it as a politician. All his advisors say you need to be more tough.

MJ: No, no. I wish I could've known Edison and Einstein and Michelangelo.

SB: We talk about all of them, by the way, in the book. Edison was so childlike.

MJ: I know, I see it, I saw him. . . laughing, giggling. I saw the footage, I see what he writes about. It's beautiful man, it's great stuff. I love that.

## Michael's Relationship with His Accuser and Other Children

Shmuley Boteach: I said to someone today that the attention you give to children with cancer seems very healing to them. I've seen it. You know when you give that kid attention that you can heal them?

Michael Jackson: I love them. I love them.

SB: It's also the fact that you are very famous and suddenly you channel all that attention that you normally get and you stick it onto someone else, and it is like this beam of light. I don't deny that celebrity can have a restorative effect, but it often has a very corrosive effect. Do you try to use your celebrity to help these kids?

MJ: I love them so much. They're my children, too. I remember we were in Australia and we were in this children-with-cancer ward and I started giving out toys. And I'll never forget this one boy who was like eleven and when I got to his bed he said, "It's amazing how just seeing you I feel so much better. I really do." I said, "Well, that's so sweet." That's what he said and I have never forgotten it. It's amazing and that's what we are supposed to do.

SB: Your devotion to Gavin [who would later be Michael Jackson's accuser] is impressive. I have spoken about it in a thousand forums now. That was one of the nicest things I have seen. That you tried to help him and his family.

MJ: He's special.

MJ: I spoke to Gavin [Michael's accuser] last night and he said, "Michael, you don't know how it hurts me, it hurts." He started to cry on the phone and he said, "I know you understand how it feels. It hurts so bad." I said, "Well, how many more do you have?" He said, "Maybe four. But the doctor said maybe more after that." It took his eyelashes away and his eyebrows and his hair. We are so lucky aren't we?

SB: Do you feel that when you speak to people like Gavin, part of the pain goes away for them?

MJ: Absolutely. Because every time I talk to him he is in better spirits. When I spoke to him last night he said, "I need you. When are you coming home?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "I need you Michael." Then he calls me "Dad."

I said, "You better ask your Dad if it is ok to call me that." He shouts, "Dad, is it ok if I call Michael, 'Dad?'" and he says, "Yes, no problem, whatever you want." Kids always do that. It makes me feel happy that they feel that comfortable.

SB: Do you feel like a universal father to children, that you have this ability to love them and appreciate them in a way that others don't?

MJ: I always feel that I don't want the parents to get jealous because it always happens and it rubs fathers in a strange way. Not as much as the mothers. I always say to the Dads, "I am not trying to take your place. I am just trying to help and I want to be your friend." The kids just end up falling in love with my personality. Sometimes it gets me into trouble, but I am just there to help.

SB: I asked you what parents can learn from children, and you identified a few things—love of fun, innocence, joy. What other things can we learn from children? For example, when you are around Gavin, what do you learn from him? Are you just there to help a child who has



cancer? What do you get from the experience? Is it just you showing pity, compassion for a child who is in trouble? Or do you feel this is the reason you are alive?

MJ: I feel that this is something really, really in my heart that I am supposed to do, and I feel so loved by giving my love, and I know that's what they need. I have heard doctors, and *his* doctors, say that it is a miracle how he is doing better and that's why I know this magic of love is so important. He got cheated out of his childhood and I think I can reflect on a lot of that because of my past. When you were ten you weren't thinking about heaven and how you are going to die and he is thinking about all of that. I had little Ryan White in my dining room telling his mother at the table, "Mother, when you bury me, I don't want to be in a suit and tie." He said, "Don't put me in a suit and tie. I want to be in jeans and a T-shirt." I said, "Excuse me, I have to go to the bathroom." And I ran to the bathroom and I cried. Imagine a 12-year-old boy telling his mother how to bury him. That's what I heard him say. How could

your heart not go out to someone like that?

SB: Since you were deprived of that childhood and now you are trying to confer it as a gift to all these children, do you heal yourself through that?

MJ: Yes. Yes, I do. Yes I do. Because that's everything. I need that to keep living. Do you see what Gavin wrote in the guest book, about his hat? It's a sweet story.

SB: I have told that story all over the world.

MJ: I like giving them that love and that pride to feel that they belong and they are special. He was hiding and he was ashamed that he had a bald head and he had cancer. Everybody has made him feel like an outcast and that's how he came here and I want him to let go. He is such a beautiful child, he doesn't need that hat. I told him, "You look just like an angel. Your voice sounds like an angel. As far as I am concerned you are an angel. What are you ashamed of?"

SB: Do you feel that children appreciate you more than adults?

MJ: Oh yeah, of course. Adults appreciate me artistically as a singer and a songwriter and a dancer and a performer. What is he like? Who is he? He's weird and he sleeps in an oxygen chamber and all those crazy horrific stories that people made up that had nothing to do with me.

SB: The children see right through that and they reciprocate your love. I saw that with Gavin.

MJ: They just want to have some fun and to give love and have love and they just want to be loved and held.

SB: Did you fight to hold onto this sense of caring? Was there a time when you said, "I don't care about anybody else. I am going to get a massage now and hang out in the Jacuzzi? The concert is over, so I'm just going to think about myself." Or even then were you thinking about what you could do for kids?

MJ: Truly in my heart, I love them and I care more than anything. I am still taking care of Gavin. He had chemotherapy yesterday and he is weak and not feeling good and it just touches

your heart. Your heart goes out to the world. I think I am a lot like my mother. I don't know if it is genetic or environmental. I remember when we were little she would watch the news and even now she has to watch the news with tissues. I'm the same, I start crying when I watch the news about the woman who takes her kids and throws them in the lake, one drowned, the other survived. So I invited the kids over and went to the funeral, paid for the funeral and I don't even know these people, but you hear these things. It's like asking, why aren't there more people like Mother Teresa? Why aren't there more people like Lady Diana?

SB: They are famous for being good, but you are famous *and* you are good, there's a very big difference. Even Diana, Diana was a good woman. I didn't know her. You did. She had many saintly qualities and did a huge amount of good. Still, she loved the glitzy life. But you love children. Why?

MJ: I am not trying to be philosophical but I really think it's my job to help them. I think it is my calling. I don't care if people laugh or what

they say. [Children] don't have a mouth to society and I think it is now their time. From here on out it is their time. They need the world's awareness and they need issues to deal with, and this is for them. And if I can be that light, that pedestal just to shine some light on who they are, and the importance of who children are, that's what I want to do. I don't know how God chooses people, or plays chess with people, and he does put you in position and sets you up. Sometimes I feel like that, like this is my place. I think about from Gandhi to Martin Luther King to Kennedy to myself to yourself. Do you think these are self-made men or, from birth, do you think God said, "Aha!" And smiling a little bit. . . . Do you think that just happened on its own by their fathers, or they were supposed to do this? I am asking you this question?

SB: I think it is the confluence of both. Great men and women are born with the potential for greatness. But it usually has to be squeezed out of them through the crisis of an external event. There is greatness in people but external events

help them develop it. Greatness is the synthesis of a man or woman's innate potential matched with their ability to rise to a great challenge. And when you don't have an answer to the question of why God gave you such phenomenal success, you start to wither under the burden of fame. You need to have something like a mirror that deflects all that attention, all that light, that is being shined on you, onto a higher cause or you'll be scorched by its intensity.

SB: A little girl I met last night is fourteen and she's an orphan. Her mother died when she was seven, and she never knew who her father was. She came to the *Lion King* last night because she is a friend of [name withheld] and her great wish was to meet you. So I told her I would bring her by for a few minutes this week so she can meet you.

MJ: Oh, who is taking care of her?

SB: She lives with her grandmother and she has

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a godfather who brought her to the play last night. Her godfather tries to take her out and see plays and things occasionally.

MJ: Did the kids have fun at the show?

SB: Oh yes they loved it. It was beautiful. This orphan girl's school is a few blocks away from your hotel. Maybe I'll bring her and let her take a picture with you.

## Knowing Ryan White and Other Children Battling Cancer

Shmuley Boteach: Wasn't there was a young boy you were very close to who got AIDS from a blood transfusion?

Michael Jackson: Ryan White. The hardest for me is. . . I am going to answer but I don't understand when a child dies. I really don't. I think there should be a window where there is a chance of dying but not in this window of time. When a child dies, or if the child is sick, I really don't understand it. But I listen to Ryan White, twelve years old, at my dining room table at Neverland telling his mother how to bury him. He said, "Mom when I die, don't put me in a suit and tie. I don't want to be in a suit and tie. Put me in OshKosh jeans and a T-shirt." I said, "I have to use the bathroom," and I ran to the bathroom and I cried my eyes out. Hearing this little boy telling his mother how to bury him. That hurt me. It was as if he was prepared for it and when he died he was in OshKosh jeans and



a T-shirt and a watch that I gave him. And I am sitting alone in this room with him and he is lying there and I felt so bad I just wanted to hold him and kiss him and say that I love him, which I did all those things when he was alive. I took care of him and he stayed at my house. But to see him just lying there . . . I spoke to him and I said, "Ryan, I promised you that I would do something in your honor on my next album. I will create a song for you. I will sing it. I want the world to know who you are." I did *Gone Too Soon* . That was for him.

SB: Do you think he heard you when you said that? Do you feel in touch with the soul of some of the people you love and have lost? Do you still feel close to them?

MJ: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

SB: So you had to deal with his death and other people who you were close to?

MJ: That hurt me so much. One other boy came to me and he was as white as snow, literally as white as snow or a white piece of paper. He was dying of cancer and he just loved me and he came in my bedroom and he saw the jackets I

wore and the videos and he put them on and he was in heaven. They told me that he wasn't going to live. That any day he could just go and I said, "Look, I am going to be coming to your town." I think he was in Kansas City. "I am going to open my tour in Kansas City in three months. I want you to come to the show. I am going to give you this jacket." He said "You are gonna' *give* it to me?" I said, "Yeah. But I want you to wear it to the show." I was trying to make him hold on. I said, "When you come to the show I want to see you in this jacket and in this glove," and I gave him one of my rhinestone gloves, and I never give the rhinestone gloves away. He was in heaven. When I came to the town he was dead and they buried him in the glove and the jacket. He was 10 years old. God knows, I know that he tried his best to hold on. SB: Do you feel angry at God for things like that happening?

MJ: No. I just don't understand them. I wish we knew more about the other side. I know it promises everlasting life and being in heaven. But why suffering and why pain before crossing

over to the white light, whatever it is? It should just be the most beautiful experience, whatever it is.

MJ: [The story about the boy] was a true story. I wish you could've seen his face, Shmuley, I wish you could've seen it.

SB: And that was a promise story, right? You said to him "I promise if you stay alive. . ." Right?

MJ: Yeah, I was trying to get him to hold on. They said he was gonna die and I said, "I know I can do something about this." You know? And I was trying to get him to look forward, to hold on and I said "Wear this to the show" and he was so happy. When I got to the town, he was dead. Killed me, killed me.

SB: How do you feel, describe the feeling to me for just a minute. How do you feel when you're around [a little girl with cancer whom Michael and I knew]?

MJ: I love her.

SB: You know that you could make a difference with them and you know that just being around

you, part of their illness almost goes away. You know the ancient Rabbis said that every time you visit someone sick you take away  $\frac{1}{60\text{th}}$  of their illness. But with you, it's almost like you take away fifty percent of their illness, you know? I know you know that.

MJ: Yeah, yeah. I love making people. . . I don't like to see anybody hurt or suffer, especially children.

SB: Do you feel that you have a healing power that was given to you? Or is it because of the celebrity? In other words, being a great celebrity, when you show a child attention, they feel really good. They know how famous you are, they feel like "wow, someone that famous cares about me, I must be special." But is it beyond celebrity? Is it something in you that you had before celebrity?

MJ: I think it's something that I'm supposed to do because I always had this yearning to give and help and make people feel better in that way.

SB: You had this before, when you were

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Michael Jackson the boy?

MJ: Yes.

## Being Dad with Prince and Paris

Michael Jackson: [To Prince, who is with us]:  
Prince, what makes Daddy laugh?

Prince: *Three Stooges* .

MJ: He's right. I love them. The fat one. . . I  
scream with laughter. I keep *The Three  
Stooges* with me wherever I go. It makes me  
happy. I have watched them all my life.

Shmuley Boteach: What is it about them? Is it  
the fact that they can like hurt each other and  
no one gets hurt and everything's funny?

MJ: Yeah, Curly is the killer. Remember  
Curly—the fat one, right Prince? [Prince starts  
jumping around, imitating Curly] Yeah, he loves  
it too. I love them.

SB: That's what makes you laugh out loud?

MJ: Yeah, I scream. I scream, I keep the Three  
Stooges with me wherever I go. It makes me  
happy. I love them. I've watched them all my  
life.

Prince: Daddy. I want to see *Peter Pan* .

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MJ: Me too.

Prince: I want to go fishing.

MJ: I'll take you fishing one day as long as we throw the fish back after we catch it.

SB: Do you feel, maybe, based on everything that you have done for children, that God showed you extra kindness by giving you two really outstanding children who are so attached to you. . . that amid the malice and mean-spiritedness of people, God gave you these two incredible gifts in your life?

MJ: That would be a nice thought. I think they are a gift. I think all children are a gift.

SB: Do you love children more after having Prince and Paris?

MJ: I love them as much and more. It's hard for me to say "my children" because I don't see any territoriality. Maybe because I used to get hectorred by my ex-wife Lisa about that because all she used to care about was her own and not others.

I know it would make a huge difference in their future if we do what we say we are going to do [with our child-prioritization initiative]. It's that time, that chance to say, "You, you are special to me. This is your day. This is not Christmas. It's not the day we are celebrating for Christ that's about the day he was born. This is about you and me. I am giving you my love." That would make a *big* difference. If I had that day with my father and my mother, that would have made all the difference. And I love my parents. My mother is like a saint. She is. . . she is not of this earth. She is unbelievably wonderful. I don't have a bad thing to say about her. That would be nice, wouldn't it?

SB: So the first thing you want Prince and Paris to know, before they know their ABC's before they know how to dress, you want them to know that their daddy loves them.

MJ: Yeah, yeah. To make them hold their hands and look them in the eyes and tell them, "I love you." That would be remembered forever. I do it to Prince and Paris every day.

SB: That's the one thing that will never be taken



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away from them. That's the beginning of all knowledge—to know that you are loved.

MJ: Loved, truly loved. . . to touch their hand, because kids go a lot by touch, and they need to be held, and people know those kinds of things. But they don't know the power.

## Playfulness

Shmuley Boteach: Give me some stories about playfulness. Tell me about your water balloon fights.

Michael Jackson: Water balloon fights?

SB: Yes, at Neverland.

MJ: I think the best way to break the ice with someone you don't know is to play. You bond quicker through play than any other way. Through shaking a hand to usually having a conversation is not as easy as play. I think it's the best way and I think breaking ice with a good water balloon fight or running around together, riding bikes, looking at each other, laughing, smiling, it's the best way to really get to know somebody in the beginning. And they realize that you are just fun and simple and your first association with them is through fun. I

think that's important, don't you?

SB: Yes. But I want you to describe it. You have this water balloon fort at Neverland, and you organize two different teams. When we stayed with you we didn't have a water-balloon fight, remember, because it was raining?

MJ: We have two teams, the red team and a blue team and you challenge each other. There are water balloons, there are cannons that shoot sixty feet on each side and there are sling shots where you can sling the water balloons and they have these shower buttons. And if the red team can get over to the blue team and push their shower button three times. . . . And the only way for the red team to turn off the blue team's side is for the red team to run back over and turn it off and we get to hit them. When I say shower, it's like a sprinkler and fountains, it is like a shower all over the place and you get flooded with water. If you hit that button three times, whoever does that first is the winner. And then the loser has to sit on this round thing with his clothes on and you throw this ball and he falls in the water. They are soaked and then

they have to go to the swimming pool and dive in with their clothes on. So it is a real fun fiasco.

SB: So when you have guests who come to Neverland you often break the ice through the water balloon fights. Children and adults?

MJ: Adults too.

SB: And how do they respond? Do you sometimes see real serious people suddenly melting?

MJ: Oh they love it. They laugh and we videotape it and once everybody has dried off and had dinner, we show it in our movie theater on the big screen and everybody is laughing and screaming and they realize how much fun it was. It is a wonderful thing.

SB: Do you ever do this with big music executives?

MJ: No. . . yes. . . with movie people like Catherine Byrne and Stephen [Spielberg]. . . we have had some big ones.

SB: What about children with cancer, people like that?

MJ: Sometimes we have it in the grass. I like it

better in the fort. There's bridges. You run across and it is fun, great fun.

SB: Tell me some more stories like that. Let's say you are in the middle of a big Sony meeting or a big movie meeting with all these crusty corporate American suits. Have you ever been able to break the ice in these serious negotiations because you are more childlike? They are very rigid, everything is about numbers.

MJ: You don't understand. One thing you don't know about me is how silly I am. Every time I get in these meetings and everyone is uptight I laugh through the whole thing and I can't stop giggling and I have to keep apologizing and my lawyer looks at me and says, "I'm sorry. He does this sometimes." Then they start laughing and they all start laughing and so it becomes fun and light-hearted because they look too serious sometimes and I like it to be a little more light-hearted. I can't help it. I really can't help it.

SB: Does that break the ice when you do that? Do people feel closer, does it make tough negotiations easier? Do they feel that they have

bonded more when that happens?

MJ: Yes, I think so. I think there is a commonality amongst all of us that we really are all the same. Things can be really humorous and we can laugh at the same things. There's that commonality in mankind. Really, we are all the same. Really.

SB: Laughter is the quickest way we can achieve something in common? MJ: Everybody's funny bone is the same color, isn't it? We are all the same, really. I have seen that a lot.

SB: What about practical jokes you do, and things like that? Do you remember Michael Steinhardt at the zoo? He was one of the best money managers on Wall Street, but he was famous for having a bucket of water fall on some guy who was too serious, at the biggest meetings. He was a legendary practical joker.

Steinhardt, who is a dear friend, is a world-renowned Jewish philanthropist and co-founder of Birthright Israel. He is a great lover of animals and has his own private zoo.

MJ: Are you kidding? That's my most favorite thing in the whole world, to prank people. I love doing it, but I am afraid that some people will get mad even though sometimes I don't care. But I do it all the time. I carry stink-bombs and water balloons. After every video, on the last day the whole room stinks like rotten eggs and it all turns to a big mess and everybody knows what I do and everybody knows that's when it's done. And then I walk out. I love it.

SB: Do you see very serious people becoming more childlike in front of your eyes when that happens?

MJ: Yes, and they talk about it and how funny it was. It is fun. SB: You will remember that on Friday night at my home one of the guests was a woman who is in her early forties and a successful real estate mogul. She has over 100 employees. But at what price? She is not married, she doesn't have children. She said she didn't have time to date. I said, "What about Friday nights?" "Well," she said, "I am ashamed to tell you that I am normally at the office until

11:00-12:00 p.m., even on Friday nights.” So, she has given up a lot of her personal life in order to have this big business. What would you say to someone like that?

MJ: I would try and show them some of the wonderful things that they are missing and not to be overly serious and not too much of a workaholic, even though I am a workaholic. But you must stop sometimes and have fun. There is so much fun to be had because once . . . our time can be so limited on the planet and I think real family and great memories and doing things with children are some of the most wonderful treasures. I have had some amazing good times. When I am sad I start reflecting on the good times to make me feel better. I do it in bed at night sometimes when I get down on myself. I put the most wonderful thought in my head, some wonderful experience and I feel a chemical reaction taking over in my body where I am actually there and I love that. I get upset if some idiot, I mean worse than a Stooge, a complete idiot writes something stupid and so untrue and so unlike what happened at the



event or something I was at. And I get so angry and I try not to be angry because I am hurting myself. And I start thinking about me flying through the air with the wind in my face. I do it in Africa. I go way up high and I am so happy up there and I am flying. I think it is one of the most wonderful things I have discovered and I love it. It's the freedom. It's bliss. It's quintessential bliss, I think. It's the height of fun.

SB: Do you ever close your eyes and see yourself in front of one hundred thousand adoring fans? Does that help?

MJ: I love the fire and the majesty of all of that, that you can command an audience and the feeling of all of that. I love that a lot. That's another great feeling. But it's not the same as this feeling of flight. Or just looking over a panorama of some beautiful picturesque scenery which is so beautiful you really start to cry. I cry. I say, "Thank you." You see the most beautiful sky where the clouds are hues of orange and purple. God, it's so beautiful. I start to pray. I kinda take a mental picture of it because I want

to remember it.

SB: What would your prayer be in moments like that?

MJ: God, this is so beautiful. Thank you for making the heavens and earth such a beautiful place. If other people don't recognize it and appreciate it, I do. Thank you, thank you so much. That's what I do. I have had moments when I have said to another person, "Look at that beautiful sky," and they have said, "Yeah? It's nice." I go, "There must be something wrong with me. Why do I see it and they don't?" Why do I appreciate it and they don't appreciate it? I went to a museum in Paris and I swear to you, my bodyguards are a witness to what happened to me, they had to carry me. I broke down crying and the lady who was showing us round said, "What's wrong with him?" And they said, "He is so moved by what he has seen."

## Practical Jokes

Shmuley Boteach: Tell me more about your practical jokes.

Michael Jackson: [Once] I took a whole bottle of scotch and I poured it into this glass in this serious meeting with all these people and I started to drink the whole thing in one gulp. And I swallowed it and I started breathing and everyone went silent. I filled it with water. They died laughing. I love doing stuff like that. I had 'em Shmuley. They thought it was vodka.

SB: I was visiting my brother's house in LA. Debbie and I were dating at the time. Debbie came to my house because we wanted to get married and we wanted to get my father's blessing and all that and we are very traditional. My father is Middle Eastern and he is looking at Debbie and she was only nineteen and I was twenty-one. I got married very young.

MJ: I wish I had.

SB: I always say better to have married the right person at the wrong time than the wrong person at the right time. Anyway, you know the hottest peppers, the little red ones. My brother, who is a practical joker, said to Debbie, who has this very sweet and trusting nature, "Have those." She said, "Aren't they the hot ones?" He said, "No. They are the sweet ones." Debbie takes

two and puts them in her mouth. She turns red, purple, blue, and says, "Oh my God. Water!" My brother says, "Here's some water," and gives it to her and she drinks the whole thing. And it was vodka. Pure vodka. It's the first time she had met my father. Debbie can't drink. She barely even drinks wine. She nearly passed out.

MJ: That's funny.

SB: Debbie is very innocently naive. Tell me more of the practical jokes you have done?

MJ: I love doing rowdy stuff. Tell 'em Frank.

Frank: Shmuley, we went to the south of France getting a music award. We were in a suite overlooking the ocean. It's a beautiful view. Downstairs below are people eating in a restaurant, elegant ties, suits, gorgeous, eating. It was 7:30-8:00 pm and it was still light. We were looking at each other and we had the same idea in mind. We got to the garbage bag and filled it with water and right below us the people are eating. We threw it [the rest is inaudible because Michael and Frank are laughing]. . . the deluge of water is on the table. We laughed so hard that we were dying. It was

so mean, the dinner was over. They were standing up going.

That same night, 4 am, people coming in, the sun's coming up. They were singing. We got a bucket of water and waited until they got close enough.

I love stuff like that. They don't know where it came from.

MJ: It was so much fun.

SB: Did you ever get caught?

MJ: No. I had one of my stage managers make me a laser and it was this long (makes a hand gesture) and it shoots out for several miles. People could have been walking several blocks away but we made this red dot go along with them. We do that everywhere. Here in the Four Seasons. They called the police and knocked on the door. It was four years ago. We were spying in somebody's room, it was so much fun. We hid it because I didn't want to lose it. The police knocked on the door and our security was talking to them and taking care of it. I don't know what he said. You have got to have some fun, come on. We love anything with water.

Frank: We were in a hotel once. . .

MJ: South America wasn't it?

Frank: We filled up a garbage can of water and if you tilt it toward the door when you open it, so when you open it water falls all over you.

MJ: I love that.

Frank: So we knock on the door and we run. They open the door. Wham! Water.

SB: This is in a hotel? This is the South American story?

MJ: South America was different. There people go out on their balconies right below you, sunbathing, with no clothes on hanging their dirty laundry that they just cleaned on the rail of the balcony, their panties drying in the sun. Boom! A bunch of water goes over everything. I love that. I love it too much. It gives me great pleasure.

Frank: There was this girl and this guy and the girl has no top on. We lean over, we see them, all of a sudden, whooom!

MJ: [Laughing] When it comes down I love that. When they jump, it kills me.



SB: You have only ever got caught once with that laser? Where is the laser now?

MJ: It's in storage somewhere in California. I wish I could find it. I would take it all over the world. It goes miles. Any of these buildings (Michael points out the window) where you are walking, it is a red dot.

**No other conversations after  
this point.**

**End**