

Prime Minister Abbas said he would not use force against Hamas. President Bush said, "those who harbor terrorists are equal to terrorists." It's time Arafat's people are treated as the murderers they are. They don't want peace. Talk is the wrong tool for dealing with a Hitler or a bin-Laden



Face Reality: Fight the enemy or bury more Jews.

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Parashas Naso

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"And the man shall bring his wife to the Kohen. And he shall bring her sacrifice on her behalf – one tenth of an ephah of coarse barley flour. He should not pour upon it oil. And he should not put frankincense upon it – for it is a meal offering of jealousy. It is a meal offering of remembrance – recalling iniquity. (BeMidbar 5:15)

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Priestly Blessings

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

I often wondered about the purpose of "Birchat Kohanim", the priest's blessings, discussed in Numbers, 6:24-26:

6:24) "God shall bless you and watch you."

6:25) "God should shine upon you favorably and show you grace."

6:26) "God should lift His face towards you and place peace before you."

Ibn Ezra explains these blessings to mean the following: 6:24) God should assist in your monetary needs, 6:25) God should answer your prayers, and 6:26) No evils should befall you.

We must ask what was the necessity for these blessings, as the perfect God only does that which is necessary. This is a perfection of His ways. Why were these blessings bestowed on the Jews via the priests? We read in 6:27 "and place My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them". Clearly, God alone is the One who determines whether a blessing occurs to the Jews, it is not in the hands of the priests, or any man, to make the blessing a reality. What then is the need for the priests to utter these blessings? Cannot God bestow blessings Himself without the priests' declaration? This last question forces the Torah student to think into the relationship between

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Arabs teach children one goal: Kill Jews with your own life. You cannot talk peace with them. Period.

Facing Reality

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Denial is a devious foe. It caters to many agendas, luring us into harmful decisions, blinding us with visions of success and peace.

Can we hope for a peace agreement with Arab terrorists, is that realistic, or impossible? We must be brutally honest when weighing both sides, and accept only what reason dictates, regardless of our dreams being crushed. Dreams are for those asleep. I am awake, are you?

Denial is our own demon. A demon which we must not run from, but approach head-on, and approach it now. Dreaming of peace will not replace your child violently killed by ruthless, homicidal, Arab bombers. There is no such people called "Palestinians". They are Arabs, and that must be understood clearly.

What causes the numerous and terminally wasteful talks to continue between the Arabs and Israel? I believe there is a conflict in us

which stems from two fatal errors; 1) An Arab child cannot become a homicide bomber. 2) Adult bombers can repent. These two tragic mistakes are literally killing us. With some people, there can never be a light at the end of the tunnel. A people who encourage their children to kill themselves and others; a people who kill their own, dragging their bodies in the street; and a people who killed a 5 year old Danielle Shefi, are not human, and cannot be treated as human, nor may their "talks" be trusted.

In His Torah, God commands man to wipe out a city of idolatry, a people who harm only themselves. We are also commanded by God to wipe out the murderous Amalekites. God Himself destroyed Sodom. He wiped out the world with a flood. In all these cases, children were not spared. Ask yourselves, "Is God right or wrong by condemning children?" There is

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Facing Reality

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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one answer: God created morality, so it is ludicrous for man to oppose God. King Solomon taught, (Ecclesiastes, 5:1) "Don't be excited (with) your mouth, and do not hasten to bring forth words before God, for God is heaven and you are on Earth, therefore let your words be few". If you are sympathetic to these children, realize that these child terrorists would not be sympathetic to your children, not even to a carriage-bound infant. They would proudly blow themselves up along with your son and daughter.

Choose who you want to live, and who to die. Israel, you have the ability and the power to correct the problem. Right now, your inactivity translates into murder. You have one decision; follow God's morality or die and be killed through passivity. God has tremendous resources, if you would admit His presence and ability. If only you would not concede to other influences, but admit His laws as absolute truths, as righteous, as the singular morality.

You still think talking will help? Didn't President Bush stop talking to Iraq at a certain point? Well, we have far passed that point with Arafat's followers and Hamas.

What is the obstacle? Most human beings cannot synthesize "child" with "suicide bomber" or "martyr". This conflict stems from something deeper, something more personal. I refer to a specific self image we all have, as a "caretaker for children". We enjoy this self image, and who can deny this sentiment? Not one of us. We all equate children with innocence - those who require our love and defense. What then happens is this; our guilt emerges as we consider a Arab child as a suicide bomber. This guilt causes us to reject that thought, and replace it with a nonsensical notion that there is potential good in these children. Time and time again, we return to "talks". The correct response is, "There isn't good in these children". The proof? The adults who kill children like Danielle Shefi used to be children themselves. Their corrupt society and corrupt religious philosophy trains and traps their Arab youth in this path of violence. More proof? Many Arab teenagers blow themselves up. Our rejection of branding adults and children as murderers attributed to the reluctance of European Jews of leaving when they could, and they paid the price.

The Arab Muslim culture is not being changed. It will continue its downward spiral as a people favoring ruthless terrorism, and the obliteration of life. These deviant and cruel animals drench nails in rat-poison, that tear through human limbs, hurled with explosives so powerful that heads are ripped off bodies. The Arabs will



During a recent graduation ceremony of the kindergarten class at the Islamic Charity Foundation in Gaza, young children were encouraged to dress in camouflage fatigues, to march with toy machine guns and to burn the Israeli flag. Some students were made to pose with red paint on their hands, representing blood, or to imitate leaders of terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah while repeating virulently anti-Israel and anti-Semitic statements.

continue to parade as more American skyscrapers plunge downward, crushing and burning to death every innocent worker, with no chance to escape and to say goodbye to their loved ones. Their families weep for their loss, for the unimaginable pain suffered, while Arabs burn flags and celebrate victory over our destruction.

I understand. Entertaining this reality alarms you. You are suddenly faced with a comparison between these violent Arab children, and your own. You ask yourself, "Can my own kids commit such atrocities?" Upon answering a very definite "No", you then find it difficult to accept that ANY child is capable of such acts. But I warn you, you must set aside your sensitivity for "children" in general. This sensitivity causes you to deny that Hamas and Arabs are killers. For decades, this nation brainwashed its youth to live for murder. They live that way. We die that way.

It is so revolting when I hear a foolish reporter equate Israeli defense - (which never targets civilians, certainly not children) - to Arabs who uncork the champagne when a baby has been shot at point blank range. Danielle Shefi, you did not die in vain. You are remembered, and you serve to teach our blind leaders that time has come to defend life a any cost.

These trained Arabs are not going away. This must not be denied. We cannot talk to them. Such talk will never result in changing their evil schemes. They have not changed - they will not change.

Their offspring are now as vicious as their parents. Even if a minority of Arabs oppose Arafat's induction of children into the ranks of his cowardly army, we cannot maintain relations with a people who contain any remnant of terror, and certainly not with the Arabs, who breed this philosophy en masse. We must accept this fact and face reality. Complete avoidance with killers and liars must be our first priority. This nation must be dismantled and destroyed.

It is beyond me how President Bush will

never entertain peace talks with bin-Laden, but simultaneously does so with Arabs. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas declared he will not use force against Hamas. So why is Bush still talking to him? Abbas must be condemned and treated as a terrorist according to President Bush's own terms, that one who harbors terrorists is equal to the terrorist. As long as Abbas 1) will not use force against Hamas, and 2) allows even one Hamas member to live under Abbas' controlled areas, Abbas is equal to Hamas, and the U.S. and Israel must treat him accordingly. This is President Bush's own words, "I've said in the past that nations are either with us or against us in the war on terror."

Not demanding Abbas use force against Hamas is a clear denial. It will cause more deaths. I appeal to the President to be guided by our knowledge of human nature - not political concerns. Life must never gain 'bargaining chip' status. As long as anyone entertains discussions of peace with a people preaching martyrdom as a basic tenet, our end will be more deaths.

Requesting Arafat denounce terror was also a grave mistake, as a Rabbi put it, "...you thereby condone Arafat's words, by requesting them." Back then, Bush's request rendered Arafat a realistic partner for peace - his words as possibly reflecting truth. Again a denial. True, Bush subsequently recognized Arafat lies. But when will he recognize Arafat's successor Abbas as no better? Again, Abbas said he will not use force against Hamas. We must not recoil from identifying someone as he is. Abbas said in other words, "I am not committed to the removal of terror. I will not use all my power to fight Hamas." The truth must be embraced if we are to make headway. Denial details.

Statements like "...the recent agreement between the PA and Israel looks promising" are denials of a clear and present danger: Arafat's Arab population of children, teenagers and adults, trained for decades to kill Jews, simply do not suddenly embrace peace. We have seen enough emailed film

clips of kindergarten PA classes teaching violence. We have heard enough on PA radio urging increased bombings. And we have read enough of Arafat's signatures ordering deadly weapons, and suicide brigades on Jews. By denying these facts, we endanger ourselves, and delay a real plan which can have the hopes of shielding us from terror.

The real facts we must face: 1) Arafat is a killer. 2) Arafat is not in control, and neither is Abbas. Their drive for "peace" is not for itself, but only until they receive a land. 3) Arafat's Arab society will continue to teach terrorism. For years, Arafat's Arab children and teens have been trained to kill Jews. These children will soon become, what their parents are now - homicidal bombers. This will not change. 4) These thousands of killers don't vanish and they will be killing for decades to come, if we allow them. 5) Proximity to a terrorist nation is fatally foolish. 6) Israel never was, nor ever will be, home to "Palestinians." Arafat's claims to Israel are baseless, and contradict history. 7) American and foreign reporters of baseless anti-Semitic blood, intend to rewrite history with words such as "occupation".

Anyone who still wants to talk to Arafat's Arab killers denies these facts, and kills Jews. Stop the denial. Stop the talks.

What must happen: A. Arafat must be tried and punished for murder according to both American and Israeli law. This is consistent with what the U.S. would have done to bin-Laden, if caught. B. Measures for distancing the Arafat's Arabs from their target Israel, must commence immediately. C. The U.S. must stop tying Sharon's hands D. We must not compromise Israeli life for any concern. E. All news people must cease interviews with Arafat, as this condones his words as legitimate, enabling him to shed his proven, murderous skin. Reporters should have world history as mandatory reading. F. Abbas must be condemned and treated as a terrorist according to President Bush's own terms, that one who harbors terrorists is equal to the terrorist. As long as Abbas 1) will not use force against Hamas, and 2) allows even one member to live in Palestinian controlled areas, Abbas is equal to Hamas, and the U.S. and Israel must treat him accordingly.

History disproves all "Palestinian" claims to Israel. The reality is they are Arabs, there are no "Palestinians". It is not our responsibility, nor is it safe to have the Arab terrorists next door. Instead, Arab terrorist people must be dismantled and destroyed, before even one more innocent American or Jewish civilian is butchered.

Further talk will kill more people. Arab terrorists cannot be partners in peace. They do not want peace. Dismantle and destroy the Arab population targeting Jews. Do it now. ■



Response to Mesora's Article: "Facing Reality"

ALAN KEYES

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim has been kind enough to send me his essay reflecting upon the reality of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. I think there is much merit in the good Rabbi's central thesis that - particularly in dealing with the terror threat - denial can kill.

I am well on the record, for twenty years and more, with my refusal to deny Arafat's terrorist credentials. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration cannot yet make this refusal free of confusion and compromise.

The Rabbi's analysis raises some provocative and disturbing questions. I agree that many such questions must be raised and answered, if we are to see our way clearly to what must be done for Israel's survival as a Jewish state. I would like to share with the Rabbi and his readers some reflections of my own about denial - and I place my comments in the immediate context of rapidly unfolding events in Israel this week.

After weeks of hyperbolic rhetoric about what had happened in Jenin, and a determined propaganda effort to lend credibility to the charges of Israeli massacre and massive atrocity, the United Nations has decided that an investigation isn't necessary after all.

Why is the putatively "unbiased" United Nations losing its fervor and interest for going into Jenin to get at the facts? Perhaps it is because emerging evidence is giving the lie to Palestinian and European charges of hundreds of deaths and massive outrages. For friends of Israel, it's not hard to see that the UN was never after facts in the first place. The UN has been a hotbed of anti-Israeli bigotry for decades, and has spent much of its energy in the past few weeks adding to the slanderous furor that was being generated



Photos: This week's deadly bombing in Jerusalem

against Israel. This is a fact that must not be denied.

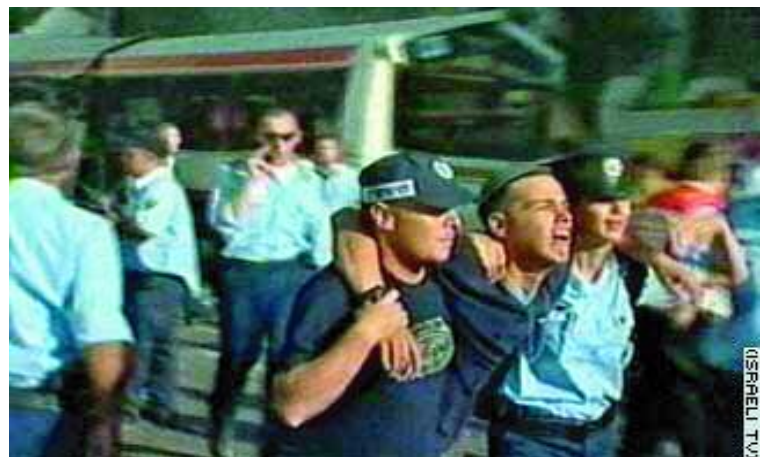
I wish I could say that it stopped with the United Nations. But it didn't. Most European countries, and elements in our own State Department, including the Secretary of State, were stampeded by a campaign of propaganda and disinformation aimed at portraying the Israelis as massive brutalizers. That campaign contributed substantially to the heavy pressure that was then placed on Israel - pressure that directly led to Yasser Arafat's liberation in the deal that was struck over the last weekend. I believe the salient truth of this analysis cannot be denied.

Palestinian claims that Jenin represented a "victory" for their side are actually correct, but not because of the battle itself. Rather, the way in which the battle was abused for propaganda purposes to score a major political and diplomatic victory in the resuscitation of Yasser Arafat, despite his continued use of terrorism as a negotiating tactic, indeed has scored a Palestinian victory in Jenin. In that sense, it would seem to me, the time-honored Palestinian tactic of "big lie" propaganda has succeeded very well.

We should consider the same question about this terrorism of the truth that we do with terrorism in

general. The success of such a campaign of disinformation tragically raises two deeply serious questions we must now confront: will we not continue to face the same tactics practiced over and over again - and realizing this, will we act, will we stop denying that we are being duped and manipulated by big lies and wishful thinking? The gullible, feckless, fatuous response that comes from our own U.S. State Department, from Europeans and from others, leaves American policy based on the loudest yelping accusations instead of facts. That's what has happened in the course of the last fortnight, and I think this fact will have momentous results for the entire region.

The Palestinian propaganda machine is banking on the Goebel's approach, the Communist approach - telling a big lie loud and often enough to make it practically true. It often works. But that approach won't work with fair-minded Americans. We prefer to look at the hard facts, and to make our judgments in a fair way on the basis of those facts. American friends of Israel won't be stampeded by emotional propaganda campaigns that turn out to have been based upon a willingness to play games with the truth in order to achieve unjust political purposes. Let us insist that the Bush Administration learn what we have come to know - that facing facts, resisting denial - these are the pressing requirements before us if Israel is to be secure. □



The Tabernacle's Inauguration

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Value	Correlative
930	Adam's years
130	Adam's years when his first son was born
620	Noah's years when his first son was born
70	The nations of the world which emanated from Noah
1	One Torah
10	Ten Commandments
613	Total mitzvos
1	Abraham
1	Isaac
1	Jacob
1	The ram to atone for the sale of Joseph
2	Moses and Aaron
3	3 sets of Jews: Israelites, Levites, Kohanim, also the 3 festivals
3 x 5	2 sets of 5 commands per each tablet, 1 set of the Five Books of Moses

A close friend asked about the Tabernacle's donations made by Israel's princes (Numbers, 7:19). Vessels of precise numeric weights, and numbers of sacrificial animals are mentioned as part of the Tabernacle's donations. Rashi offers interesting correlations between the numeric weights of vessels and the numbers of animals, and between numeric values noted in the Torah. Below I have listed the numbers which Rashi correlated. The "value" column represents either the weight of a donated vessel, or the number of a species sacrificed. (See image above)

The question of course is, what the significance is of these correlatives? Additionally, what do these correlatives have to do with the inauguration of the tabernacle? Take a moment before reading on. Try to categorize the correlatives.

It is interesting that the correlatives fall into three categories. (See image at right)

It appears God's will is that man's attention be drawn to three concepts upon the erection of the Temple - the completion of the system of the Torah. All else was complete except for the building of the Tabernacle. Upon its completion, God willed that these three categories of importance be recognized as the primary goals of human life:

- 1) Man must Populate the world
- 2) Man must follow/recognize competent Transmitters of the law
- 3) Man must

recognize Divine law.

1) The essentiality of man populating the world is self evident. The world was created by God for the sake of man to appreciate his Maker. Therefore, all members of mankind must admit to the good which they enjoy as created beings, and bestow that very good on another human, by procreating. The act of procreation is a testament by the father of his admission of the good, which is a created, thinking being. Procreation is a father's endorsement of life - intended by God, for others too.

The reason why only Adam's and Noah's ages at their first child's births are mentioned, although countless others contributed by fathering children, is due to the exclusive role both these men had. They were the only two people who can be considered "population's forerunners". Adam was the cause of all mankind, and Noah began the world again in the post-Flood era. No other men lay claim to such a significant role of populating Earth than these two, without whom, the world would be barren.

2) Why are transmitters of the law essential? We can also ask why God gave the Torah to Moses in the manner He did, i.e., to pass it down, man to man. Why did God not give the Torah to each man individually? Perhaps this would convey a false notion that man is inherently entitled to the Torah. This is

not so. Man must toil in Torah to uncover the truths. The more he toils, the deeper the wisdom he penetrates,....

"If you dig for it like silver, and search it out like a buried treasure, then you will understand the fear of G-d, and the knowledge of G-d will you find" (Proverbs, 2:4-5).

Perhaps then the very act of orchestrating a system of 'transmission' of the Torah, is to teach the very idea of how profound and deep the Torah is. But why is this idea so essential? Why must man know that Torah is so deep? It is because it reflects on its Creator, and teaches that God has infinite wisdom. Perhaps man's search for wisdom needs to be fueled by the idea that the Source of all Torah is infinitely wise. Only with this realization will man thrust himself into his learning, guaranteed by this concept that his mining for wisdom will always yield precious gems.

The relevance of the 930 years lived by Adam rides on the coattails of this concept: Adam's length of days teaches us that the wealth of knowledge in existence far exceeds man's lifetime. Were man to live a thousand years, he would still just scratch the surface of

knowledge. By correlating Adam's years to the Tabernacle, we realize the amount of learning available far surpasses a man's lifespan - even one of Adam's age. It adds to our appreciation of God's infinite wisdom.

3) The Torah itself required highlighting. Just as in the Tabernacle, the focus was the Ark which contained the broken tablets and the Torah, so also the inaugural gifts must embody this concept. In all major areas of Torah, we will find that the Torah and wisdom in general take the spotlight. (See the article: The Ark's Poles)

According to Rashi these essential and primary concepts must inhere in the inauguration. The inauguration - the final commencement of the Torah system - required a focus on these primary goals of creation. The structure of the Tabernacle was not an ends, but a means for achieving these goals. The one method for focusing on the goals was permeating the inaugural services with these concepts.

One point remains unanswered as indicated by the "(?)": 1) What is the role of the atonement for the sale of Joseph?

Populating Earth	Torah Transmitters	Torah

Value	Correlative
930	Adam's years
130	Adam's years when his first son was born
620	Noah's years when his first son was born + 20 years prior to the Flood's decree
70	The nations of the world which emanated from Noah
1	One Torah
10	Ten Commandments
613	Total mitzvos
1	Abraham
1	Isaac
1	Jacob
1	The ram to atone for the sale of Joseph (?)
2	Moses and Aaron
3	3 sets of Jews: Israelites, Levites, Kohanim, the 3 sections; Torah, Prophets, Writings
3 x 5	2 sets of 5 commands per each tablet, 1 set of the Five Books of Moses

Referencing God

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

The very last sentence in parshas Naso (Numbers 7:89) reads, "And when Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with 'him', and he heard the voice speaking to him from atop the Kaporess on the Ark of testimony from between the two cherubim speaking to him."

Who is the first "him" referring to? It makes no mention of anyone previously in the chapter. Additionally, this passage seems out of context. As the preceding verses are dealing with the twelve princes' offerings, why does it state that Moses spoke with "him" immediately following the sacrifices of the Tabernacle's inauguration?

It's clear that the "him" mentioned is referring to God, as there is no one else in the Tabernacle when Moses entered. Why then did God go out of the way and avoid using a direct reference to His name? God could have written, "And when Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with God..."

I believe God used the word "him" to teach the following: this is the one geographical location where there is no mistaking that it pertains exclusively to God. When in the tabernacle, the term "Him" suffices to teach with whom Moses was talking. It is only "God's House". It is impossible to refer to any other being in this location, as it is exclusively God's domain, "And make for Me a temple and I will dwell among you". (Lev. 25:8). The Torah therefore points to this exclusivity by using the term "Him" in place of the name God.

What then is the importance of our knowing this fact, that this

place is exclusively God's? Perhaps the answer is that there is no one else who could be the source of wisdom - the definition of the Tabernacle and Temple. As the ark is the focus of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle's distinction is derived from the Ark's unique character as the "Torah's container". Additionally, Moses heard the voice emanating from between the two cherubim which is directly above the Ark to embellish on the point that such prophecy was directly from God, the Creator of the Torah. Perhaps for this reason, miracles surrounded the Ark which housed the Torah - the object of God's exclusive creation which He made before the universe. Through miracles, the Ark was intimately tied to the Divinity of Torah as it housed both it and the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments also carried the miraculous feature of being written legibly from both sides of each tablet - one of the objects mentioned as being created on the primordial Friday at sunset. (See our article on this topic: All Miracles Were Part of Creation). Miracles then seem to be used in connection with the Ark to underline the Torah's Divine nature and origin.


Why is the term "the voice" used, and not "God's voice?" Simply put, God has no voice. Meaning, we don't find statements which attribute corporeality to God. A passage such as "God's voice....." referring to actual verbalization - not a message - is impossible for the Torah to state, as it implies human qualities. (An acceptable instance would be

something like "listen to His voice", meaning, follow His commands. Such a statement is not conveying that God has a voice, so it does not oppose Torah principles.)

The reason this verse comes right after the completion of the inaugural sacrifices is to teach that the sacrifices are not the essential aspect of the Tabernacle and the future Temple. The essence of these structures' purposes is that man have a connection with God - the Source of all knowledge. To demonstrate this, God wrote that Moses spoke with Him subsequent to the sacrifices to show the real goal of the Temple.

If this parsha concluded with the sacrifices, one might be led to believe an inherent importance to sacrifice as an ends. Really, sacrifice is a means. Knowledge of God, Torah study is the goal of the Torah. See Talmud Moad Katan, 9b at the very top of the page where Torah and mitzvos are compared by Rav Shimon bar Yochai's students, questioning which is the preferred activity. ▣

(See our article on the Tabernacle where we explained that the articles contained in the Holy of Holies serve to illustrate that in these four objects, we witness God's exclusive, ultimate knowledge.)



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Disheartening

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

From the many educational and charitable Jewish organizations, one would suspect none - especially in these lines of business - to act contrary to their missions. Unfortunately, this is just a wish. The reality of dichotomized souls flourishes, even among those bearing the Torah's coat of arms. Disgusting. What a "Chillul HaShem", "Disgrace of God's name".

On more than one occasion, from (orthodox) Jews, we will call "A&B", from two unrelated organizations, came to verbal agreements on purchase prices with another reputable organization, we will call "C". Subsequent to A&B's agreements, some time had passed and A&B had not yet transferred payment to C. Times grew tight for C, so they lowered their fees to attract new business. A&B heard of the lowered fees and wanted the new price intended for others. When C responded, "An agreement was made, please abide by your word", A&B made their original agreements "null and void". Their verbal commitments to engaging C's services were suddenly compromised by their pocketbook, and their allegiance to their word was of no concern. They gave their word, made a deal, and then contradicted their flaunted, immovable, uncompromising Torah ideals of honesty and commitment.

What does the Torah say about such behavior?

I recall a story told by a Rabbi, quoting the Talmud. There was a merchant standing besides his goods, but engaged in prayer. A prospective buyer approached who valued his merchandise. While the merchant was yet praying, unbeknownst to the buyer, the buyer said, "I'll buy that for such and such a price". The merchant could not interrupt his prayer, so the buyer upped his price, thinking the merchant was dissatisfied with his first offer. Again, the merchant was silent. The buyer again took this "response" as indicative, and once more upped the price. When the merchant finally concluded his prayer, he told the buyer he would sell the item at the first-offered, lowest price.

We learn such precious values from this merchant. He had, at first offer, accepted that initial price in his heart, but could not verbalize his acceptance as he was praying to God. The buyer was completely unaware of the true reason for his silence. However, the merchant felt that since he had internally accepted the initial price, he should not take advantage of the ignorance of the buyer. Although not even a verbal agreement was made, and although the seller alone accepted the first offer, this perfected merchant lived by the virtue of acting with the utmost honesty. He

was happy to sell at the first price offered. This was reality, although unknown to the buyer. Certainly, had both parties agreed verbally to a price, no one would be justified in altering the agreement. This merchant embodied a true attachment to truth - one where externals cannot compromise what in his heart, he had agreed to. To this merchant, mental acceptance is as real as verbal commitment. His inner values do not depart from his outer actions. "Echad b'lave v'echad b'peh". "One way in his heart, and one way in his mouth", is a corruption, and despicable by Torah standards. God knows all, and this cognizance must be in front of our eyes and in the innermost chambers of our heart. You cannot fool God. This was the crime of Achan who intended to deny to Joshua his robbery of the booty. Joshua said, "Do not conceal from me...". Achan did not confess, so God created a miracle where Achan witnessed God's omniscience - God's absolute and complete knowledge of human affairs.

In our case, both parties verbally agreed to a contract with C. Then, subsequently, both parties, on two different occasions, heard of a lower price which C offered to others, after respective agreements were concluded. Although they agreed to buy C's merchandise at a set price, A&B valued neither their

word, the institution of "agreement", or honesty. C did not sell its services to A&B at the new, lower fee, although money was very tight. C felt it did not want to condone and endorse this behavior. Honesty is not to be compromised. Our study of Torah has honesty as its cornerstone. Without it, we cannot admit error in our learning, we cannot admit to seeing a new idea, we cannot compliment a learning partner for his ingenuity, and we cannot approach God. "M'dvar sheker tirchak". "From a dishonest matter, distance yourself."

Perhaps these two Jews, A&B, have at their defense that they had not heard of this Talmudic account. My response? How would they behave, had the tables been turned? All Jews certainly know, "Treat thy brother as thyself."

May this fortunate merchant cited by the Talmud, instill in all of us a yearning to cleave to honesty, justice, charity, and God's virtues that we will never compromise, out of a love for what our minds and morales tell us is right.

Certainly, these two misguided souls are not representative of their organizations. But something is awry and needs correction if such individuals were hired, especially by Torah oriented organizations.

When C asked A&B, "Why don't you keep to your agreement?", they had no response. □

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Parashas Naso

RABBI BERNARD FOX

(continued from page 1)

Our parasha discusses the test performed upon the Sotah. The Sotah is a woman suspected of adultery. She is brought to the Mishkan or Bait HaMikdash. There, she is administered the test described in the Torah. This test culminates in the woman drinking a special mixture. This test relies on a miracle. If the woman is guilty of the suspected crime, then she dies. If she is innocent, the mixture does not harm her.

Our pasuk describes the meal offering of the Sotah. This sacrifice is brought by the woman's husband on her behalf. This meal offering is very unusual. First, most meal offerings are made of wheat flour. The Sotah's is composed of barley flour. Second, normally the flour of the meal offering is finely milled. The Sotah's barley is coarse. Third, meal offerings are generally accompanied by oil and frankincense. The Sotah's offering does not include these components.

Rashi explains that all of these special characteristics of the Sotah's offering express a single message. These aspects of the offering reflect on the promiscuity of the Sotah. The Sotah, in her adulterous affair adopted the behavior of a beast. Therefore, her offering is composed of a coarsely milled grain reserved for animal feed. The addition of frankincense and oil enhance the offering. The offering of a sexually immoral individual does not deserve these enhancements.[1]

In the process of testing the Sotah other steps are taken that reflect upon her behavior. For example, her hair is uncovered in public. Rashi explains that this is an intentional attempt to disgrace her.[2]

Perhaps, the most interesting element of the process is the actual administration of the test. The Chumash explains that the ingredients are placed in an earthenware vessel. The mixture is then administered from this vessel. Why does the Torah specify the use of an earthenware vessel? Rashi explains that this vessel is chosen to contrast the woman's unglamorous predicament with her amorous behavior. She and the adulterer drank fine wines from expensive goblets. She now drinks the bitter mixture from a simple earthenware vessel.[3]

It seems that this entire process reflects an assumption of guilt. Yet, in fact we do not know whether adultery has been committed! This is the reason the test is

performed. The most disturbing aspect of this question is that the very administration of the test reflects an assumption of guilt. The earthenware vessel, used in the test, represents an assumption of guilt. At least the test itself should be free of any prejudgment!

In order to answer this question, we must recognize that the Torah expects us to conduct ourselves with extreme modesty and discretion. The Torah does not regard flirtatious behavior by a married woman as harmless. This does not mean that a married woman must live a sheltered life. However, we must all conduct ourselves with dignity and restraint.

We do not know whether the Sotah has committed adultery. The test is administered to resolve this issue. However, in order for the Sotah to be subjected to the test, she must be clearly guilty of promiscuous, flirtatious behavior. Without a pattern of such behavior, she cannot be subjected to the ordeal of the test.

We can now begin to answer our question. The assumption of guilt is based upon the actual behavior of the Sotah. We know that she is guilty of immorality. The test only determines the degree of her deviation from Torah expectations. This explains the elements of the procedure designed to disgrace the woman. She is being punished for her promiscuity.

However, this does not explain the assumption of guilt implied within the test itself. In other words, it makes sense that the woman should be reprimanded for her behavior. But the test utilizes an earthenware vessel. This vessel implies the commitment of adultery. The test should be free of any prejudgment.

It seems that ordeal of the Sotah cannot be defined as the administration of a test. A test would be free of prejudgment. The ordeal of the Sotah can more properly be defined as a punishment. It assumes the guilt of the woman and punishes her appropriately. Even the administration of the mixture is part of the punishment. The mixture is a potential poison. It is administered as an appropriate punishment for an adulterer. Various elements, throughout the process, imply or express guilt. This is now understandable. The process is designed as a punishment for adultery.

However, the process is also a test. The effectiveness of the punishment is uncertain. The potentially toxic mixture may not effect the woman. If the woman survives unscathed, she is vindicated from the crime of adultery. In other words, her vindication is not the result of an unbiased test. It is indicated by surviving the punishment.

“Speak to Ahron and his sons saying: This is how you should bless Bnai Yisrael. Say to them...”
(BeMidbar 6:23)

This passage introduces the Torah's discussion of Birkat Kohanim – the Priestly blessing. The blessing is actually composed of three separate blessings. These blessings are recited by the Kohanim. Through their recital of the Birkat Kohanim, they express their desire that the Almighty bestow His blessings upon Bnai Yisrael.

The Birkat Kohanim has been incorporated into the chazan's repetition of the Amidah. There are various practices regarding which days the Birkat Kohanim is recited. The dominant practice in the land of Israel is to recite the blessings every day. Outside of the land of Israel customs differ.

The format for the recitation of the blessings is very simple. The Kohanim begin by reciting a benediction prior to the performance of the mitzvah. This benediction acknowledges that the Kohanim have been commanded to lovingly bless Bnai Yisrael. Then, the chazan leads the Kohanim in the recitation of the Birkat Kohanim.

There is an interesting dispute in halacha concerning Birkat Kohanim. In order to understand this dispute a brief introduction is needed. There is a general principle in halacha of shomea ke'oneh – one who listens is treated as the one pronouncing. The principle dictates that a person can fulfill an obligation to recite a given formula or text though listening to the recitation of another individual. An example will illustrate the application of this principle. We are obligated to recite Kiddush on the night of Shabbat and festivals. However, in most families the head of the household recites the Kiddush on behalf of all those present. How does the recitation of this one individual discharge the obligation of the others present to recite Kiddush? The answer is that the principle of shomea ke'oneh is applied. The head of the household recites the Kiddush and others present fulfill their obligation through attentively listening.

Can the principle of shomea ke'oneh be applied to Birkat Kohanim? In other words, can one Kohen recite these blessings on behalf of all the Kohanim present? Can the other Kohanim present fulfill their obligation through listening attentively to the one Kohen reciting the blessings?

This issue is disputed by the authorities. Some argue that Birkat Kohanim is not different from Kiddush. Shomea ke'oneh is effective. Others offer various reasons for differentiating between the two

recitations. Rav Meshulam David Soloveitchik offers a very interesting reason for differentiating. He explains that the benediction recited by the Kohanim states that they are commanded to bless the nation with love. He explains that shomea ke'oneh is effective in relating the recital of the blessings to the listening Kohen. However, shomea ke'oneh cannot transmit this element of love to the listener. The love must come from the Kohen himself. He cannot express his love through the feelings of the Kohen reciting the blessing. In short, through listening, the Kohen has not blessed the nation in love![4]

These comments can be understood in two ways. In order to understand these two approaches we must analyze the idea that the Kohanim must bless the nation with love. Midrash Rabbah explains that the Kohanim cannot recite the blessings in a rote manner. The blessings must be expressed wholeheartedly.[5] The blessings are an expression of the Kohanim's love for the nation. This means that a Kohen does not fulfill his obligation through merely reciting the blessings. The blessings must be an expression of the inner feelings of the Kohen. Shomea ke'oneh can relate the recital of one Kohen to another who is listening attentively. However, shomea ke'oneh cannot render these blessings into a personal expression of the inner feeling of the listening Kohen. Therefore, shomea ke'oneh is ineffective in this case.

There is a second way to understand the Midrash Rabbah and Rav Soloveitchik's comments. Perhaps, Birkat Kohanim is more than the recital of a formula. Instead, it can be understood as a relationship between the Kohanim and the people. With the recital of their blessing, the Kohanim are entering into a relationship with the people. The Kohanim are the petitioners and the people are the beneficiaries of their petition. This is the reason for requiring the wholehearted expression of the Kohanim. The relationship between the Kohanim and the people only exists when the blessings are recited with sincerity. As we explained above, shomea ke'oneh can only relate the recital of one Kohen to another who is listening attentively. Shomea ke'oneh cannot create a relationship between the listening Kohen and the people. Therefore, in this case shomea ke'oneh is ineffective. □

[1] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 5:15. [2] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 5:18. [3] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 5:17. [4] Rav Shimon Yosef Miller, Shai LaTorah (Jerusalem 5751), volume 1, pp. 183-184. [5] Midrash Rabba, Sefer BeMidbar 11:4.

Priestly Blessings

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

(continued from page 1)

the Jews and the priests.

The first step in answering this question is to properly categorize the role of the priests in these blessings. They are acting as benefactors of some sort. They are blessing the Jews. Our next question is, "what is the purpose of the priests to be benefactors of the Jews?"

By looking at the dynamics between the Jews and the priests, perhaps their relationship affords some insight. The priests receive gifts from the Jews. The priests also serve in the Temple. The Jews do not. What attitude might be generated from such a relationship where one party receives gifts from the other, and where they also have exclusive rights to Temple service? Would the Jew feel justified in his resentment, because he works hard for his possessions while the priests get free possessions? The Jew might also resent that the priests are "closer to God" since they can be in the Temple and he cannot.

Perhaps this is exactly what the blessings address: The preempting of the strife which might occur based on the Jews' resentment of priestly gifts, and the exclusion of the Jew Temple service. I suggest that precisely to rid Jewish society of resentment, God commanded the priests publicly bless the Jews in these two areas - monetary needs and concern that God pays attention to Jews. By doing so, any ill feelings will be addressed before they become an issue. God developed a method so that Jews regularly heard the priests wishing their monetary success. The Jews also hear the priests wishing God to respond to their prayers. Precisely the two areas reserved for the priests. Concern of the priests that the Jews be blessed by God in all areas will create a harmonious state for all Jews, necessary for the Torah system to operate.

Since the goal is harmony between Jews of all roles, I believe the final blessing is appropriate, that is, the blessing of peace. □

Trust, Hope, or Denial?

RIVKA OLENICK

We have declared "n'asay v'nishma" we will do and we will hear. We have accepted the Torah and now we must carry out into our daily lives what we have accepted. The good that God has given us is the Torah. Through the written word and the oral tradition it is the guide we use to conduct our lives, which is guided by its truths. However, being given the Torah does not give us immediate, special protection from the uncertainties in life, and one should be realistic regarding the task of "we will do and we will hear". Pursuing the path of truth takes courage, but courage does not make one immune to sin. By using good judgment and common sense we can hopefully avoid the pitfalls of denial. The trap of denial is very powerful, and not admitting when we are wrong, sets up the trap. Then when a situation occurs that becomes intolerable we will look to blame it on someone else, or on God. It is our own doing according to the Rambam. We should look into our ways and confront our own denial and ask God to assist us. Most of the time we cannot admit that we are in denial. Not according to the Rambam who says that a person has the ability to change, that is the purpose of free will. In challenging times we should have a keener awareness of this emotion of denial, how much more so when things are "going great" and we are naturally much less introspective. Since there is no life without sin, if we do lose

our focus and commit sin we should remember that we can still put our trust in God. We should remind ourselves of this constantly. If we commit sin we should not allow ourselves to feel distant from God, which causes a person to lose trust in God. "What's the use, it's hopeless." When a person is overwhelmed with guilt they believe they cannot return to God. In effect, they "lose hope", "Why should God help me out this time?" When a setback or crisis befalls us, we hear: "It's beshert, it's probably meant to be, maybe check your mezuzas." Have you heard that? That's all denial. Do we take trust in God for granted or are we caught up in denial? When we are successful we think we are so brilliant, but when we are unsuccessful we blame it on God. Either way it's denial. It is God Who provides us with our needs by giving us the means to obtain what we need at the appropriate time. When was the last time you heard: "Use your intelligence and do everything you possibly can to help your situation. Put your trust in God and be hopeful."

What is the difference between hope and trust? What does hope mean? Here is the dictionary's definition of hope: a desire for some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable, to want and expect, to trust or rely. Here is the definition of trust: confident expectation of any event;

anticipation or hope. Hope and trust are related. Without trust in God hope is meaningless. Hope itself is futile without trust in the One we direct our hope to. We are asking for God's mercy when we talk about being hopeful. When we "hope it works out" our desire is that God will have rachmanus, mercy on us.

When King David took Batsheva for his wife it was considered evil in God's eyes because she was still the wife of Uriah. David had Uriah killed in battle and Batsheva mourned her husband. David was told by the prophet Nossan, that the child born to him and Batsheva was destined to die. This was a punishment and for 7 days David mourned and repented before God with the hope that the child would live. God's justice decreed that the child would die, yet David "never gave up hope" that God would have mercy on him. He faced the reality of his situation and went before God. No matter what situation befalls us, we should look into it and determine whether the situation was caused by our denial. If it was then we should repent before God with honesty and never give up on the hope of God's mercy. At any time we can reinstate our trust and hope in God. We always have the opportunity to reconnect through sincere tefila and change our focus and regain our trust in God. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Proverbs, 29:25. Safe from denial. Safe in reality. □