



"Would it be that My people listen to me, if Israel would go in My ways, I would subdue their enemies in a instant, and turn My hand against their foes."

King David, Psalm 81

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*Dedicated to Scriptural and Rabbinic Verification
of Jewish Beliefs and Practices*

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Passover Questions and Answers

RABBI REUVEN MANN

1) Was Moshe a good negotiator? At first glance it would seem he wasn't a good negotiator. The 2nd plague, frogs seemed to bring Paroh to his knees. (Sh'mos 8:3) Phroh asks Moshe to pray to God to remove the frogs and promises to allow the Jews to leave. Moshe proceeds to pray and God responds by removing the frogs. When Paroh saw that the frogs were gone he hardened his heart and refused to release the Jews. Why didn't Moshe insist on concessions before removing the pressure? Did Moshe learn from this mistake? The same pattern is repeated. See (Sh'mos 8:13). Paroh promised to free the Jews under the pressure of wild beasts. Moshe warns Paroh to be serious, prays to God, the plague is removed and Paroh again hardens his heart. Moshe still does not learn. He repeats the same "mistake" by hail and by the plague of locusts. (Sh'mos 10:

Question: Why didn't Moshe use the leverage he had to pressure Paroh with concessions - instead of accepting his worthless promises? Did Moshe actually trust Paroh?

Answer: We see from this that the purpose of the makkos, plagues was not to beat Paroh into submission. God had the power to save the Jews without any makkos, plagues. Or He could have gone straight to the slaying of the firstborn. See the verses in Sh'mos. The purpose of the makkos was not to destroy but to teach that there is a supreme being outside the scheme of the universe Who created the world and had adequate control over its true purpose of the makka (plague) was to break down the false idolatrous ideas of Egypt ad to teach them about Hashem - the Creator of Heaven and Earth Who brought the world into being from nothingness and retained absolute control over everything that happened. God wanted Paroh to use his free will

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ASK YOUR CHILDREN:

"Can God want there to be more than one religion?"
Have your children email us with their answers: questions@mesora.org

Freedom & Religious Expression - A Contradiction

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: Hi. I'm an American Jew living near Boston. I appreciate all the work that goes into Mesora.org, and am 100% behind Israel and the elimination of the Arab threats to our homeland. The one thing I have a problem with is in the Mesora Must Reads section of your homepage. Is it really necessary, or helpful to our cause in any way, to have a link to "Jesus cannot be God: Disproving All Other Religions"? That just seems like a ill-conceived notion. Inches below that on the page is a like called "Protest French anti-Semitism". I get a disturbing sense of hypocrisy when I see calls to disprove "all other religions". I thought the point of freedom was to allow people to believe whatever they thought to be true, as long as it didn't hurt others. We can't defend our land and our people by literally attacking the religion of others'. Judaism and the Jewish people have no need to try to diminish the beliefs of other people. We can easily stand strong on our own beliefs while letting other people enjoy their own.

I urge you to reconsider that article. We can do much more with a teaspoon of honey than a gallon of vinegar. Thank you.

Mesora: I appreciate input as yours. But let me be clear, Mesora's goal - as should be the goal of any person - is to understand absolute truth about reality, by definition meaning truth about God. This truth carries with it a conviction and the defense of such truth, as one who perceives truth is disturbed that another human being is bereft of that knowledge. He desires truth desires it for all mankind. Such were Abraham's goals. Therefore, the platform you hold of allowing others their freedom to practice what they wish, although not practically removed via our position, yet, we must oppose it verbally, so as to teach the truth. There is only one best way for man to live according to a God who doesn't change is mind - according to God who has absolute knowledge of truths - which refer to eternally, unchanging principles. Therefore, tolerance of any system but the one given divinely by God Himself with proofs of that event, must be opposed, for the sake of mankind. Opposing other religions is not an attack on people, but on principle. Religion must not be treated different than science - both are based on rational principles, as both emanate from God Himself, the Designer of all sciences, and religion is what I would term, the "science of life".

Freedom is a goal, and I defend it. But would you defend freedom unconditionally? You surely support the US's move to capture bin-Laden and bring him to trial, as should be done with Arafat. So you yourself would not suggest that freedom is an absolute - we do not allow terrorists freedom to express themselves. Now while freedom of religion at least today hurts no one - compared to the crusades - we must not falsely evaluate the death of one's body via homicide explosions as more evil than the death of one's soul through living a life of lies. certainly the soul's death is far worse, as it is an eternal ruin of man, whereas physical death is not. We do not force others to choose their beliefs, as God's will is that each man retain and express his freewill.

We will continue to speak out against France, the PLO, terrorism, and most importantly, false ideas - be they false religions or false practices - which lead the blind astray, losing for them their one chance of a short life, learning the truth about God's one plan for man.

Israel's Independence Day Festival

DR. ALAN KEYES

Los Angeles, California April 21st, 2002

I am often asked why it is that I am such a strong supporter of Israel. And I have to confess that when folks ask me that, it takes me aback a little bit, because it is not how I think of myself. Or, at least, it's not how I think of what I do. What I have been trying to do over the course of a couple of decades - I have a little more opportunity to do it right now on my television show - is as best I can simply to speak the truth as I understand it.

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Independence Day

DR. ALAN KEYES

(continued from page 1)

And I think that I try to do so, as I try to do everything in my public life, in a way that will reflect the deep sense of allegiance that I feel to this country, America, and to the principles that we are supposed to stand for in the world. That has been especially important to me, as it has to many Americans, I think, since September 11th. And I think that if we understand the real meaning of what happened on September 11th, then we ought to understand that whatever was the case before, whatever were the reasons, strategically, politically, economically; whatever were the reasons, emotionally and morally and spiritually, that led the United States to stand together with the state of Israel before September 11th, after September 11th it becomes not just a question of policy and philosophy. After September 11th, it becomes an absolute principle of survival, to take a stand against those who represent a willingness - cold-bloodedly, ruthlessly, and with malice aforethought - to bring war against the innocent in pursuit of naked and brutal ambition.

I'm not trying to tell you that I, or anybody else, could wave a magic wand tomorrow, and banish conflict and war from the Middle East. But I think what we must all realize, as human beings who hope for the progress of this planet, is that if someday we are to banish war, then certainly today we must absolutely banish those who would make war without principle, without rules, without decency, without conscience, without respect for the intrinsic worth of every innocent human life.

And this means I must, here and now, part company with those who believe that when suicide bombers bring down the Twin Towers, and kill thousands of Americans, we are right to stand before the world and declare that there is no neutrality with terrorism, there is no negotiating with terrorism - and then demand neutrality and negotiation with those terrorists targeting Israel. I will stand against those who see terrorism when Americans die, but who see suicide bombers who kill Israelis, and believe that that is just part of the negotiating process.

If bin Laden is a terrorist; if his mind is that of a terrorist; if he has facilitated terrorists when he directs and provisions those who kill the innocent in the World Trade Center, then Yasser Arafat and his cohorts are terrorists when they direct and provision young Palestinians to kill the innocent in Israel.

Throughout my career, I have stood for peace in the region, as solidly and firmly anybody could. Long before the Bush



MSNBC TV

Administration thought to do it, I declared that there was in fact a need to satisfy the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. There is no doubt about this.

But mark my words: It does no good for the Palestinian people to keep themselves in the clutches of a bloodthirsty leadership that is willing to inculcate such hatred that they sacrifice their own children for the sake of destruction. It is not just for Israel that we stand together today. And it is not just for America. It is for every decent minded human being who hopes someday that all of us will be able live together in peace. It is for every decent minded human being who hopes someday that we will banish mindless hatred from the hearts of our children.

Step number one is to reject, absolutely, all those leaders everywhere in the world who would turn their children into suicide bombers, who would cynically exploit their own young peoples' trust and innocence for the sake of death, in evil advancement of the raw and ruthless political power they seek.

And I believe that as we come together here today in order to commemorate the Independence of Israel, we must stand together, each and every one of us, solidly on the grounds of our common opposition to that terrorist menace which threatens the independence, the morality, and the decent conscience not just of Israel, but of every human being anywhere on this globe.

The President was right: in the war against terror, there can be no neutrality. Every state that facilitates and encourages that menace must stand accountable before the civilized world. And as an accounting of those terror states must include Iran, and Iraq, and North Korea, **SO IT MUST INCLUDE SAUDI ARABIA, AND ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE WILLING, AS THEY HIDE BEHIND THE LABEL OF PHONY "MODERATION" TO SPONSOR TERRORISM AND DEATH!**

I have had to come a long way today, for the sake of sharing these few thoughts

with you. But I'll tell you something. The reason I thought it was worth it, is very simple. Some people think that what is at stake in the Middle East is the survival of Israel. I deeply believe that in present circumstances, the survival of Israel is at stake. But if we learned anything on September 11th, then we should have learned that what is finally at stake in this confrontation is the survival of us all.

Already we are seeing that confusion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, confusion and a false moral equivalency in understanding that conflict, is undermining the clarity of America's policy on terrorism. Don't think that that is not a serious problem. It indicates the connection that we must all understand. We must be CLEAR in dealing with the challenge of this region, for it is the challenge to every human heart to stand against those who would deny the right and better destiny not just of Israelis, but of all decent human beings.

There is a solution, but it is not going to come in a negotiating process that embraces a terrorist mentality, that rewards terrorist violence. It will come when all of us are willing, without exception, to make it clear that every leader, and every regime, and every movement, and every organization that steps across the line to terrorism, must be banished from the discourse of civilized human life. They have made it clear, as inhuman terrorists enacting inhuman violence against the innocent, that they are not a part of our common human destiny. In their embrace of terror, they are denizens and practitioners of a barbarous culture of death. And we must be steadfast in our determination of their pariah status among the nations of the civilized world.

When we are willing to stand firm and unequivocal in that judgment, we will not only make the world safer for a discussion of peace in the Middle East. We will make it safer for the survival of the Jewish State of Israel. We will make it safer for a true fulfillment of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for responsible self-government. We will make it safer for the continued progress of our own people here in the United States. We will make the world safer by standing united and unyielding - standing on principle, no exceptions, no excuses - against terrorism.

So let us today reaffirm our commitment to respect the sacredness of innocent life. Upholding that moral principle, we will, in fact, win the war against terror, and prevail in our determination to secure for all people the better destiny of freedom and self-government that is the birthright of our humanity. ■

Magicians vs Prophets

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: What exactly is the difference between Moses and any of the other prophets?

Mesora: See the paper, "Maimonides 13 Principles", Principle VII.

Reader: You write that Israel did not believe Moses because of the miracles he displayed; in fact, you disparage the concept of a warlock in general. On the other hand, one of the tests a prophet has to pass in order to be accepted is the prediction of the future - exactly the type of miracle being performed in many of the stories, some having been corroborated, that people have written to you about. Yet when people write you about that, you respond with Maimonides' criticism of astrology.

Mesora: Let me first say that astrology today is not divine, it is man's invention, as opposed to prophecy which is God's Divine, informative gift.

If I am clear, what you are asking is how a warlock is of no validation, yet one who predicts future events is accepted, and even warranted. It is a good question.

I would make this distinction; A warlock, as opposed to one who tells the future are doing two qualitatively different acts. The one forecasting events which come true 100%, demonstrates a perfection in the realm of knowledge, and only attainable by God's Will. This validates that he is in line with the Creator. Additionally, he is not spoken of in the Torah as one who derails another from following the Torah, as opposed to one who performs tricks in order to cause others to defect from Judaism. Here alone we see why God tells us not to follow the baal mofes, the warlock. As he is speaking against the Torah, God teaches us that when both a warlock and Torah come into conflict, the Torah always is to be followed. Torah is the absolute truth. Saadia Gaon dismisses all the signs of Pharaoh's magicians as merely slight of hand.

One might ask, "what if an accurate predictor of events tells us to follow idolatry? Do we then follow him, as he predicted future events accurately, is he now completely validated by his forecast?" The answer is that one who forecasts accurately, will never oppose the Torah. Why? It is because his forecast demonstrates that he is receiving knowledge from God, and God will never give a true forecast to one who opposes Torah. This is the case as God instructs us that one who forecasts with 100% accuracy must be accepted by Torah standards. ■

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Kedusha

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Written by Rabbi Mendy Feder

A very central theme throughout Judaism is the concept of kedusha, sanctity. Although the term seems rather abstract as Torah Jews we are commanded to constantly strive to be kadosh, to be holy. In Leviticus chapter 19 verse 2, we are commanded to be kadosh because "I the Lord your God am holy." Chazal teach us that kedusha means to be "poresh mey arayot", abstain from the sexual prohibitions. This implies that if not for this commandment, there would be no reason for one to live a moral life style. Throughout the generations, the greatest philosophical minds without the benefit of the Torah have come to the same conclusion, based upon their rational faculty. The best life is one of abstention from the physical pleasures. It would therefore seem that the Torah is redundant.

The Torah additionally instructs us to be holy because God is holy. This creates a dilemma based upon our aforesaid definition. If holy means merely to be "poresh mey arayot" what relevance does it have respecting God?

The concept of a poresh must have greater significance than simply abstaining. Pure abstention infers that the person is withholding something from himself. This would imply that the person really has the desire to do the prohibited action but he is just controlling himself. Such an idea would be nothing more than an exercise of self-restraint and denial. The Torah's concept of a poresh is not so trite. The essence of a poresh is an individual who is poresh because it is a reflection of his true nature. His energies are no longer attracted to the areas of the arayot, to the physical, but flow naturally to the area of chachma, wisdom. Insofar as ones essence is truly that of a poresh, he partakes of the "tzelem elokim". The "Boreh Olam" by his very nature, is extraneous to, and not limited by, the physical. Thus, in order for one to be a poresh from the Torah perspective, requires great intellectual conviction, whereby all ones energies flow to the acquisition of knowledge.

There is a critical distinction between the Torah's concept of "prishah" and that of the philosophers. The philosophers, although they advocated a lifestyle of "prishut", it was based upon their appreciation of human nature. They recognized that human nature has two components. Man has an instinctual nature and an intellectual nature. Based upon their investigation of human nature

they concluded that man can only achieve true happiness, in the pursuits of his essential intellectual nature. They therefore preached a lifestyle of "prisha". However to the Torah Jew the concept of "prisha" has much greater significance. We are taught that if we lead a lifestyle of "prishus", then we can have a relationship with G-d. We strive to mold our nature to be essentially a Poresh, and attain "kedusha" in order that we can relate to Hashem. In Judaism there is a metaphysical dimension if one is a true Poresh. This metaphysical relationship with the creator is only possible when one is a poresh. If one succeeds in redirecting his energies so that they naturally flow to chachma, only then will he relate to the creator, the source of reality. If a person abstains from the physical because of fear of punishment than he is not truly a poresh. Such a person is still guided by the pleasure principle. The fear of punishment is merely a means to control the person from being punished, and thereby remain in a state of pleasure. He is abstaining from the physical prohibition only because he feels that indulging said physical desires would ultimately cause him greater physical pain. However a talmid chacham is naturally drawn towards the principles of the Torah. He is in a unique state, whereby his energies naturally flow to the metaphysical. Thus we can appreciate the Torah imperative to be kadosh because "ki kadosh ani hashem elokaychem". At such a high spiritual level a person can relate to God as his energies naturally flow to chachma.

Chazal agree with the philosophers, that the life of the ideational is the best life since they hold that "kol d'racheha darchay noam", all the ways of the Torah are pleasant. It would be absurd that Hashem would command man not to live life the best way. It is obvious that God desires man to achieve happiness by living life in line with his essential nature. However the Torah recognizes that by living a life of chachma one initiates a relationship with the creator. God, who is not physical and whose essence is mirrored in the world of the ideational, commands that man aspire to live a life based upon the intellectual dictates of the Torah not predicated on the physical. Only then is one able to approach God through chachma. Since God is not subject to physical whims and passions so too man is directed to be kadosh because "ki ani hashem elokaychem kadosh". We are taught that Chazal did not fully partake of the pleasures of this world. This does not mean that they essentially sought an austere existence. They did not believe in repressing their desires simply because they felt there was a virtue in moral restrictions. This philosophy is characteristic of Catholicism which venerates the lifestyles of priests and

nuns. Nor did they have an emotional repulsion to pleasure. Quite the contrary is true because we are taught "ei efshar bli basar chazeer"; one should not refrain from eating pork because he doesn't like it. The proper attitude is for one to say that he really desires pork but that he is not having it to demonstrate his acceptance of the mitzvos. He struggles to elevate his behavior from purely the instinctual to the level of kedusha which is based upon mans true nature, his tzelem elokim. Maimonides in his Mishna Torah in his book on kedusha incorporates the laws of the forbidden foods and prohibited sexual relations. His point is evident. One can only attain kedusha by channeling his energies from the basic instinctual drives of man, the sexual and appetitive and directing them to the intellect. This does not mean denial of the physical but rather an appreciation of the life of a talmid chachom.

Chazal did enjoy the benefits that God offered in this world. We are told that Rabbi was very wealthy and there was nothing lacking from on his table. However, he did not direct his energies to the physical. He had the blessings of the physical world which he did not deny, but his energies were not drawn to the physical. He lived the life of a kadosh as evidenced by his appellation. His energies naturally flowed to chachma.

Whereas by Iyov, Chazal tell us that the reason Iyov lost his wealth was because he had an over attachment to materialism. He viewed it as an end in and of itself. However, after he realized that the physical was only a means to relate to Hashem, not an end, was he capable of regaining his riches. After learning this lesson and redirecting his energies, he used his prosperity simply as a means in Avodas Hashem.

The Vilna Gaon explains the concept of "pas bemelach tochal", that one should subsist on bread and salt. This is not to be taken literally as espousing an austere existence. The Gaon explains that at the beginning of ones learning he must "pas b'melach tochal". This means that if one is to succeed as a talmid chocham, it demands total commitment. If one is fortunate to live a life of kedusha his energies must naturally flow toward chachmas hatorah.

Rashi teaches us that the parsha of Kedoshim is so basic that "kol goofay hatorah teluyin bah", all the basic principles of the Torah are summarized within it. This obviously can not be taken literally for most of the 613 commandments are not within the parsha of Kedoshim. Rashi is expressing the importance of the concept of kedusha. It is such a vital and essential concept to the Torah observant Jew, that adherence to its basic principles can lead one to perfection as a Ben Torah.

Therefore, the mitzvah of kedusha is an extremely valuable concept in Judaism. The imperative of kedoshim teheeyoo must be appreciated in the proper perspective. We must be scrupulous in our pursuit of true kedusha. If one abstains from being a zolell vesorah, a glutton because of health reasons, he is not fulfilling the commandment. He is simply persuing one desire in favor of another. His desire for longevity has displaced his appetitive desires. Such a person's energies are still rooted in the physical pleasures. True kedusha requires a painstaking process where one works to channel his energies to the learning of Torah and its teaching. Ultimately he can aspire to kedusha where his energies will naturally flow to chachma since the learning of Torah will give him the greatest pleasure. Thus, he will obtain true kedusha and be blessed with an appreciation of "ki kadosh ani hashem elokaychem" and be fortunate to have a metaphysical relationship with the creator.

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Passover Questions and Answers

RABBI REUVEN MANN

(continued from page 1)

to arrive at this conclusion. Had Moshe refused to remove the plague until Paroh complied - then the Jews would have been released but it would be as a result of a freely arrived at choice. Thus the plague created the pain that forced Paroh to deal with the reality. In the moment of pain he recognized God and asked Moshe to remove the plague. Moshe complied. He removed the plague. Now Paroh could reflect on what had happened and arrive at the proper conclusion- not out of a sense of duress. The only value of a miracle is to draw our attention to the facts that can lead us to the truth. However, we must each use our own power of choice. No one can coerce us. If God wanted to He could force the entire world to believe in Him. But the goal is that we should accept Him and serve Him out of our own free will. This is a fundamental foundation of Judaism.

Question 2) If it the will of God for Paroh to accept Him on the basis of free will, why does it say repeatedly that God "hardened" his heart? The plain meaning seems to be that God made him stubborn thereby preventing him from the right choice.

Answer) The great Bible commentator S'forno explains that it doesn't mean that God took away Paroh's power of choice. To the contrary it means that God strengthened Paroh on an emotional level so that he would not be overly frightened and crushed by the awesome blows that were brought down upon him. The average person would have been to emotionally overwhelmed to resist. If that were to happen then Pharaoh would give in from the force of the blows and thus would defeat the purpose of allowing him to recognize Hashem as a result of free will. Thus God strengthened him emotionally and gave him the fortitude necessary to avoid emotional panic and exercise the power of bachira, choice.

Question 3) The matza is a symbol of the exodus. The reason is because the redemption came about suddenly, and without prior notice so that the Jews did not have enough time to allow the dough to rise. However, why didn't the Jews know that the redemption was imminent? Moshe told them in advance to prepare a sheep for the Korban Pesach and to sprinkle the blood and that God would pass over their houses and slay the first born of Egypt. They knew that the big night was coming and freedom was at hand. Why didn't they have enough time to prepare normal, leavened bread?

Answer) The purpose of the Seder is to engage in spontaneous discussion. Not everything should be scripted. Therefore, while I have an answer to this question I have decided not to express it and to allow you to use your own creativity in resolving

this problem.

Question 3) After Moshe's initial meeting with Paroh failed, God told him to return and perform a miracle ie. To throw his staff on the ground and it would turn into a snake. This would seem to be impressive but Paroh called his magicians and each one did the same (with their secret devices). Moshe's snake then devoured their snakes. However, the ability of the magicians to duplicate Moshe was enough to enable Paroh to remain stubborn. Why did God give Moshe a sign, which was subject to imitation thus undermining its authenticity?

Answer) God does not want to overwhelm people into believing in Him. He wants us to use our minds, think carefully, make the appropriate distinctions and reach a logical conclusion. That is why He gave Moshe a sign, which the magicians could imitate. However, if anyone was interested in the truth they could clearly discern between the magic of the sorcerers and the genuine miracle of Moshe. The magicians used slight of hand and always keep the audience at a certain distance. Moreover, the staff of Moshe consumed the snakes of the magicians. There was enough therefore the thinking person to discern and to distinguish the true from the false. It is only through the proper use of our God given intelligence that we can know Him and serve Him. □

Is Islam Based on TRUTH?

Part II

RIVKA OLENICK

The majority of the world assumes that Islam is based on true monotheism, Judaism does not. Islam attempts to be recognized as believers in one god even though Mohammed was a navi sheker (false prophet). The world knows that God chose the Jewish nation to represent the truth that the world cannot tolerate. And therefore, we await the Messiah.

According to the Rambam, when the Jewish people became a monotheistic nation, all the polytheistic (those believing in many gods) nations realized that their beliefs were being challenged. So they joined forces with the goal to destroy Israel and the Jews, falsify monotheism and Judaism, and replace it with their false monotheism: Islam. Every attempt at killing and oppressing Jews was made to convince the Jews that their beliefs were futile and untrue. Not only did the Jews not convert under great pressure, they held more steadfast to Judaism. Much of man-kind recognized the superiority of Israel, but not in practical terms regarding Jewish law. Great efforts continued to undermine the

Torah and destroy Israel. "And this is a remarkable plot which is used by the very evil man attempting to kill his enemy; and when this fails, he tries to kill himself together with his enemy" (From the Rambam's Igeret Teiman, Chapter 1 - Letters to Teiman). We clearly see that the Rambam described the evil, as a perverted "suicide bomber." Only the technology is more sophisticated!

In order to find an intellectual way and continue to undermine the monotheistic beliefs of the Jews, Islam was formed to pose as monotheism: fake monotheism. Their aim was to prove that the Torah of Israel was untrue and that monotheism according to Torah ideals and beliefs was untrue. Judaism preceded Islam. The Torah makes no mention of Islam or the Koran. The Koran (Islam's bible) states that the Jews corrupted the authentic scriptures. To the contrary, Islam warped and corrupted our sacred scriptures in order to validate their own distorted religious beliefs. Islam created an artificial combination of laws that were structured in a superficial way by man. Once again in order to undermine the Jewish religion, Islam's attempt was to counterfeit the Torah. However, Judaism is the only authentic and true religion. The entire system of commandments and beliefs are all tied to and work together with the creation and perfection of mankind. God, in His great wisdom willed it to exist this way. No nation has been able to or will be able to sever the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

Koran 2:47: "Remember how WE delivered you from Pharaoh's people who had oppressed you cruelly, slaying your sons and sparing only your daughter's. Surely that was a great trial from your Lord. We parted the sea for you, taking you to safety and drowned Pharaoh's men before your very eyes. WE made a tryst with Moses for the fortieth night, and in his absence you took up the calf and thus committed evil. Yet after that WE pardoned you, so that you might give thanks."

The above statements as WE all know are absolutely false! It was only God who brought US out of Egypt, parted the sea, drowned our enemies and brought us to safety. It is HE WHO WE bless every day through prayer for taking us out of Egypt. It is HE WHO commanded us to partake in the Festival of Matzos, Passover which is celebrated and dedicated to transmitting these truths to our children and our children's children.

"And Israel saw the Great Hand which God used upon the Egyptians, then the people feared God and trusted in God and in Moses, His servant." Exodus 14:31

It is God's plan that all other nations believe in true, authentic monotheism, ONE GOD - that all people believe in the absolute truth of Torah and recognize the

Jewish people as the teachers of truth. That all people acknowledge the land of Israel as the land designated to the Jewish people by God.

We are His nation, the recipients of His covenant and we wait with joy for Him to send us The Messiah.

"And the entire world will be filled with the knowledge of God" Isiah 11:9

To be continued. □

Questions on Judaism's View of Gentiles

Reader: I understand your response that Christianity is not OK for Christians. Basically Christianity is NOT all right for Christians or anyone else - But Only Jews were given the Torah. Are Non Jews then doomed to never be elevated?

Mesora: No. Gentiles are to follow God in their system (7 Noachide commands) and the Jew is to follow God in his system of 613 commands. Both are following what God deemed fit respectively.

Reader: When exactly did there become non-Jews or more correctly when did there become Jews and non-Jews, or has it also been so from the beginning?

Mesora: After the event at Sinai when God gave the Torah, there emerged the nation of Jews required to follow the 613 laws. The "children of Israel" status existed at Jacob's (Israel's) time.

Reader: Judaism does not recommend or seek converts, and often discourages much interaction with non Jews,

Mesora: Incorrect. Regarding idolaters, yes, we are bound to remove ourselves from identification with all which cleaves to idolatry, and opposes the rational proofs of monotheism. Regarding gentiles (not idolaters) we are to act as teachers. This is one reason why we study the Torah, to teach the other nations. God created all mankind because He cares for all mankind. Not just Jews. Initially, there wasn't Jew and Gentile, there was simply man. This was God's plan, until man initiated idolatry. God then created the Torah to be safeguarded by one nation to dispel idolatry, and learn His ways. But God's plan is that all man approach God. In God's wisdom, He created a system for both Jew and gentile - the 613 and the 7 Noachide Laws.

Reader: I am discouraged by the vast differences in opinion among the frum community, especially what seems to be a large rift between the Chassidic and the Non-Chassidic

Mesora: If it occurs that people deviate from the ideals set by God - following wrong ideas - then Jews must speak out, even if it is against his own brother.

The right ideas must be defended and incorrect notions opposed, so others do not go astray after them. We are not to seal our lips because it seems that we are infighting. Rather, we are to follow the Torah command to "rebuke thy kinsmen". Page 4