

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

BEMIDBAR/SHABUOT

Haftarah: Hoshea 2:1-22

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Day 49 of the Omer

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The Terrorist Defender And The Democrats' Platform By: Stephen M. Flatow

After 9/11 and Paris and the beheadings on the beach, after San Bernardino and Charlie Hebdo and the burning of the pilot in the cage, after all the savage terrorist attacks of recent years – you would think the last person the Democrats would choose to help write their platform would be one of the most vocal defenders of a notorious Palestinian terrorist.

But that's what they just did.

This sad story begins on May 14, 1979. Chaim and Chaya (Irene) Mark, a couple from Connecticut who had immigrated to Israel, were stepping out of a restaurant in the central marketplace of Tiberias when a huge bomb exploded.

"I was hit in the chest and knocked down," Chaim later recalled. "When I got up, I saw my wife with a leg and arm nearly blown off."

Two Israeli children were killed in the bombing and 36 other people were maimed. Mrs. Mark spent a year and half in the hospital, undergoing countless surgeries. She was left severely handicapped.

A few weeks later, one of the terrorists involved in the bombing was captured by Israeli police. He confessed to having constructed the bomb and he named one of his PLO comrades, Ziad Abu Eain, as the one who planted it.

Eain had already fled to Chicago – not exactly the behavior of an innocent person. When the FBI came knocking at the Chicago apartment where he was staying, he denied he was Ziad Abu Eain – again, not the kind of response one would expect from an innocent person.

Israel asked the U.S. to hand him over. Eain fought extradition. He used what I call the have-my-cake-and-eat-it-too defense: he denied his guilt and at the same time argued that the bombing was a "political offense."

That's right: murdering two Israeli children and crippling a Connecticut housewife was a "political" act.

In jailhouse interviews with the media, in fact, Eain brazenly defended the bombing. He told the Chicago Reader (June 18, 1981) that the Tiberias murders were a justified response to Israeli strikes on PLO targets in Lebanon: "The bombing was like a message. We are still doing something to help you have your freedom."

Who was Eain's loudest supporter? James Zogby, who at the time was the founding director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. The very first action undertaken by Zogby with the AADC was to launch a campaign of protests, lobbying, and newspaper ads opposing the extradition of Eain.

Soon afterward, Zogby became active in Democratic Party politics, as deputy manager of Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1998 presidential campaigns, then later as "Senior Adviser on Ethnic Outrage" for Al Gore in 2000 and Barack Obama in 2008. Since 2001, Zogby has been a member of the Democratic National Committee.

And last week, he was named as one of the 17 members of the committee that will draft this year's Democratic Party platform. (He was chosen by Sen. Bernie Sanders, who'd been allotted several slots to fill on the platform-writing committee.)

In his efforts on behalf of the Tiberias bomber, Zogby charged that extraditing Eain would create a dangerous precedent for handing over individuals accused of "political crimes." Zogby also played the race card. He told the Washington Post (July 24, 1981): "The only way to account for the State Department's and the U.S. attorney's behavior in this case is the fact that Ziad Abu Eain is an Arab."

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected those claims and ordered Eain extradited. The New York Times

applauded the extradition. In a lead editorial, it said the "political offense" argument could not be accepted in such a case, since "the crime attributed to Mr. Eain was planting a bomb in a crowded market where children were celebrating Independence Day."

Zogby was so passionate in support of Eain that even after the bomber was extradited he continued mobilizing AADC members to send letters of protest to the State Department and the Israeli Embassy.

To this day Zogby has never expressed a word of remorse for his crusade on behalf of the Tiberias bomber.

Eain was tried, convicted of murder, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Three years later, he was released in a prisoner exchange. So what did Mr. Innocent do when he was set free? Just two months later, he was arrested for conspiring with other terrorists to hijack an Israeli bus. He spent three more years in prison. When the Oslo accords were signed, Eain, like many terrorists, accepted a senior position in the Palestinian Authority. Evidently he finally recognized the value of "working from within."

James Zogby, too, understands how effective he can be from "the inside." Drafting the Democratic Party's platform plank on Israel will have a lot more influence than organizing petitions on behalf of a Palestinian terrorist with American blood on his hands.

Most people have forgotten about Ziad Abu Eain, the two Israeli children he murdered, and the Connecticut housewife he maimed for life. But the American Jewish community should neither forget nor forgive. Someone who defended a terrorist who harmed Americans should not be rewarded with an influential role in the Democratic Party.

Summary of the Perasha

This week we begin Sefer Bamidbar. The first 5 parshiot take place in Benei Israel's 2nd year in the midbar while the next 5 parshiot skip directly to the 40th year in the midbar. A dominant theme in the sefer (particularly in the 1st half of the sefer) is the sins that Benei Israel did in the midbar including complaining about the traveling and the manna, Miriam speaking lashon hara, the sin of the spies, the mekoshesh etsim, Korach and his assembly rebelling against Moshe, Benei Israel complaining about the lack of water, Moshe hitting the rock, and Benei Israel sinning with the Midyanite women and baal peor.

Bamidbar - Moshe counts Benei Israel (year 2 in the midbar)

- 1- Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon to take a census. Leaders of each tribe are assigned
- 2- The count for each tribe is listed. Levi is not counted. The job of the Leviim by the mishkan
- 3- Discusses how Benei Israel camped around the mishkan (who camped next to who, leader of the tribe and number of people in each tribe) and how they traveled in the midbar
- 4- Tells about the sons of Aharon. The Leviim are appointed to take care of the mishkan
- 5- Moshe counts the Leviim. The parasha discusses the 3 children of Levi individually including where they camped, who their nasi was, and what their job in the mishkan was.
- 6- Moshe counts the bechorim. The bechorim are redeemed by the Leviim.
- 7- The special responsibilities of benei Kehat

FROM THE JERSEY SHORE NEWSLETTER

"You will be a treasure to Me from among all the people." (Shemot 19:5) "If there is no Torah there is no proper conduct. If there is no proper conduct there is no Torah." (Abot 3:17)

As we approach the holiday of Shabuot we must prepare ourselves to maximize the benefit of this great holiday. In the introduction of Parashat Yitro, before the Ten Commandments, the Torah speaks the often-quoted statement that we are to be the Chosen People to Hashem from all the rest of the nations. Besides being a great praise, this statement is also describing our obligation to act the role of the Chosen People. In Pirkei Abot we have almost a paradoxical statement by Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah: If we don't have Torah we won't have derecho erness and if we don't have derecho erness we won't have Torah. Rabenu Yonah explains: "A person must perfect his middot (his character traits) and only then can the Torah rest upon him. The Torah will never rest upon a person who lacks good character traits. Additionally, learning Torah properly teaches a person the proper conduct.

The Tiferet Yisrael (114) notes that there are non-believing Jews and non-Jews who have sterling personality traits, and are kind, considerate, generous, and able to control their tempers. Nevertheless, since their behavior is based on the morals of society and not on the divinity of the Torah, it falls far short of the conduct expected of a Talmid Hacham. Secular society has yet to produce someone with the middot of the Hafess Hayim.

Rabbi Shimon Finkleman relates that someone once asked Harav Avraham Pam zt"l how

he was able to remain calm in situations where the average person would become agitated. "I worked on this for many years," he replied.

The Shulhan Aruch states: "A person is obligated to accord a Sefer Torah great honor. It is a misvah to set aside a specific place for it, to treat that place with respect and to beautify it very much (Yoreh De'ah 282:1). Harav Pam applies this halachah to the Torah's expectations of those who study it. "If someone desires to bring the Torah into his heart, he must clean the place in which it will dwell from the dust of any bad middah and prepare it for an honored beautiful dwelling place within himself."

Tosafot asks (Berachot 11b), Why do we make a new berachah on the succah every time we return to the succah to eat there once again after having left for an extended period of time, yet the Birkot Hatorah we do not repeat every time we return to our learning even if a lot of time has passed? They answer: One never fully diverts his mind from Torah study, because the Torah dictates our every word, thought, and action. When we act it is with the middot that the Torah has taught us to develop, when we speak it is in a refined manner and free of lashon hara and falsehood as the Torah demands, and even when we think, we strive to avoid improper thoughts, to give others the benefit of the doubt and to think Torah thoughts as we ride the subway or find ourselves in other venues that may not seem "Torah friendly."

As we celebrate Shabuot, let us strive to refine our middot so that the Torah directives will have an impact on every aspect of our lives, and we will be the kind of human beings that Hashem wants us to be. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Count the heads of all the Children of Israel." (Bemidbar 1:2)

Whenever the Jewish people were counted, they had to give a certain coin which, by counting that coin, we could know the number of people. Once, in the time of King David, the people themselves were counted and a great plague ensued. Even today, when we count individuals for a minyan or the like, we don't say, "one, two, three..." but rather we say words of a pasuk such as "לחג, תגהו" through which we all know the total number. Why is there such an emphasis on not counting people by number?

Rabenu Bahya explains that when people are included in a group, they have the merit of the entire group and thereby are protected. When an individual becomes separated by being counted, then he is on his own, and he must have his own protection. Even when we pray for sick people, we always include the individual with the entire nation by saying, "ktrah hkuj

rtalu, c - Among all of the sick in Israel," so that they should have the merit of the whole nation. This should teach us that although we are all individuals, unique and separate, our strength lies in our being part of a greater whole, the Jewish people. We should try not to stand out and not separate ourselves from community involvement. By joining together in the synagogue's programs, such as minyan, classes and activities, we will have the blessing of the multitudes in addition to our own zechut. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Elements of Torah

Parashat Bemidbar is usually read on the Shabbat before Shabuot, which commemorates the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Midrash Rabah states that the Torah was given with three things:

1) Fire, as indicated by the verse "All of Mount Sinai was smoking because G-d descended upon it in fire" (Shemot 19:18).

2) Water, as indicated by the verse, "Even the Heavens trickled, even the clouds dripped water" (Shoftim 5:4).

3) Wilderness, as the pasuk states, "And G-d spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai" (Bemidbar 1:1).

Why was the Torah given under such conditions and not on a serene day in a heavily populated area?

Each of these portrays an eternal and profound message to the Jewish people about the correct approach to Torah.

1) The fire teaches that the Torah should be studied and practiced with warmth and vigor.

2) Water fulfills a physical need, but unlike other physical needs, people have little desire to overindulge in it and are usually satisfied to simply quench their thirst. This teaches us to be satisfied with our physical circumstances and indulge entirely in the study of Torah.

3) Wilderness is an abandoned property where anyone may step foot. Giving the Torah in a wilderness teaches that to succeed in Torah study a person must be very humble and consider himself insignificant. He should permit all Jews to associate with him, and not conceitedly select his company. (Vedibarta Bam)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR The Origins of Jewish Tenacity

The Midrash, commenting on the opening verse of the Book of Bamidbar, observes that the Torah has been compared to three natural phenomena: fire, water and a desert. Many Rabbis raised the question

of what precisely the Midrash seeks to teach us through this observation. Why is it important for us to know that the Torah is compared to these three phenomena?

One explanation is that the Midrash seeks to draw our attention to the roots of one of the Jewish people's most outstanding and consistent character trait: our innate stubbornness and tenacity, our refusal to surrender even under the harshest conditions. Throughout the millennia, Jews have shown their readiness to make enormous sacrifices – including the ultimate sacrifice, of their own lives – for their faith. Whether it was in Germany or Spain, in Russia or in Syria, Jews stubbornly clung to the Torah despite unbearable pressures. Even here in the United States, where we enjoy the freedom to practice our faith without fear of persecution, we are nevertheless subjected to an unrelenting onslaught of cultural pressures and lures, and yet so many Jews, Baruch Hashem, remain steadfastly committed to Torah study and observance, heroically resisting these pressures.

The Sages teach us that this extraordinary quality originates from three sources: fire, water, and the desert.

It began with Abraham Abinu, who refused to renounce his beliefs even at the threat of being thrown into a furnace. The fire of Abraham has been passed down to his descendants, to the countless generations of Jews who were prepared to give all they had, and their lives, for their faith.

But Abraham's example was the source of individual devotion, people making the personal decision to make great sacrifices. The concept of a nationwide sacrifice, of the Jewish people collectively sacrificing themselves for their belief, began in the water – at the Sea of Reeds. Following God's instructions, the nation headed straight into the raging waters of the sea. They were not told that the sea would be transformed to dry land. But they trusted that God would somehow rescue them, and with unflinching faith, they proceeded onward into the water. This established the precedent of nationwide sacrifice for the sake of God.

Still, these two incidents – the heroism of Abraham and of Beneh Yisrael at the sea – were momentary events. What remained to be seen is whether this stubborn, steadfast devotion could endure over an extended period of time. And so the third origin of Jewish tenacity is the wilderness, the forty-year period that Beneh Yisrael spent traveling through an uninhabitable desert. Their only food was the

miraculous daily ration of manna, their only water source was the miraculous traveling well, and their only source of protection from the elements, animals and attackers was the miraculous clouds of glory. Placing their trust in God, Beneh Yisrael lived for forty years in a place where there is no possibility of survival through natural means. This set the example of our ability to withstand pressures and hardship even for many years, to refuse to relinquish our faith even through lengthy periods of difficulties and sacrifice.

As mentioned, we face enormous pressures and challenges here in the United States. Day in, and day out, week after week, month after month and year after year, we live with the temptation of material indulgence, the prevalent obsession with wealth, and the pervasive culture of permissiveness and immorality. We have good reason to take pride in our stubbornness, in the beautiful Torah homes, communities and institutions that we've built despite these persistent pressures, in the way we have remained stubbornly committed to our traditions rather than accept defeat. Even today, we live "Bamidbar," in the desert, in a constant condition of challenge and struggle. May we continue to draw inspiration from our ancestors in our attempts to overcome the obstacles in our path, withstand pressures, and remain proudly and steadfastly committed to God and His Torah.

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**Rabbi Wein
SHAVUOT**

Although there is no really accurate way to measure the relative importance of the holidays of the Jewish calendar year, I think that we can all agree that the holiday of Shavuot appears to be the least dramatic of them all. The Torah describes it as an agricultural feast day commemorating the grain harvest and the greening of the first fruits of the season as an offering in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Jewish tradition and rabbinic sanction has emphasized and label the holiday as the anniversary of the granting of the Torah to the Jewish people by God at the revelation at Mount Sinai. With the absence of the Temple, the holiday has taken on this commemoration as the center point of its observance.

Secular Zionism attempted to restore the primacy of its agricultural component in commemorating the holiday but was singularly unsuccessful. So, even today in the Land of Israel, once again fruitful and bountiful, this agricultural aspect of the holiday is still very secondary to its historical commemoration of the revelation at Sinai. And in this there is an important lesson that repeats itself throughout Jewish history.

The great Gaon, Saadya, succinctly summed up this message when he stated: "Our nation – the Jewish people – is a nation only by virtue of its Torah." All of the other facets of our nationhood exist only because of this central historical moment – the granting of the Torah to the Jewish people by God through Moshe at the mountain of Sinai. This was and is the pivotal moment in all of Jewish history. Everything else that has occurred to us over these three and a half millennia has direct bearing and stems from that moment in Jewish and human history.

Therefore it should be no wonder as to why the holiday of Shavuot is the day of commemoration of the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Looking back over the long centuries of our existence, we can truly appreciate how we have been preserved, strengthened and enhanced in every way by our studied application of Torah in every facet of our personal and communal lives.

Those who forsook the values and denied the divinity of Torah fell by the wayside of history and are, in the main, no longer part of our people. Unlike Pesach and Succot, Shavuot carries with it no special ritual or commandments. It certainly is the least dramatic of all the holidays of the Jewish calendar. But, rather, it represents the every day in Jewish life – dominated by study and observance of Torah and its eternal values.

The name of the holiday means "weeks" – units of time that measure our progress on this earth. It is not only the seven weeks from Pesach to Shavuot that is being referred to, but rather we are reminded of all of the weeks of our lives that compose our stay in this world. Time has importance to us when we deem it to be meaningful and well spent. The purpose of Torah, so to speak, was and is to accomplish just that. And therefore the day of commemoration of the granting of the Torah to Israel is very aptly named for it is the Torah that gives meaning to our days and weeks.

The customs of the holiday also reference the scene at Mount Sinai on the day of revelation. Eating dairy foods, decorating the synagogue and the home with flowers and greens, and all night Torah study sessions have all become part of the commemoration

of the holiday itself. They all relate to Sinai and the revelation. The Jewish people, through long experience and centuries of analysis have transformed this seemingly physical agricultural holiday into the realm of spirituality and eternal history.

On this day of festivity we are granted an insight into the past and the future at one and the same time. We are able to unlock the secrets of our survival and eternity as a nation, and as the prime force in human civilization for these many millennia. So it is the holiday of Shavuot that grants true meaning and necessary legitimacy to all of the other holidays of the Jewish calendar year.

Shavuot is the cornerstone of the entire year, for without it all the days of celebration and commemoration remain devoid of spirituality and eternity. It does not require for itself any special commandments or observances because it is the foundation of all commemorations throughout Jewish life and time.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Sound of Silence

Bamidbar is usually read on the Shabbat before Shavuot. So the sages connected the two. Shavuot is the time of the giving of the Torah. Bamidbar means, "In the desert." What then is the connection between the desert and the Torah, the wilderness and God's word?

The sages gave several interpretations. According to the Mekhilta the Torah was given publicly, openly and in a place no one owns because had it been given in the land of Israel, Jews would have said to the nations of the world, "You have no share in it." Instead, whoever wants to come and accept it, let them come and accept it.[1]

Another explanation: Had the Torah been given in Israel the nations of the world would have had an excuse for not accepting it. This follows the rabbinic tradition that before God gave the Torah to the Israelites he offered it to all the other nations and each found a reason to decline.[2]

Yet another: Just as the wilderness is free – it costs nothing to enter – so the Torah is free. It is God's gift to us.[3]

But there is another, more spiritual reason. The desert is a place of silence. There is nothing visually to distract you, and there is no ambient noise to muffle sound. To be sure, when the Israelites

received the Torah, there was thunder and lightening and the sound of a shofar. The earth felt as if it were shaking at its foundations. But in a later age, when the prophet Elijah stood at the same mountain after his confrontation with the prophets of Baal, he encountered God not in the whirlwind or the fire or the earthquake but in the kol demamah dakah, the still, small voice, literally “the sound of a slender silence.”[4] I define this as the sound you can only hear if you are listening. In the silence of the midbar, the desert, you can hear the Medaber, the Speaker, and the medubar, that which is spoken. To hear the voice of God you need a listening silence in the soul.

Many years ago British television produced a documentary series, *The Long Search*, on the world's great religions.[5] When it came to Judaism, the presenter Ronald Eyre seemed surprised by its blooming, buzzing confusion, especially the loud, argumentative voices in the Bet Midrash, the house of study. Remarking on this to Elie Wiesel, he asked, “Is there such a thing as a silence in Judaism?” Wiesel replied: “Judaism is full of silences ... but we don't talk about them.”

Judaism is a very verbal culture, a religion of holy words. Through words, God created the universe: “And God said, Let there be ... and there was.” According to the Targum, it is our ability to speak that makes us human. It translates the phrase, “and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7) as “and man became a speaking soul.” Words create. Words communicate. Our relationships are shaped, for good or bad, by language. Much of Judaism is about the power of words to make or break worlds.

So silence in Tanakh often has a negative connotation. “Aaron was silent,” says the Torah, after the death of his two sons Nadav and Avihu (Lev. 10:3). “The dead do not praise you,” says Psalm 115, “nor do those who go down to the silence [of the grave].” When Job's friends came to comfort him after the loss of his children and other afflictions, “Then they sat down with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, yet no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.” (Job 2:13).

But not all silence is sad. Psalms tells us that “to You, silence is praise” (Ps. 65:2). If we are truly in awe at the greatness of God, the vastness of the universe and the almost infinite extent of time, our deepest emotions will indeed lie too deep for words. We will experience silent communion.

The sages valued silence. They called it “a fence to wisdom.”[6] If words are worth a coin, silence is worth

two.[7] R. Shimon ben Gamliel said, “All my days I have grown up among the wise, and I have found nothing better than silence.”[8]

The service of the priests in the Temple was accompanied by silence. The Levites sang in the courtyard, but the priests – unlike their counterparts in other ancient religions — neither sang nor spoke while offering the sacrifices. One scholar[9] has accordingly spoken of “the silence of the sanctuary.” The Zohar (2a) speaks of silence as the medium in which both the Sanctuary above and the Sanctuary below are made.

There were Jews who cultivated silence as a spiritual discipline. Bratslav Hassidim meditate in the fields. There are Jews who practise taanit dibbur, a “fast of words.” Our most profound prayer, the private saying of the Amidah, is called tefillah be-lachash, the “silent prayer.” It is based on the precedent of Hannah, praying for a child. “She spoke in her heart. Her lips moved but her voice was not heard” (1 Sam. 1:13).

God hears our silent cry. In the agonising tale of how Sarah told Abraham to send Hagar and her son away, the Torah tells us that when their water ran out and the young Ishmael was at the point of dying, Hagar cried, yet God heard “the voice of the child” (Gen. 21:16-17). Earlier when the angels came to visit Abraham and told him that Sarah would have a child, Sarah laughed inwardly, that is, silently, yet she was heard by God (Gen. 18:12-13). God hears our thoughts even when they are not expressed in speech.

The silence that counts, in Judaism, is thus a listening silence – and listening is the supreme religious art. Listening means making space for others to speak and be heard. As I point out in my commentary to the Siddur, there is no English word that remotely equals the Hebrew verb sh-m-a in its wide range of senses: to listen, to hear, to pay attention, to understand, to internalise and to respond in deed.

This was one of the key elements in the Sinai covenant, when the Israelites, having already said twice, “All that God says, we will do,” then said, “All that God says, we will do and we will hear [ve-nishma]” (Ex. 24:7). It is the nishma – listening, hearing, heeding, responding – that is the key religious act.

Thus Judaism is not only a religion of doing-and-speaking; it is also a religion of listening. Faith is the ability to hear the music beneath the noise. There is the silent music of the spheres, about which Psalm

19 speaks:

*The heavens declare the glory of God
The skies proclaim the work of His hands.
Day to day they pour forth speech,
Night to night they communicate knowledge.
There is no speech, there are no words,
Their voice is not heard.
Yet their music carries throughout the earth.*

There is the voice of history that was heard by the prophets. And there is the commanding voice of Sinai, that continues to speak to us across the abyss of time. I sometimes think that people in the modern age have found the concept of "Torah from heaven" problematic, not because of some new archaeological discovery but because we have lost the habit of listening to the sound of transcendence, a voice beyond the merely human.

It is fascinating that despite his often fractured relationship with Judaism, Sigmund Freud created in psychoanalysis a deeply Jewish form of healing. He himself called it the "speaking cure", but it is in fact a listening cure. Almost all effective forms of psychotherapy involve deep listening.

Is there enough listening in the Jewish world today? Do we, in marriage, really listen to our spouses? Do we as parents truly listen to our children? Do we, as leaders, hear the unspoken fears of those we seek to lead? Do we internalise the sense of hurt of the people who feel excluded from the community? Can we really claim to be listening to the voice of God if we fail to listen to the voices of our fellow humans?

In his poem, 'In memory of W B Yeats,' W H Auden wrote:

*In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start.*

From time to time we need to step back from the noise and hubbub of the social world and create in our hearts the stillness of the desert where, within the silence, we can hear the kol demamah dakah, the still, small voice of God, telling us we are loved, we are heard, we are embraced by God's everlasting arms, we are not alone.

[1] Mekhilta, Yitro, Bachodesh, 1.

[2] Ibid., 5.

[3] Ibid.

[4] 1 Kings 19:9-12.

[5] BBC television, first shown 1977.

[6] Avot 3:13.

[7] Megillah 18a.

[8] Avot 1:17.

[9] Israel Knohl.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

This is transcribed from questions that were posed to Harav Avigdor Miller by the audience at the Thursday night lectures.

QUESTION: Please prove the authenticity of our Torah? That's a question I like to get!

ANSWER: So we say to the questioner, you have the floor, please disprove it. Please disprove the authenticity of our Torah. The Torah is here. Here it is, and we are here. We are the nation that claims our fathers gave us this Torah that they received from their fathers, and we received a tradition that Mosheour teacher gave it to them, and our entire nation stood at Har Sinai and they heard Hakadosh Baruch Hu say to Moshe and give him a mandate in their presence. Moshe Rabbeinu, you're going to speak to this people for Me from now on, and therefore Moshe Rabbeinu when he gave us the Torah was mandated by Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the presence of 600,000 males between 20 and 60 years of age, not to mention the elderly ones, the young ones and the women. That's our claim; no nation in the world ever claimed such a claim. Not the Mohammedans. Of course the Mohammedans claim that the Bible is true because the Jews say so. Christians claim the Bible is true, because the Jews say so. The Vikings didn't have any traditions, the Buddhists didn't have any traditions, they made no such claims.

We are the only ones who claim that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave it to us. And if you'll ask, how do we know that it's true? So we'll ask you a question: How do you know that there was a George Washington? Prove George Washington. So you say there are books. We also have books. We have books, too. So you say Washington was recent and our claims are old. Anybody around here saw George Washington? Anybody saw a man who saw George Washington around here? How do you know he was there? It's emunah; you believe people. So should we believe nations of disorderly people, there were so many shikurim among them, and so many club wielders, so many roughnecks. Such a nation testifies that George Washington was present, and we accept their testimony. Well, there are so many documents; there are a lot of documents. You want documents? Josephus wrote two thousand years ago a big document. So that's thousands of years ago, so that's as good evidence as any evidence that you'll produce for anything that happened three hundred years ago in America.

Therefore we are standing on solid ground, we have a historic tradition. We are not one person, we are a nation. And our nation always was united behind this. We never had a single Jew who disbelieved that Moshe received the Torah from Hashem, up till a hundred fifty years ago. Not the Karaites, not the Sadducees, none of them disbelieved that, - they all believed. There wasn't a single Jew up to the time of the German assimilationists and reformers one hundred fifty years ago; there wasn't a single Jew who disbelieved in the Torah. So our entire nation was behind this tradition. Not to mention the fact that the Christians and Mohammedans all say the same thing about our Torah, that we received the Torah.

So therefore if anybody wants to bring proofs against the authenticity of the Torah, we'll give him the floor.

Tizku L'shanim Rabot

Palestinians celebrate terror attack in Tel Aviv, Saudis strongly condemn
June 9, 2016 Thursday 3 Sivan 5776
The Jerusalem Post - Israel News
By MAAYAN GROISMAN

Following the shooting, Salma al-Jamal, a Palestinian news anchor working at Al-Jazeera TV, wrote on Twitter: "The Ramadan operation is the best answer to stories about 'peace process'."

Palestinians in the West Bank and east Jerusalem took to the streets to celebrate the deadly terrorist shooting in Tel Aviv on Wednesday night that left four people dead and several others wounded. Upon hearing the reports of the shooting, dozens of Palestinians gathered at Damascus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, singing out loud and cheering the gunmen.

In the West Bank city of Tulkarm, many young men took to the streets and distributed candies to the local drivers, while in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem dozens of Palestinians participated in a march praising the terror attack.

Palestinians also expressed their joy on social media networks, where they created the hashtags "#Carlo Bullet," after the name of the improvised submachine gun used in the attack, and "#Ramadan Operation" to laud the horrendous terror shooting.

Another popular hashtag on Palestinian social media networks was "#We broke the fast killing them," referring to the fact that the two gunmen broke their Ramadan fast in the restaurant where they later shot people.

Following the shooting, Salma al-Jamal, a Palestinian news anchor working at Al-Jazeera TV, wrote on her Twitter page: "The Ramadan operation that took place today is the best answer to stories we have been hearing about 'peace process' that some people are trying in vain to revive."

In a striking contrast to the Palestinian reaction, the official Saudi media strongly denounced the Tel Aviv terror attack.

Reporting about the shooting on its Facebook page, the well-known Saudi TV channel al-Arabiya referred to the people injured in the attack as "victims," and not as "settlers" as most of the Arab outlets usually refer to Israelis. This remark aroused cynical reactions among users on social media, who claimed that the channel distorted the report to defend Israel, because the victims are Palestinians, not Israelis.

Dahham al-Enazi, a member of the Saudi Journalists Association, also condemned the shooting in a series of remarks on his Twitter page.

"The Tel Aviv attack is terror and thuggery. Our solidarity and support for the Palestinian people does not mean that we accept the killing of innocents and civilians. We would like to extend our condolences to the families of the victims," Enazi said.

"I will keep saying that killing civilians and innocents in the streets as happened in the Tel Aviv attack is terror. Even if it happened in the streets of Tehran or Isfahan it would be terror," he concluded.

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