

BS"D Parashat Aikev 5786

Betrayal

Gemara Gittin 90b:

אמר רבי אלעזר: כל שמתגרש את אשתו הראשונה אף מזבח ביהמקדש ששקע דמעות
הוא

As Rabbi Elazar said: Whoever divorces his first wife even the altar (that stood in the courtyard of the Bet Hamikdash, where sacrifices were offered) sheds tears.

The expression “even the altar sheds tears” is a metaphor to illustrate the immense heavenly sorrow and pain over the dissolution of a first marriage caused by a **betrayal** of the love and trust that once existed between husband and wife.

Example: An incident occurred in a Rabbinic bet din in Yerushalayim, where the husband was found to have been unfaithful to his wife. It was a prolonged case due to financial complexities; but eventually the rabbis figured it all out and she received the divorce.

The woman approached the head Judge and extended her hand in gratitude; the rabbi diplomatically refused. And when the woman explained that it was a simple act of gratitude the rabbi replied: “Had your husband acted like me, he would not have **betrayed** you and you would not be in this bet din today.”

Conclusion: Individuals and nations have basic interests that they deem necessary to create a life of security and welfare. This was expected when the human condition changed dramatically when Adam and Chava were expelled from Gan Eden

and humanity was required to fend for itself.

Granted that people (and all other creatures above the level of the mineral world) are born with needs beginning at the moment a newborn takes its first breath; however, moral people and societies have developed norms that govern the way we share this planet together.

**Rule number one – Competition yes!
Betrayal no!**

Our parsha begins with the conditions that HaShem set down as the preamble of the Jewish nation receiving the Torah and becoming HaShem's chosen people (7:12-13):

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[illegible]

¹² *If you are attentive to these laws and are careful to follow them, then HaShem will keep his covenant of love with you, as He swore to your ancestors.*

13 He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land, your grain, new wine and olive oil, the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you.

Chapter 8:19-20:

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וְאִם אֵלֶיךָ תָּשׁוּבָה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת כָּל הַצִּוְּוֹת וְהִשְׁמַעְתָּ אֶת הַקוֹל וְהָיִיתָ לְעַמְּךָ לְיֵשׁוּעָה:

-וְאִם 'וְ אֵלֶיךָ תָּשׁוּבָה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת כָּל הַצִּוְּוֹת וְהִשְׁמַעְתָּ אֶת הַקוֹל וְהָיִיתָ לְעַמְּךָ לְיֵשׁוּעָה
וְהָיִיתָ לְעַמְּךָ לְיֵשׁוּעָה

But if you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God.

Chapter 8,19-20 is extreme in its threats of punishment that if and when the Jewish nation rejects the singularity and oneness of HaShem and accepts idolatry, they will lose the reason for their existence and henceforth cease to exist.

Meaning – Two sides of HaShem's balancing scale. On the one is a life of plenty and blessing and on the other is partial or total annihilation. No other mitzva makes one liable for destruction to the degree that the sword of idolatry holds over the head of every Jew. Why?

I submit that the bond between HaShem and the Jewish nation is not contractual, whereby one side under certain conditions could violate a clause and the contract remains in force. The bond of HaShem and the Jewish nation with its unique and exquisite neshamot was forged in love by the Creator, a specific element that justifies the existence of creation.

The rejection of the singularity and uniqueness of the Creator by acceptance of idolatry is not only a sin, it is an abrogation and betrayal of the mutual bond, faith and devotion of the two sides to each other. It is the termination and betrayal of the sanctified emotions of confidence and trust similar to that felt by a man and woman just joined in holy matrimony in their youth.

Summary: breaking a contract is an act of non-confidence, but breaking an emotional tie is an act of **betrayal**.

Betraying Friendship

The following is a partial list of gentile leaders and nations that share a common feature with regards to the Jews in their midst and to Jews in general:

The Paros of Biblical Egypt, Nevuchadnetzer of Babylon destroyer of the first Bet Hamikdash; Antiochus IV and the Seleucid Empire in the time of Chanuka; Rome; Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; King Edward I of England; King Louis IX (Saint Louis) of France; Count Duke of Olivares; Philip IV of Spain; Tsar Alexander I (Russian Empire); Shah Abbas II of Persia; The Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany; Benito Mussolini (Italy); The Soviet Regime; Vichy France, and England of the mandate period.

They were all guilty of **betraying** the friendship and loyalty of the Jewish people.

To describe the details behind what led up to these acts of betrayal is beyond the scope of this article, but it is sufficient to say that all of them initially showed favor, protection, or alliance toward the Jewish people only to betray us down to the gates of Auschwitz.

Jews have enemies, as do most other nations, where political, economic, and other interests compete; and at times these interests cause wars. But betrayal of a nation by its allies is a different level of immorality.

Competition? Yes! Betrayal? No!

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

