



For HaShem Has A Controversy

By Ariel Bar Tzadok

Copyright © 2001 by Ariel Bar Tzadok. All rights reserved.

"Hear the word of HaShem, children of Israel; for HaShem has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land; for there is neither truth nor loving-kindness nor knowledge of G-d in the land. There is swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and blood touches blood."
(Hoshea 4:1-2)

"I have a controversy with the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael, for I gave them the land on the condition that they perform righteousness and justice therein, and with that I stipulated that My eyes would be on it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year (Deut. 11:12). Since you are doing the opposite, swearing lying etc., I too will do the opposite of what I promised, and I will hide my countenance from them, and the land shall mourn and all that dwell therein shall be cut off."
(Perush ReDaK Al Hoshea, Rabbi David Kimhi)

Since I was young, I have learned the stories about the Exodus from Egypt. I have read all the accounts that our holy Rabbis have written about the conditions in Egypt prior to the Exodus. Our Rabbis have taught that the Egyptian exile was the worst because of its deceptive nature. For all the while in Egypt, as bad as things were, the children of Israel, did not seek redemption. In spite of how bad things were, they were satisfied with their lot. The Torah clearly records that the people were not very happy when Moshe Rabbeynu initially came to redeem them. Moreover, once they had left Egypt many still pined away for the good old things and the way of life associated with them.

Not for naught did G-d have to let an entire generation die in the wilderness. The generation of slaves was never able to receive redemption. So many were taken out of Egypt against their will. So many received the Torah at Sinai against their will. So many had to die in the wilderness, all against their will. What a large portion of the people wanted was to be left alone. They were quite content to remain as the slaves of the Egyptians. It was only the generation of the children; those who grew up in freedom and not under Egyptian influence that were the ones who benefited from the liberation.

So little has changed over the centuries.

Pirkei Avot teaches us that the study of Torah is not the essential thing. Rather, it is the doing of Torah that is essential. Words mean nothing when not backed up by deeds.



The study of Torah mysticism, Kabbalah, and Hasidut is supposed to inspire the individual and to fill him/her with a sense of zealotry towards our Creator. For once one is filled with this spirit, one can act in the proper ways, as defined and led by that spirit.

Alas, today, even the study of mysticism has fallen into the hands of the forces of evil. More people today study Torah mysticism than at any other time in history (with the possible exception of First Temple times). Nonetheless, while more people read the mystical books, listen to mystical tapes and visit mystical websites, the number who properly act upon the holy knowledge are ever so few and far between. As Rabbi Haim Vital wrote in the introduction of his Sha'arei Kedusha, quoting an earlier source, "I have seen the number of those who wish to ascend and they are indeed few."

Woe to us and woe to our generation. So many believe themselves to be so full of Torah that they have not left any place in their hearts for the fear of G-d. So many of us have become hypocrites. So many have grown fat and lazy, just as were our ancestors in Egypt. While many of us call ourselves religious and pat each other on the back for our grand and glorious "frumkite" (religiosity), we have missed the point of the whole thing. Our yeshivot are full to the brims and at the same time less and less are the number of students who truly and sincerely embrace the spirit of zeal for the Torah.

In this, I too am to blame, for I have failed to instruct many of my own students properly. All they want to do is sit and study. They wish to learn all that I can teach them. Yet, after many years, only a few have grasped the first lesson that I have ever taught them. My first lesson and my last are the same. You must act as a zealot for the Torah to be one of its children. There is no room for laziness, fatness, or self-indulgence. Torah means a life of self-sacrifice. This term today turns off almost everybody.

I am often told that my message is "negative" or that I am too "preachy." It boggles my mind that there are those of you who crave the study of Kabbalah but who can make such stupid statements or hold on to such foolish ideas.

After all these years, don't you yet have any idea of what Kabbalah is all about? Do you really think it has to do with mysticism?

Kabbalah is about politics.

Kabbalah is about social welfare and reform.

Mysticism plays only a small role in the life of a Kabbalist, just as it played only a small role in the life of a Biblical prophet.

The role of the Biblical Prophet was to be the voice of social conscience. All Kabbalists throughout the centuries, regardless of when they lived or where, if they practiced the mysticism that they learned, all acted as voices of social conscience in their generations.



Some of the greatest moralistic literature of all times was written by the masters of mysticism. Rabbi Cordovero's Tomer Devorah and Rabbi Luzzato's Mesilat Yesharim are two examples of these great classics. These two men shared much in common, although they were separated by centuries and continents. They both had the courage to speak out against the ills that were common in their days.

Alas for us today, for although we have many fine teachers who point the finger at all our wrongs, we nonetheless, ignore their dire warnings. More so, we seek to silence them by not supporting the infrastructures that make it possible for them to perform their sacred work of admonishing the public.

The mystic masters of today are either old and viewed as icons, such as Rav Kaduri, or young and starving because no one is willing to support their sacred work.

Of course, there are the apostate so-called Rabbis and the cult leaders, but it is a disgrace to our holy Torah to call them masters of mysticism. In reality, the cult leaders are only masters of mind control and masters of financial manipulation. Yet, their groups thrive because they lack the essential ingredients that every true Kabbalist must have. These ingredients are justice, discipline, and truth.

Studying Torah and living a religious life today is far easier than it ever has been in the past. Today there is unprecedented religious tolerance. Orthodox Jews have risen to the heights in every field and career. Kosher restaurants abound in number and style. Synagogues are numerous. Many are doing teshuva so there is no shortage of marriage opportunities. Yes, religious life today is far easier than it used to be. The problem is that the growing ease of religious life has led to a softening and a weakening of sincere religious commitment to the difficult things that just might jeopardize religious convenience and ease.

It is easy being religious when you fit into the mainstream, yet once you make a stand for the difficult things; you find your support among your peers dwindling fast. Peer pressure and public support in the religious community do more today to silence the true Voice of Torah than all the present anti-Semitism combined.

Ask yourselves, where is your true home, Israel, or abroad? Israel, you say? All right then, what are your plans for moving to the Holy Land? No plans? Why not? I am sure you have all the excuses.

Do you support the patriotic Jews in Yehuda and Shomron, not with your empty words, but with your deeds and with your wallets? No? Our patriotic brothers and sisters are dying every day to maintain a Jewish hold on Eretz Yisrael and you just read about it in your Jewish newspapers as you sip your Latte.

Of course, you sympathize, but what can you do about it? When the day comes that you stand before your Creator for judgment, make sure you ask Him that question. I am sure



He will provide you with numerous answers of what then will be too late to do. However, it is not too late now. You know what you can do, so why aren't you doing it? I will tell you why, because you have no sense of true justice and no discipline to do the hard things.

Mind you, Rodney King is not a Jewish role model. His now famous statement, "can't we all just get along" does not express true Torah values. There are many cancers in our midst. Trying to get along with a cancer is a recipe for death, not for coexistence.

Do you support and follow those Rabbanim who have the courage to speak out against the laziness and sloth that prevails amongst many in the Rabbinate today?

Are you willing to move to Eretz Yisrael?

Are you willing to FIGHT for Jewish causes with your fists and not just your dollars?

Or are you so comfortable and at ease here in the U.S., Canada or wherever else you are, that you have all kinds of Halakhic proofs to justify your present way of life?

Mind you, when you answer that yes, you have every Halakhic reason, and right to live outside the Land, you are not the first to make this claim. The Jews of Europe also made this claim throughout the 1920's and 1930's. They perished for one simple reason; they did not have a correct order of priorities.

How little have things changed. As it was in Egypt, so it was in Europe. With the beginning of a national outbreak of Anthrax here in the U.S., with war growing around the world, the economy of western civilization is in a position of severe danger. Everyone knows, when the wallet takes a hit, the Jews will be blamed. For all those who believe that the position of Jews here in the U.S. will always be stable and strong, let's hope you're right. For if not . . .