

THREE DOUBLE MURDERS

COURAGEOUS TEARFUL PLEA OF THE MOTHER OF ONE OF THE THREE KORBONOS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Parshas Bolok

By Rabbi Menachem Rokeach

One may surmise that the Ten Commandments on Sinai were heard throughout the nations of the world. However, do they know the meaning of the eighth commandment **לא תגנב**, you shall not steal?! The Talmud (Sanhedrin 86a) expounds, this prohibition applies to stealing a human being, kidnapping. The penalty for violating this command is capital punishment. This is derived from the juxtaposition with **לא תרצח**, you shall not kill (and **לא תנאף**, cohabitation with a married woman). The commandment against theft of money or valuables is mentioned separately in Vayikro (19:11).

The case of the tragic kidnapping and murder of the three Yeshiva youths going home for Shabos two weeks ago is a condition that incurs a double death penalty. How can such a penalty be executed? One surmises the second death penalty, at least in theory, if not in Beth Din (court) practice, refers to the accomplices to the ugly crime. These include participants in the planning stage, those hiding the murderers. On a meager level it includes the thousands who applaud the murderers, who hail them as heroes, the many hundred thousands who quietly jubilate at our torment.

In our Sidrah, Bilaam the heathen prophet speaks. (Important to inject the Midrashic teaching that prophecy to this unworthy gentile was given him as a response to the complaint, in jealousy, why were the Israelites alone selected to be given the word of Hashem). One of Bilaam's remarks about the Jewish people, **"הן עם לבדד ישכון"** "Behold it is a nation that dwells alone" (Bamidbar 23:9). Israel's mission is to remain separate, disjointed and distinct from the nations, thereby in a position to inspire them at least a touch of spiritual values. Rashi (ibid) quotes from the Midrash **"כשהן שמחין אין אומה שמחה עמהן"**, when the Jewish people rejoice,

the nations do not, cannot, rejoice with them (הן as הנאה, joy). Do the nations possess even an inkling of a Simchas Torah? Do they have even one iota of our lofty experience of the three festivals, referred to in our Sidra (see Rashi 22:26)?

To our great sorrow, the neighboring nations went a step further. Not only do they not rejoice in our jubilation, they DO rejoice in our failures. Prophet Jeremiah takes note of their hilarity at our downfall. "שחקו על משבתה", her enemies saw her (the Jewish people) and gloated at her downfall (Eichah 1:7).

The hatred of some nations toward us stems from Har Sinai, as the Midrash uses the homonym of words Sinai – Sina hatred. The hatred of nations toward Israel stems out of jealousy that we, not they, stood at Mt. Sinai, receiving the Torah. If that is the case, and it surely is: then let us continue in the oneness, and unity of all Yisroel as it was at the time the Torah was given on Sinai, as the Torah testifies ויחן שם ישראל, and he (Israel, in the singular, as one man with one heart – Rashi) encamped there (Shemos 19:2).

One cannot miss but marvel at the courageous statement of Mrs. Rochel Frankel, in the name of all three mothers in the midst of their unimaginable pain, to all the Jews who so deeply share their agony. She tried to comfort herself by consoling all the consolers. השם נתן והשם לקח, יהי השם נתן והשם לקח, יהי "Hashem gave and Hashem took, Blessed be the name of Hashem" (Iyov 1:21). These are words of נשים צדקניות inspiring participants in עבודת השם and true אמונה.

And as if to make some sense of this trauma she pleads with all who supplicated to Hashem together, to continue in the Tehilim togetherness, care for one another, in complete faith in Hashem. For it seems that this was the Ratzon (will) of Hashem. Taking this message to heart, the tragic victims will attain עלית נשמה on the highest level. In the aforementioned הן (ידידות in לב – דד, לב as in לבדד ישכן, עם לבדד ישכן, the word לבדד, alone, can be interpreted לב – דד as in ידידות) heart of friendship.

