

Dear Rabbi Dr. Leiman,

I recently looked over your book, "Faith and Doubt", and I had a few comment/questions on some of the points you made. I hope that you would not mind spending a few minutes of your time examining them. In your explanation of how "cognitive doubt" does not affect the functional realm of practice, you cite as an example a child who is drowning, and you explain that the lifesaver's perception of his chances of success do not affect his commitment to save him.

You state, "My discernment was plagued with serious doubt and grave misgivings. My commitment, however, is not one whit less total than if I had been a champion lifesaver; I will spare no effort in achieving success."

Although I strongly disagree with this behavioral pattern simplification applied across the board to all people [I think that such a psychologic thought pattern only applies to special and unique human beings], I think that the Ramban in the beginning of Shmos disagrees with this point. When 3221' saw that he was 710, the 7102 continues that she hid him. The Ramban sees that the 7102 seems to imply that this was causative and asks, "All mothers regardless of whether the child is beautiful or ugly will spare no effort in saving their child." Why must the

7100 point out that she saw that he was good?" He goes on to explain that the 710 was that "aura" that D'n referred to and when she saw it she thought that a miracle would occur, thus her perception of her probability of success increased. "100" therefore, she - 1000 1000 1000. It seems, and clearly so, that the removal of serious doubt and grave misgiving does indeed change ones commitment. Also, a mothers love for her child is one of the strongest loves that exist in this world, how much more so in our case. Furthermore, the 100 is discussing Yocheved, a great 1000.

As for the "10" in Shabbos 100,
I think that one could prove the opposite point that you wished to prove. You wanted to prove that when the 10 is not a 1000 but rather just didn't believe that 1000 was 1000, - Judaism could tolerate that. The latter could be construed as what you describe as "cognitive doubt," and is tolerated by Judaism.

But let's look at the last words of that Rashi, that Hillel would convince him. If not for this, that he would certainly change his mind, then he would have the same status in the eyes of Judaism as the 1000. Why then does Rashi draw the distinction? The

distinction is quite relevant in terms of Hillel's ability to work with him and change his mind. The reason why one cannot and should not convert a no is that he is an active denier and even the likes of God cannot affect him. If, however, the no's obstinacy of belief could be overcome, then certainly, we would take him in. This, I believe, is the correct lead in '87.

I realize that your schedule is somewhat hectic at best, but if you do find the time to respond my address is:

Jordan Hoffman
68-19 Burns St. #C6
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Sincerely,

Jordan Hoffman