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YOUR REF.....

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Rabbi Norman Lamm,  
The Jewish Center,  
131 West 86th Street,  
New York,  
N.Y. 10024,  
U.S.A.

Dear Rabbi Lamm,

The Spring-Summer issue of Tradition has just reached me. May I congratulate you on your lucid and penetrating article "Faith and Doubt". As usual, if I may say so, you have presented comprehensive and challenging review of the subject.

A few comments occur to me after a first reading of your article:

1. My own master and guide in matters of the spirit, Rabbi E.L. Dessler <sup>L35</sup> used to expound the basic meaning of emunah as 'honesty'. He said that emunah is that attitude to life which arises of itself when a person is completely honest with himself, and true to the deepest springs of his being.
2. An interesting example (in reverse) of co-existence in one person of (existential) doubt and (intellectual) faith can be found in R. Zadok Ha-Cohen ("Resisei Lailah", Lubin 1903, p.160). He raises the problem of the intense questioning of the justice of G-d by some prophets (e.g. Habakkuk), when the whole problem of tsaddik ve-ra' lo etc. is solved very simply in the Talmud by reference to olam ha-ba. He answers that prophecy wells up from springs of being deeper than intellection - i.e. existentialist experience - and therefore has no access to matters beyond human experience, e.g. olam ha-ba. (Cf. Maharal. "Tiferet Yisrael", ch.57, who uses the same insight to explain why there is no direct reference to

olam ha-ba in the Torah, which is also basically prophecy - the prophecy of Mosheh Rabbenu). The latter is however accessible to intellectual cognition, and is thus discussed and analysed by Chazal, illustrating the principle of hacham adif mi-navi. (It is however not completely clear from R. Zadok whether he holds that the two attitudes were present simultaneously in one mind, or whether the development of the cognitive element was a later historical development.)

3. Personally I do not believe that substantive doubt can be effectively isolated from functional faith. A person can only live as a whole, and doubt at the heart of things must inevitably affect the intensity of his avoda. Only the person who is absolutely convinced that torah is <sup>his</sup> ha-shamayim, and consequently that there is a rational solution to his (halachic) puzzle, which will yield itself to him if he struggles long enough, will be able to summon up the almost superhuman intellectual effort often needed to arrive at the solution, as demonstrated by our Gedolim. Even in the realm of maaseh, doubt must affect the mode of carrying out the mitzvot - the dikduke mitzvot. I agree however that doubt must be squarely and openly faced, and not repressed. (This is perhaps the lesson conveyed by the last three words in Genesis 18:15 addressed to Sarah, apparently by the Almighty Himself; i.e. that doubts should not be repressed, even if the attempt at repression derives from yir'at shamayim.)
4. Your attempted analysis of the dispute between Hillel and Shammai (p.29) is very interesting, but I am afraid I cannot see the relevance of Rashi's remark to the problem of doubt. Rashi does not say that the non-Jew 'doubted' the Oral Torah. He says that he accepted its validity but denied (not doubted) that it came from G-d. The halachic point (well taken!) is that this does not infringe the requirement of complete acceptance of the mitzvot as a condition of gerut. Rashi is saying that all he has to do is to accept them; it does not matter whether he accepts them as divine or otherwise. (Incidentally, this is a surprising concession <sup>on</sup> of Rashi's part, especially in view of Rashi's own remarks on Ha'omer eyn t'chiyat ha-metim min ha-torah (Sanhedrin 90<sup>a</sup>), and it would be interesting to know whether it is borne out in Halacha. It would also seem to be in conflict with Rambam's famous dictum in H.M'lachim 8:13 about the

conditions for acceptance of ger toshav.)

re: "Hedge of Roses".

Further to our previous correspondence, in order to remove the rather obvious objection which can be (and in fact has been) raised to the theory of the "biological clock" as a reason for the freeing of women from obligation for time-linked mitzvot, I should be glad to know that you would have no objection to the following footnote being added at the end of the passage in question:

This deep inner sense of holiness linked to her biological rhythm remains with the woman always, and is not invalidated by those situations in which the "biological clock" is not in fact functioning; e.g. in pregnancy, or after the menopause.

Kind regards.

Yours very sincerely,



L. CARMELL. 