

Rabbi's Article II

Bearing Testimony

The verse (-Deuteronomy 19:5) states, "*By the mouth of two witnesses... shall the matter be established.*"

Legally:

There are two categories of witnesses:

- (i) *Witnesses of Confirmation*, in which the witnesses do nothing but confirm that the action took place. For example, if Reuben gives Shimon a loan, Shimon owes Reuben whether there are witnesses or not. The loan was not *established* by the witnesses, but later confirmed and ratified in court by the witnesses. Hence, the witnesses *become* witnesses in court, by the court, and hence, need to be examined by the court.
- (ii) *Witnesses of Establishing*, in which the witnesses, and not the action of the parties involved, create what is happening. For example, concerning marriage, the law is (-Maimonides (-Link), Laws of Isshut, Chapter 4, Law 6), "*When [a man] consecrates [a woman] in the presence of a single witness, [his kiddushin (marriage)] are of no consequence. [This applies] even when both [the man and the woman] acknowledge [that the kiddushin were given].*" Hence, the witnesses *become* witnesses at the time of the event, and therefore, the court doesn't need to establish them as witnesses through examining them, for they are already established witnesses.

Another legal difference between the two categories of witnesses is the law of (-Nedarim 87a), "*Within the time required for speaking* (the short phrase, 'Greetings to you, my teacher,' until that time has passed his action is seen as incomplete and can therefore still be modified)... *And the law is:* (The legal status of a pause or retraction) *within* (the time required) *for speaking* (a short phrase is) *like* (that of) *continuous speech*, (and so a person can retract what he first said if he issues the retraction within this period of time after he finished speaking. This principle holds true in almost every area of law,) *except for* (the case of)... *one who betroths a woman.*" The reason being that by all other cases, the *parties* establish the action, and hence, *they* can modify it within this time frame. However, by marriage the *Witnesses of Establishing* establish the action, and hence, once done the parties involved cannot modify.

Mystically:

Introduction: Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the *Alter Rebbe* (-Link) explains (-Likkutei Torah, Pekudei 4a) that witnesses apply only, "*On that which is hidden and concealed from the eyes of all,*" however, not on that which is revealed. And even that which is presently hidden, but is, "*A thing which is made to (eventually) be revealed,*" doesn't need, "*absolute witnesses.*" Spiritually this means: (i) *That Which is Revealed*, refers to the *Finite Linear Permeating Light*, which clothes itself within, and is the tangible life-force of all creations. For this we do not need witnesses, for our mind can *palatably understand* it. (ii) *That Which is Made to be Revealed*, refers to the *Infinite Circular Encompassing (elusive) Light*, which even though our mind cannot grasp it, nevertheless, our minds understands that if there is the *Finite Light* which vivifies us, there must be the *Infinite Light* above and beyond this, for G-d is not ultimately only about being the life-force of creations. Hence, here too, we don't need witnesses. (iii) *That Which is Hidden and Concealed from the Eyes of All,*" refers to the *Essence* of G-d, which is beyond *Infinite* and *Finite Light*, and hence needs witnesses. And here we have the two categories of witnesses, as our sages (-Zohar Vol. III 86a) give two opinions on the verse (-Isaiah 43:10), "*You are My witnesses,' says the L-rd*": (i) "*These are Israel,*" and (ii) "*These are Heaven and Earth.*" In which we will say, (i) *Israel* are the *Witnesses of Establishing*, and (ii) *Heaven and Earth* are *Witnesses of Confirmation.*"

Heaven and Earth *confirm* that G-d is their Creator by having within them the '*fingerprint of G-d,*' eternalism. In Heaven each creation remains (sun, moon, and stars), while on Earth, the species exist. This is not something that Heaven and Earth create or establish on their own (*from Below*), rather, it is something created within them only by G-d (*from Above*), and their openly being this way *confirms* and *reveals* that the world was created, is vivified, and that the *Essence* of G-d exists within them.

The sages teach (-Shabbat 88a) on the verse (-Psalms 76:9), "*The earth feared, and was silent,*" that, "*At first* (before the Jews received the Torah at Mt. Sinai), *it was afraid, and in the end* (after the Jews received the Torah), *it was silent.*" The reason being that (-Rashi, Genesis 1:1) the world was created, "*For the Torah... and for Israel.*" Hence, the true existence of the world, in which it is one with G-d, through Israel performing with it the Torah and Mitzvot, was not until the Israel accepted the Torah. Only then was the world silent, and no longer afraid. However, the question begs to be asked, G-d, Who's intentions and actions are one, created the world with this oneness from the very beginning, hence, why the fear? However, albeit that to G-d (the "*Above*") the intention is one and revealed within the action, and G-d placed this within creation, nevertheless, from the *Below's* perception, this intention of oneness is not *actual*, until the *Below* itself brings this actually about. Hence, Israel are truly *Witnesses of Establishing*, in which they *create* the oneness of the world being the *Dwelling Place of the Essence* of G-d, by actually doing it so, "*of the Below, by the Below, for the Below.*"

In Our Service to G-d:

To serve G-d only within that which one's mind can perceive and appreciate ("*that which is revealed*") is not to bear true witness for G-d. Even to serve G-d with a self-sacrifice that one's mind understands that this is something we must sacrifice ourselves for ("*that which is meant to be eventually revealed*") is not bearing testimony for G-d. However, when one sacrifices himself (his will) for G-d, beyond any calculations, this is the true service of, "*You are My witnesses.*" Additionally, true testimony is when one realizes that the world *is* but the oneness of Israel performing Torah and Mitzvot, and of being the dwelling place for the *Essence* of G-d, Hence, he does not allow the world to seem as an obstacle to his service to G-d, even when '*calculations,*' beg to differ.