

Shalom Account

"It's late dear. Let's take a taxi to the wedding. A bus will never make it in time."

The husband and wife wait for a taxi to come by. A few pass, but they are full. It is getting later and later, and the wedding is about to begin. At last, the husband motions to a driver and he pulls over.

"Can you take us to Givat Shaul?"

"Surely. That will be forth shekels."

"Forty shekels!!! That is way too much money. It's only a ten minute ride."

"That's the price. Take it or leave it."

The wife realized that they had no choice. If they did not take this cab, they would be late.

"Let's get in dear and sit down. We'll talk during the cab ride."

"Okay, but this is highway robbery."

"Dear, try to calm down."

"How can I? That driver is taking advantage of us."

"If I told you that someone else was paying for the fare, would you be upset?"

"Not really."

"Then you can relax. This cab fare is coming from a special account that will not affect our budget in any way."

"How is that?"

The wife took a small object out of her purse. It was an envelope with the words "Shalom Account" written on the outside. She pulled out two twenty shekel bills and handed them to her husband.

"Here is the cab fare dear."

"I never saw that envelope before."

"I have had it for a while. I was reading the Chofetz Chaim's sefer, 'Shmiras HaLoshon'. He advises setting aside some money at the beginning of the year in a 'Sholom Account'. Most *machlokes* (quarrels) begin with little things. He broke my pen. She lost a house key. The neighbor left dirt on my steps. We get very upset over these things and we start an argument. These petty arguments can lead to all sorts of big *aveyros* (sins) – *loshon hora*, *sinas chinam* (hatred), *onaas devorim* (saying hurtful words), and embarrassing people. All of this could have been avoided if we just learned to forego a little money. Therefore I

set aside this money. Whenever a small monetary squabble pops up, and I see that the other side is not giving in, instead of getting upset, I pull out my little envelope."

"And the argument ends right there."

"Exactly."

"That is brilliant. And it is surely worth the money. Who needs all of the aggravation of a *machlokes*."

"Don't thank me, dear. Thank the Chofetz Chaim."



Kinderlach . . .

This week's parsha is about machlokes. We learn from Korach, about the terribly damaging effects of machlokes. It is one of the worst things in the world. The Chofetz Chaim has a simple way to avoid most arguments. It just costs a little money. We are willing to spend money on many mitzvos: an esrog for Succos, matza for Pesach, tzitzis, tefillin, etc. This mitzvah also costs money. Guess what. It's a big bargain. Kinderlach, you know a good buy when you see it. Buy a lot of shalom for a little money.

Mockery

"Moshe, if four threads of *techailes* (blue wool) make a *tallis* kosher, then an entire *tallis* made of *techailes* must surely be kosher." "No, it is not Korach." "Moshe, If a small mezuzah with two parshios of the Torah written on it are enough for a house, then surely a house filled with Sifrei Torah does not need a mezuzah!" "Yes it does, Korach." "That's ridiculous! Look, here are 250 *talleisim* made entirely of *techailes*. Look who are donning them; 250 *Roshei Sanhedrious* (heads of high courts of Torah law)."

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l points out that Korach's claims were totally unfounded. Korach was a very intelligent person. How could he have asked such ridiculous questions? Even more amazing is the fact that he was able to convince 250 Jewish leaders, brilliant and respected *Roshei Sanhedrious*, to follow him. How did he do it? Rav Shmuelevitz explains that Korach's questions had an air of *leitzonus* (mockery) about them. He was able to ridicule Moshe Rabbeinu and his authority. Ridicule gives a person power way beyond that of logic. The episode of Korach illustrates the tremendous destructive force of *leitzonus*.

Kinderlach . . .

What's wrong with making a little joke? It's a mitzvah to be happy, isn't it? Let us not confuse happiness with leitzonus. Happiness comes from appreciating everything that you have in life. When you realize how much Hashem has given to you, and are contented with all you have, you cannot help but to be happy. Leitzonus, on the other hand is a destructive force that only wants to destroy good people and their deeds. It has the power to overthrow the good using ridicule and mockery. Additionally, one who makes fun of another often transgresses the sins of embarrassing your fellow man and hurting him with words. Kinderlach, before you make that quick joke think of the damage and the sins that it will cause. Is it really worth it?