



Make Peace

“Oy!”

“What’s the matter Chaim? Is everything okay?”

“No, Abba. Everything is not okay.”

“What is the matter?”

“I am learning this week’s parasha about the *machlokes* (dispute) of Korach. It is so horrible that it pains me just to think about it.”

“Chaim, I am very happy to hear that.”

“You are happy that I am in *tsaar* (distress), Abba?”

“No. I am happy for another reason. You take your Torah learning so seriously, Chaim that you are in *tsaar* when you read about the terrible effects of the *machlokes* of Korach. The Torah is not just an academic study for you; rather it is alive. It is a vital part of your life. That is a very big accomplishment.”

“Thank you Abba, however, I am still in *tsaar*.”

“I am sure that reading the story of Korach has motivated you avoid *machlokes* at all costs.”

“It has, Abba. In fact, I want to go one step further. I want to make peace in the world.”

“That is wonderful, Chaim! The Gemora at the very end of *Mesechta Brochos* instructs us exactly how to make peace in the world.”

“Please share it with me, Abba.”

“My pleasure, Chaim. Rebbe Elazar says in the name of Rebbe Chanina, ‘*Talmidei chachomim* increase peace in the world, as it says, “All your children will be students of Hashem, and your children’s peace will be abundant” (Yishaya 54:13). Do not read “your children,” rather read, “your builders.”’ The first step is to be a *talmid chochom*. Learn, learn, and learn Torah until you become a *talmid chochom*.”

“That is my goal, Abba!”

“Fantastic, Chaim. However, do not stop there. The commentary of the *Iyun Yaakov* shows precisely how *talmidei chachomim* increase peace. They settle *machlokes* between people. When litigants come with their claims, *talmidei chachomim* judge the dispute according to *dinei haTorah* (the laws of the Torah), and resolve the differences between the two sides. That is one aspect of increasing peace – settling *machlokes*. Additionally, when *talmidei chachomim* are learning Torah amongst themselves in the Beis HaMedrash, they come to *machlokes* in their learning. Each has his own interpretation

of (subject) the *sugya* that they are learning. Just as the *talmidei chachomim* are arguing down here in this world, so too the heavenly angels are having the same dispute in the spiritual world. The *machlokes* is settled either one of two ways. Either they agree to disagree, and each one accepts that both points of view are valid, or they agree that one is wrong and the other is right. When the *machlokes* is settled down here, the heavenly angels are at peace also. And so, *talmidei chachomim* make peace in both the upper and lower worlds. The gemora (Kiddushin 30b) darshens this from a verse in parashas Chukas (Bamidbar 21:14). *Talmidei chachomim* are fighting a war over the *sugya*. If their goal is to come to the *emmes* (truth) *li’shaim shomayim* (for the sake of Heaven), they will come to love each other.”

“I understand, Abba. A *talmid chochom* makes peace with his fellow talmidim, and settles disputes between others.”

“Excellent, Chaim, however, it goes even farther than that.

The *Etz Yosef* cites a verse in parashas Bechukosai

(Vayikra 26:3,6). ‘If you will follow my decrees ... I will provide peace in the land.’ Rashi explains that ‘going in

my ways’ means toiling in Torah. Therefore, *talmidei chachomim* who toil in Torah bring peace to the land.”

“I am so inspired, Abba.”

“Good, Chaim. Let us continue with the gemora. Rebbe Chanina calls children ‘builders’. The gemora (Shabbos 114a) states that *talmidei chachomim* work at building the world all the days of their lives. How? The Maharsha elucidates that Torah is Hashem’s tool to create the world. *Talmidei chachomim*, by learning and upholding the Torah on a very high level, supply Hashem (so to speak) with a very high quality, powerful tool to continue building up the world.”

“This is incredible, Abba. Each word of Torah is so powerful!”

“Indeed, Chaim. The most far-reaching effect of the Torah of *talmidei chachomim* is bringing peace even to *reshayim* (wicked people). We understood the word ‘*bonoyich*’ to mean ‘builders’. The Rif darshens it to mean those who are ‘*misbonen*’, who think deeply; contemplating the profound meanings of the Torah. These *talmidei chachomim* bring

peace even to *reshayim*, as the next verse in the gemora states, ‘For the sake of my brethren and comrades, I shall speak of peace in the midst of others’ (Tehillim 122:8 or 9). ‘Brethren and comrades’ are the *talmidei chachomim*, whom peace comes for their sake, even to others – *reshayim* – who do not deserve it.”

“Unbelievable, Abba. Learning Torah is an ‘explosion’ of peace! I want to be a big peacemaker! I want to be a big *talmid chochom*!”

“May Hashem help you to succeed, Chaim.”

Kinderlach . . .

Imagine a world with an ‘explosion’ of peace. No more *machlokes*, *sinas chinam*, *discrimination*, and other *tsaar*. Only blessing, harmony, and *nachas ruach*. Do you want to bring peace to the world? Of course you do! Learn Torah! It brings peace to those who learn it, to those who have disputes, to *reshayim* who do not deserve it, and gives Hashem the tools to build up the world. Peace is a super-power in the universe. Become a *talmid chochom* and bring peace to the world.

Directly to the Source

Korach did not take his complaint directly to Moshe Rabbeinu. Rather, he gathered 250 people and voiced his opinions to them. He did this in a way that made a mockery of Moshe Rabbeinu and the Torah. Contrast this with Moshe Rabbeinu’s actions. He went privately to Korach, careful not to embarrass him in public. Moshe explained to him that the selection of Aharon for Kohen Godol was a command from Hashem. Similarly, the Torah laws that Korach questioned were directly from Hashem. An argument that is *li’shaim shomayim* (for the sake of Heaven) strives for the truth. Moshe Rabbeinu was a man of truth who sought peace. Korach was not interested in truth. He wanted to satisfy his own desires by creating and increasing an unjustified argument.

Kinderlach . . .

Moshe Rabbeinu teaches us how to make peace. Go to the other person directly and privately. Explain yourself and your point of view in a soft tone of voice. If you are honest, then you have done your part. With Hashem’s help, the other person will also be honest and the matter will be settled.

Parasha Questions:

- What did the earth swallow up? (16:31,32)
- What happened to the other 250 men? (16:35)
- What was the reaction of the Bnei Yisrael? (17:6)
- How did Hashem reply to the Bnei Yisrael? (17:7-15)

