

A Dvar Torah to encourage matters of Yiras Shomayim prepared to be shared and discussed with your family at the Shabbos table



פרשת קרח

56

AVOIDING מחלוקת

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לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה



לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שיי' בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

THE TRAGEDY OF STRIFE

The Tora say that one is forbidden to behave like Korach and his group, in causing and continuing מחלוקת. The Gemara says that one who continues a מחלוקת, transgresses a לאו (negative commandment), which a number of ראשונים count as one of the מצוות (סנהדרין קי ע"א, ס' חרדים פכ"ד מ"ב)

Rebbi Berachia said: A מחלוקת is so severe, for the Beis Din above punishes those over twenty years old and the Beis Din in this world holds thirteen year olds responsible, but during the מחלוקת of Korach, even children who were a day old were burned and swallowed into the earth. (במדבר רבה יח, ג')

The Medrash writes that the reason "כי טוב" was not written regarding the second day of creation is because 'מחלוקת' took place on that day, when the waters that filled the earth were split. If מחלוקת used for benefiting the world does not deserve "כי טוב", then how much more so regarding מחלוקת that brings confusion to the world. (בראשית רבה ד, ח)

The Medrash explains that when Yakov Avinu instructed his children, "Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you in the end of days," he was telling them to keep themselves gathered as one assembly, thus preparing themselves for the geulah. (בראשית רבה פ' צח)

The chachomim say that a home with מחלוקת will eventually be destroyed, and a Shul with מחלוקת will be transformed into a place of עבודה זרה. Once, a מחלוקת took place amongst the chachomim in a shul in Tveria, and the anger reached such a peak, that a Sefer Torah was accidentally torn. Reb Yosei ben Kisma, who was present then, said, "I would be surprised if this shul does not turn into a place of עבודה זרה." Indeed, this actually happened. (מס' דרך ארץ פ"ט, יבמות צו ע"ב, וראה חרדים פ"ז)

The Gemara tells of two people who on every Erev Shabbos would be incited by the שטן to quarrel. Rebbi Meir went to visit this home three weeks in a row, making sure that all was peaceful, and on the third week, Rebbi Meir heard the שטן moan, "Oh, that Reb Meir has chased me out of this home." (גיטין נב ע"א)

The Me'iri writes: מחלוקת is always repulsive, loathsome and forbidden, as the Torah instructs, "You should not be like Korach," but one who quarrels with another whom he is obligated to respect, is even more despised. (מאירי סנהדרין קי ע"ב)

The Medrash says: שלום is so great that regarding those who serve

and live peacefully, Hashem says that it is as if he has no control over them. In the generation of דוד המלך, although people were very great, many would fall in battle because of their מחלוקת. Yet in the time of אחאב, when they were serving עבודה זרה, they succeeded in battle. (בראשית רבה לח, ו, ויקרא רבה כו, ב)

The Frieddiker Rebbe related: On שבת פרשת נח תרנ"ט, after the davening on Shabbos morning, we began the Kiddush at my home at approximately twelve o'clock, hoping to have enough time to later attend the seudah of my father, the Rebbe Rashab. Suddenly, at one thirty, my father walked in and said that he had come to join.

Present at that time, was the chossid Reb Leib Velizher, who was a great ירא שמים and did not act according to personal agendas, but was a very harsh when dealing with others, especially simple people. At the time, there was a big מחלוקת in Velizh, in which Reb Leib dealt harshly. It was at this Kiddush that the Rebbe Rashab said the מאמר החלצו of Midyan which creates strife amongst Yidden, encouraging one Yid to quarrel with another. This comes from Yidden, encouraging one Yid to quarrel with another. This comes from ישות (feeling important), where one Yid is unable to tolerate the others existence, although the other has not done anything wrong. (סה"ש תש"ה ע' 18, סה"מ תרנ"ט ע' ס)

The תורה writes that one מחלוקת chases away one hundred possibilities for פריסה.

THE WAY TO PEACE

Rebbe Ilo'o said: The world exists in the merit of one who closes his mouth during מחלוקת.

The Alter Rebbe explains that the cause for מחלוקת is the narrow mindedness of not being able to tolerate another perspective; אחדות comes from a broad mindedness, being able to hold two approaches to an issue.

Elsewhere, the Alter Rebbe says that מחלוקת comes about because of a negative spirit that enters one's heart, causing him not to trust his friend, even when his friend insists on befriending him. (מאמרי אדה"ז ענינים ע' פ"ו, מאמרי אדה"ז הקצרים ע' תכ"ט)

Another cause of מחלוקת is that, instead of focusing on quarreling with himself, to overcome his יצר הרע, he uses that energy to quarrels with others. (אמרות טהורות ע' פ"א)

The Reb Chaim Rappaport was the Rov in the city Lvov, and was a great adversary of the Baal Shem Tov. Once, when Reb Chaim

was learning alone in the Beis Medrash, a man walked, and when Reb Chaim asked who he was, he replied, "I am dust (עפר ואפר)." The guest then reciprocated the question, and Reb Chaim responded that he is also dust. "If so," said the guest, "Why should there be מחלוקת between us?" Reb Chaim understood that this man was the Baal Shem Tov and from then on, he became attached to him, later fulfilling many great missions.

(רשימות דברים ח"ג ע' רעה)

The tzaddik Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshischa once told his chassidim: Look at the power of the טומאה found within every מחלוקת that is not truly לשם שמים! Korach and his followers claimed that Moshe Rabbeinu, the humblest of all people, was trying to raise himself over others, a senseless claim. Such can be caused by מחלוקת, which can even dull the vision of great people and takes away their common sense.

(פרפראות לתורה)

Chassidim once complained to the גאון Reb Avraham of Sochatchov (the אבני נזר), that the Rov in their town had ruled leniently regarding a question in Kashrus. They did not want to continue accepting his rulings regarding Kashrus issues, and therefore asked that their Rebbe send them another Rov. The tzaddik replied, "Even according to your claim, this Rov has at most committed an איסור דרבנן. However, what you want to do is an איסור דאורייתא, for the Torah forbids מחלוקת. Furthermore, through מחלוקת people make mistakes and it will cause many to transgress other אסורים."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה, ע' 557)

In the year תקק"ה, there was an intense מחלוקת stirring in the city of Smargon. In the past, there had been a large Yeshiva there, and many of the learned bochurim had married into families living in the city and settled there. Being great לומדים, they were unable to hold a Rov in their city. The Alter Rebbe, then returning from Mezritch, stopped in the town, and said a מאמר emphasizing the importance of peace.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 19)

מחלוקת לשם שמים

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos says: Any מחלוקת that is for the sake of Hashem, like that of Hillel and Shamai, will bring truth. However, one that is not for Hashem's sake, like the מחלוקת of Korach and his collaborators, will not bring any good.

(אבות פ"ה מ"ז)

The Gemara says that when discussing תורה, two people (even a father and son or a Rebbe and his talmid) can appear to be fierce enemies, yet in the end, they reconcile out of their love for each other and harbor no hard feelings. This can be seen from Beis Hillel and Beis Shamai, who despite their disagreements, still intermarried and lived peacefully together.

(קידושין ל ע"ב, יבמות יד ע"ב)

During the time of the מחלוקת between the Alter Rebbe and the tzaddik Reb Boruch of Mezhibuzh, one of the Alter Rebbe's Chassidim wanted to prove his Rebbe's righteousness, but the Alter Rebbe did not allow him to get involved. Sometime later, the Alter Rebbe reminded the chossid about this and said, "If you think this was a simple מחלוקת, you are mistaken. This was a continuation of the מחלוקת between Shaul Hamelech and Dovid Hamelech."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 44)

During the time of the מחלוקת regarding the Chassidim, the Chassidim of Vilna suffered, but nevertheless, continuously attempted to bring peace and did respond to their tormentors. At one of the meetings

of the Chassidim, in the year תקנ"ו, a group of great תלמידי חכמים who were from the younger Chassidim, decided that it was necessary to begin fighting back against their oppressors. The chossid Reb Meir Refoels, who had for many years worked on keeping the peace, argued against this. This was contrary to the chossid Reb Moshe Meizels who sided with the younger group, and out of great pain from all the suffering, used strong words against his opponent.

Hearing about this, the Alter Rebbe immediately dispatched a messenger to relate to the younger group that although in concept they were right, they must nevertheless act with מדות טובות and אהבת ישראל, which will eventually cause Hashem to be glorified. Later that year, the Alter Rebbe wrote a letter to Reb Moshe Meizels, asking him to publicly ask forgiveness from Reb Meir Refoels, "For chazal say that no peace will come from quarreling, and most צרות (troubles) are a result of מחלוקת which are thought to be לשם שמים, may Hashem protect us from it."

(אגרות קודש אדה"ז ע' פ, שם ע' תלה [מליקוט י"ד כסלו תשל"ט ע' 150], ספרי דברים רפ"ו)

The Rebbe Yoinoson Eibeshitz said: The יצר הרע will bring on מחלוקת by convincing one to be zealous for Hashem's sake. Therefore, it is necessary to weigh one's own actions, even in a מחלוקת לשם שמים, Yetzer Hora will try to further develop the מחלוקת into something negative.

(יערות דבש דרוש ה)

The של"ה writes that the way to determine if one's intention is לשם שמים, is by judging the way he feels towards the other person in all other areas; if he loves him entirely, the מחלוקת can truly be called לשם שמים.

The Rebbe explains: Because Kedusha is unity, a true מחלוקת לשם שמים will therefore lead to full harmony. However, קליפה is strife, so even if the Yetzer Hora dresses himself in a "זיידענע זופיצע" (silk kapote) and convinces one that the מחלוקת concerned is for Hashem's sake, if it is causing the opposite of אהבת ישראל, it is obvious that its coming from קליפה.

(של"ה, התועדויות תשמ"ה ח"ג ע' 1911)

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