



SEEKING PEACE (2)

Spreading Peace

Dovid HaMelech says in *Tehillim*, "Seek peace and pursue it." Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: "If one sits in his place and remains at peace with everyone, he has not *pursued* peace. Rather he should go to great lengths to seek it, even at a distance."

(ויק"ר ט, טז, אדר"ג יב)

Chazal instruct us, "Be one of the students of Aharon HaKohen, loving peace and pursuing peace..."

Whenever Aharon heard of two friends who were quarreling, he would approach one of them and tell him, "My son! Do you know what your friend is doing? He is beating his chest in anguish and tearing out his hair and saying, 'How can I look my friend in the face? I am so embarrassed to have sinned against him!' Hearing this, the listener would of course forgive his friend in his heart.

Aharon would then visit the other man and repeat the process. And when the twomet, they would embrace and kiss each other.

So it was that when Aharon passed away, eighty thousand Aharons, born as a result of his peacemaking, took part in his funeral, and all of *Bnei Yisroel* mourned Aharon for thirty days.

(אבות א, יב, אדר"ג יב, כלה רבתי פ"ג)

Reb Refoel of Bershad, a *talmid* of Reb Pinchas of Korets, often busied himself with restoring peace amongst friends and couples. One Tisha BeAv he headed out to a house where a number of people were quarreling.

"Why don't you go *after* Tisha BeAv?" his *talmidim* asked.

Reb Refoel explained, "The Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed because of causeless hatred – so on a day like this, should we postpone an opportunity to restore peace?"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 458)

Extending Oneself

Chazal say that in order to bring peace between people who are quarreling, one must act humbly.

(כלה רבתי פ"ג)

One Friday night, Rabbi Meir's *shuir* for women ended far later than usual. When one of his listeners finally returned home, she found her husband so irritated that he would not let her in the door until she would go and spit in the speaker's face!

What should she do? Her friends encouraged her to visit Rabbi Meir for advice and they accompanied her. As they approached his home, he sensed the dilemma with *ruach hakodesh*. Acting as if his eye was hurting, he greeted the women, "Can one of you please spit in my eye to heal it?" The woman grasped the opportunity and returned home happily.

After they left, his *talmidim* asked, "Rebbi! Isn't this a disgrace to the Torah?"

Rebbi Meir replied, "My honor cannot be greater than the honor of *HaShem*, Who allowed his Name to be *erased* – in order to make peace between husband and wife."

(ירושלמי סוטה פ"א ה"ד)

In a letter to Reb Volf Greenglass, the Rebbe encourages him to engage those opposing *chassidim* by showing them friendship. Although both sides were surely to blame, nevertheless it is *Anash* who should take the first step towards befriending them.

(לקט סיפורי התועודיות ע' 616)

Peace at Home

Chazal say that whoever instills peace in his own family is considered to have instilled peace amongst the entire Yiddishe nation, for every person has influence on his home.

(אבות דר"ג פכ"ח)

Chazal say, "If the *mizbeiach* is to be treated with reverence for its peacemaking between

the Yidden and *HaShem*, how much more certainly will an individual who brings peace between husband and wife, or between families or communities, be spared punishment and be granted long years!"

(ספרא קדושים כ, תנחומא יתרו י')

There once lived two people who every *erev Shabbos* were incited by Satan to quarrel. So what did Reb Meir do? *Chazal* relate that he visited their home three weeks in a row to make sure that all was peaceful. On the third Friday he heard Satan moan: "Oy, this Reb Meir has chased me out of this home!"

(גיטין נב ע"א)

When the Alter Rebbe lived in the town of Mohilev, after discontinuing his planned voyage to *Eretz Yisroel*, he had to sacrifice time from his learning in order to bring peace to a struggling couple. His *chavrusa* complained: "True, *Chazal* say that bringing peace between husband and wife is so great a *mitzva* that one is rewarded for it in This World and the Next – but don't they conclude that the study of Torah is equal to all the great *mitzvos* that they list?"

In reply, the Alter Rebbe pointed out that in that list, the *mishna* places "bringing peace" next to "*talmud Torah*" – in order to teach us that each of those two *mitzvos* is equal to all the others.

(שמו"ס ח"א ע' 124)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is peace so different from other types of kindness that one should *pursue* it?
- Why is it necessary to act humbly to bring about peace?

A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

How to Distribute Tzedaka

I received a mail request for *tzedaka* to benefit families in *Eretz Yisroel*. Am I allowed to donate to them before donating to the local needy?

- Contrary to popular opinion that one may do whatever he chooses with his *tzedaka* money, there are many *halachos* as to how *tzedaka* should be distributed.
- There are several cases that (depending on various factors) take precedence, such as one's own relatives, someone who is in desperate need and a *talmid chacham*. In the absence of these factors, in most cases, preference is given according to the location of the recipient. This is the subject of this issue. Being that these *halachos* are complex, one must seek the *halachic* advice of a *Rov* to find out the exact *halacha* in his particular situation.
- The Torah says that one should give *tzedaka* to "*he'oni imoch*", the poor man with you. From this *Chazal* derive that *tzedaka* should first be given to the needy of closest proximity.¹ Therefore, the residents of one's hometown take precedence over those of another city or those who have come to collect.² A person is considered a resident of a city if he: (a) buys a house; (b) comes with the intention of settling there; (c) dwells in the city for twelve months.³ *Poskim* add that in a town where there are a number of different communities (i.e. separate *rabbonim*, schools etc.), the poor people of one's own community come before those of another community.⁴
- One is obligated to help a neighbor before other people in the city.⁵ Some *poskim* add that those who live in a closer part of the city take precedence over those who live in a further part of the city.⁶
- The people of *Eretz Yisroel* precede those of *Chutz La'aretz*.⁷ Most *poskim* maintain that they only precede all other cities, but not one's hometown.⁸ Others hold that the poor of *Eretz Yisroel* precede even the poor of one's hometown,⁹ since he is fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *yishuv Eretz Yisroel*, a *mitzvah* considered to be equal to all other *mitzvos*.
- It should be noted that the Rebbe often applied this *halacha* to spreading *yiddishkeit*, that one has a foremost responsibility to reach out to those in his own community before extending help to other communities.¹⁰

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your *Rov* for a final *psak*.

1. ראה ב"מ דף ע"א ע"א.
2. שו"ע ורמ"א יו"ד ס"ו רנ"א ס"ו.
3. ספר אהבת חסד לבעל חפץ חיים, ח"א פ"ו ה"ב.
4. שו"ת ר"א מזרחי ח"א ס"ו נג, הובא בשו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ה ס' קלה אות ה' ע"ש.
5. שו"ע ורמ"א שם.
6. ראה ספר צדקה ומפושט (לגר"י בלוי ז"ל) פ"ג הע' לד.
7. שו"ע שם.
8. ש"ך שם סק"ו. ועוד הרבה פוסקים. וראה בטעם הדבר שו"ת ח"ס ח"ו סכ"ז.
9. שו"ת יוסף אומץ לחיד"א ס' יט. ועוד.
10. ראה לדומגא אג"ק ח"כ ע' פה.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

לע"נ ר' ארי' לייב בן ר' חיים יהודה ע"ה
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לזכות ר' יהודה צבי עקהווי
לרגל יום הולדתו לשנת ה'תשס"ח

OUR HEROES

י"ב אלול

Reb Bunim of Pshischa

Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshischa is a well-known Rebbe. He was a *talmid* of both the "Yid Hakadosh" of Pshischa and the "Chozeh" of Lublin, and modeled his manner of Divine service after that of the "Yid Hakadosh". Reb Bunim was a businessman and did not dress with the traditional garb of rebbeim. Some of his famous chassidim include Reb Mendel of Kotzk and the Chidushei Hari"m. Reb Bunim passed away on the 12th of Elul, תקפ"ז (1827).



When he was a child of five years, a group of important guests came to his father's home. Despite his age, Simcha Bunim was very bright. In honor of the guests, his father wanted him to say a *dvar Torah* about the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*. The boy went out to prepare and shortly thereafter returned and announced, "I'm ready, but I need you to come to the nearby room." Somewhat perplexed, the guests followed. In the other room, they found a row of beds, each one fully arranged with bedding and *negel vaser*. "This is the best way to expound on the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*..."

Following in the ways of *Chassidus*, Reb Bunim constantly emphasized the concept of *simcha*. He would often say:

"Shabbos is very hospitable. When Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbos, the holy Shabbos gives up its Musaf prayer. When Yom Tov falls on Shabbos, Shabbos gives up all its *tefillos*. When Yom Kippur falls on Shabbos, Shabbos even gives up its *seudos*. But Shabbos does this only for worthy guests; guest who bring joy. However, when Tisha be'Av falls on Shabbos, coming to dampen the mood, Shabbos gives up nothing..."

Crossing a bridge in Danzig, Reb Simcha Bunim saw a man struggling in the waters below. With no way of saving him, he called out, "Send regards to the *Liviyasan!*" At that moment, the man managed to catch onto a plank and was spared. Reb Simcha Bunim later explained that the man's broken spirit did not allow him to be helped. "When my comment gladdened him somewhat, he was able to be saved."

(שיח שרפי קודש עניני שמחה אות ט)

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

A Little More to Fill the Cup

In the winter of 5752, the Rebbe told Reb Leibel Groner that he has difficulty reading the small print in the *Gemara*.

Reb Leibel brought in an eye doctor to see the Rebbe. The doctor used the opportunity to ask the Rebbe a question that had been on his mind: "I have been around the world, and I have seen the wonderful work of the Rebbe being carried out by his *shluchim*. Wherever they are, they are spreading genuine *yiddishkeit*. Rebbe, how is it that after all this work, *Moshiach* has not yet come?"

The Rebbe smiled at the question and answered, "Indeed, I have the same question, but apparently, there is still more to do to fill the cup." The Rebbe motioned, demonstrating a small amount with his fingers. "This is why, whenever I speak to the chassidim, I inspire them to do more."

The Rebbe finished off, "I do not let my chassidim sleep!"

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