

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

PARSHAS
CHUKAS

בשבת

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Sadly, we come to the death of Aharon *HaKohein* in this week's *Parshah*.¹ Moshe, Aharon, and his son Elazar are taken to a secluded spot, Aharon hands off the *Kehunah Gedolah* to Elazar, and passes away. The Torah records that the entire nation cried for 30 days in mourning. Rashi² comments that both the men and women wept for the loss of Aharon, which, says the *Gur Aryeh*,³ was something that was not done upon the death of Moshe.

Why did both the men and women mourn for Aharon, while only the men wept for Moshe? Rashi explains that Aharon had a particular trait - he made it a mission to make peace between people, feuding friends, and sparring spouses. *Avos D'Rebbi Nassan*⁴ elaborates on the strategies and tactics that Aharon *HaKohein* used in his efforts to make peace, and how he would visit with each party to reconcile their differences. In fact, his peacemaking wasn't limited to the human realm; Aharon would make peace between man and Hashem by influencing people to do *Teshuva*.

The *Gur Aryeh* adds that Aharon had to understand the personality and nature of each individual he was dealing with. So, although Moshe certainly positively affected all the members of *Klal Yisrael*, and there is no doubt that both men and women mourned for Moshe, the loss of Aharon was acutely felt on a personal level by each member of the *Bnei Yisrael*. Therefore, the Torah specifies that each member, both men and women, mourned for Aharon.

Clearly, the trait of peace-seeking is more than just 'a nice thing.' Aharon *HaKohein*, despite being the *Kohein Gadol*, one of very few *Kohanim*, and Moshe *Rabbeinu's* right-hand man, would take time to reunite spouses, friends and neighbors. Lest one think that this is limited to someone like Aharon, but we are not capable of doing our part, we find in *Pirkei Avos*⁵ that we are enjoined to become a 'student of Aharon,' loving and seeking peace. Though we may not have the abilities of Aharon *HaKohein*, we can still look for ways to reconcile quarreling parties, and we can be especially vigilant from joining in an argument.

1 *Bamidbar* 20:23-29

2 *Bamidbar* 20:29 s.v. כל בית ישראל

3 *ibid.* s.v. האנשים

4 12:3-4

5 1:12

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Not only can it be very difficult to make peace between two parties, but it simply may not be wise to involve oneself in an ongoing argument. Without the proper understanding of the situation, one may end up doing more harm than good.

However, in regards to our own interactions, we can be proactive in making peace with others.

What causes people to stay stuck in an argument?

Sometimes people don't want to concede an argument, not because they want their way, but because they don't want to admit that they are wrong. Moreover, people may not even realize that there is another way of looking at things, and perhaps there is room for compromise.

A little humility can go a long way.¹ One who can understand, "Just like I am sure that I am right, he also thinks that he is right. Perhaps there is some truth to what he is saying," is on his way to putting an end to an argument.

One idea may be to repeat over the other person's argument, perhaps even try to defend it. It will go a long way in understanding another's position.

1 *Tiferes Yisroel* on *Avos* 1:12

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The inspiration that comes
while learning *Mussar* is like
a flash of lightning at night.
Although it lasts but a second, at
least the traveler will now be able
to find his way.

- The Alter of Novhardok, *Madreigos*

HaAdom p. 233

DAMAGE CONTROL

The Epsteins and the Karlins had been fighting for weeks. It started when the Epsteins decided to build a fence on their first floor balcony, in order to keep out potential thieves. The Karlins, their neighbors in the apartment immediately above them, protested. "This fence will allow a thief to climb onto our balcony," said Mr. Karlin, "You're putting us in danger, and should pay for a fence for our balcony as well."

The Epsteins would not hear of it. "We have a right to build a fence on our balcony," they countered. Everyone had an opinion, and the once peaceful apartment complex was being torn asunder.

Amidst this unrest, Akiva Bodner stepped into the fray. Though Akiva had a vested interest, as he was the direct neighbor above the Karlins, and a fence for the Karlins would mean his balcony would be in danger, he wasn't getting involved for himself. Rather, he wanted to do what he could to reconcile the two families.

The Karlins and Epsteins joined Akiva in his apartment. "Just a few weeks ago, we were all friends. Sadly, over the past few weeks, much of that has changed. However, I think I have a solution that would satisfy all parties. I would like to pay for a fence for the Karlin's balcony."

Although shocked, everyone agreed this would be the best solution.

More than six months later, during Chanukah, Akiva Bodner and his wife decided to step out, leaving their daughter in charge. Nobody knows how, but a fire broke out, and within moments seemed to engulf the apartment. Neighbors frantically knocked on the door, but it appeared that the fire blocked the entrance, and no one could open the locked door.

Quickly, some young men climbed up the two fences, onto the Bodner balcony. They broke into the house, and rescued the children.

Mr. Bodner's intention was to put out the fire of strife, and in the process prevented a catastrophe.

**Rewritten from In the Spirit of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn*

Akiva Bodner's intention was to put out the fire of controversy, and in the process prevented a catastrophe.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The one *Bracha* that holds all other blessings together is peace.¹
- One who pursues peace never has a *Tefillah* returned empty-handed.²
- If *Klal Yisrael* serves Hashem properly, not only would they not be attacked by outside forces, but they would have peace between themselves, internally.³

¹ *Oktzin* 3:12, *Talmud Yerushalmi Berachos* 2:4

² *Kallah Rabbasi* Chap. 3

³ *Ohr HaChaim* s.v. ונתתי שלום on *Vayikra* 26:6