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בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
PINCHAS

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

AGREEING TO AGREE

Immediately after a national census, Hashem told Moshe the methodology that should be used in apportioning the land of Israel. After *Klal Yisrael* enters *Eretz Yisrael*, they will have to determine where each tribe may settle, and how much land each member of the tribe will receive. Hashem explained the system of distribution to Moshe, a system that was a mix of counting those who left *Mitzrayim*, those who are entering *Eretz Yisrael*, and a lottery.

The Ohr Hachaim¹ points out that Moshe himself would not be entering *Eretz Yisrael*, and therefore Hashem was telling him to instruct Yehoshua and the elders who would be entering with him.

This raises the question — why is Hashem instructing Moshe at this point regarding the splitting of the land? Moshe himself is not entering *Eretz Yisrael*, and it would take Yehoshua seven years before he had enough control over the land to begin the process of division. Why give this directive now?

Ralbag² (Reb Levi ben Gershon, 1288–1344) explains an important idea that we can find in this seemingly technical discussion. He says that by describing now how the land will be split, Hashem avoided potential arguments that people may have. Once people enter the land and battle the inhabitants, some may argue that they deserve more, or battled because they had their eye on a particular property, etc. Thus, by directing beforehand how the land would be divided, everyone understood, going in, what is to be expected. *Klal Yisrael* accepted the methodology, and went on to conquer *Eretz Yisrael*.

Ralbag's words, in describing this idea, are that one should seek to "avoid arguments as much as possible." We all know how terrible arguments can be, and yet, it appears that people fall into them all the time.

This Ralbag highlights the need to be proactive, to think about what may lead to disputes, and what we can do to minimize those chances. Are we inviting some friends over for a birthday party, but leaving others out? Are we sharing a toy with some siblings, but not allowing others to play with it?

When we think about the consequences of our actions, we will not only avoid disagreements, but we will make our interactions much smoother and pleasant as well.

1 *Ohr Hachaim Bamidbar* 26:52 s.v. וידבר ה' אל

2 *Bamidbar* 27 s.v. התועלת הרביעי

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Most people don't enjoy being in the midst of an argument, yet we sometimes find that we are pulled in. Are there any ideas we can use to avoid quarrels?

One common source of disagreement is financial disputes. The Chofetz Chaim writes¹ that much like one is willing to spend money on a nice esrog, or to purchase matzah, one should be willing to spend money to avoid *machlokes*. He advises that one should separate some money at the beginning of the year (or on a weekly basis if it can't be done all at once) to have a special 'peace fund.' This fund is used to avoid arguments. Your friend claims you owe him money, when you know that you don't? Use the fund!

Our ego is another source of disagreement. It's sometimes hard to let go, and let the other person 'win.' Using this idea from the Chofetz Chaim, we can recognize that we will all go through life with ups and downs, times we 'win' and times we 'lose.' When we can accept that we won't always 'win,' we can be more agreeable even when we know that we are right. After all, it's just a part of life.

1 End of Vol. I of *Shmiras Halashon*

Mussar's impact isn't fully achieved through hearing *shmuessen*, or reading Mussar essays. Rather one must set a fixed time, daily, to analyze his ways, combined with deep contemplation and review of *Sifrei Mussar*

- R' Shlomo Wolbe zt"l, *Alei Shur* vol. 1, pg. 88

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BABYSITTER BILLS

Tzvi and Ditzah Shafran* just had their first child, a beautiful baby boy. Their excitement knew no bounds, but life moves on, and both Mr. and Mrs. Shafran had to return to work. After doing some research, they found a family friend, the Schorrs, who had someone come to their house and watch their child. The Schorrs agreed to allow the Shafrans to join, worked out the monetary arrangements, and the Shafrans were set.

At the end of every week, Tzvi Shafran would hand Yisrael Schorr his share of the payment, which Yisrael would then give over to the babysitter. This went on for some weeks, without incident.

Sukkos arrived after about a month and a half, with the Shafrans going out-of-town to their parents. On the last day of babysitting, Tzvi handed the money to Yisrael, and went to pick up his son. "Wait a minute," said Yisrael. "We're missing something here. You only have one week's wages here; we need another week's worth."

"What? Why? What do you mean?"

"We're going away for Sukkos, so we need to pay her for Sukkos today. I have two week's worth of payment from me, but only one from you, we need another week."

"Paying her for Sukkos? But she's not working on Sukkos, I'm taking my son with me!"

Yisrael shook his head. "I thought we spoke about this. We give the babysitter paid vacation, every Sukkos and Pesach. We do it by giving her a week's worth of salary, even though she's off. Look, you probably forgot. I'll lay out the money, but please pay me back after you get back."

Tzvi was fuming. Later that evening, he recounted the entire incident to his wife. "I am sure they never told me that! I never would have agreed to that! We don't make enough money to just throw it out like that. This is ridiculous!"

Mrs. Shafran sat there silently as her husband grumbled. When he was done, she said, "Rosh Hashanah just passed, and didn't you tell me that you were planning on setting aside a fund to avoid arguments at the beginning of the year? Did you do it? Because this seems like the exact situation it is needed."

Tzvi stopped in his tracks. Indeed, he did! Just two weeks ago he had opened a new bank account, and placed some money in it to be used to avoid monetary disputes.¹ He took a deep breath and smiled. "You're 100% right. Whoops. I'll transfer the money now. And you know, it's not such a bad idea to give employees some paid time off, either!"

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

¹ See "Mind the Gap," on the other side.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Despite being the greatest prophet who ever lived, when *Moshe Rabbeinu* found himself the target of a dispute, he did all he could to appease the antagonist.¹
- Because Hashem particularly disdains quarrels, He made many *mitzvos* that distance one from arguments.²

¹ *Sanhedrin* 110a

² *Sefer Hachinuch mitzvah* 228