

זרנים  
בפרשה  
קרח

R' Mordechai Appel,  
an alumnus of Telz  
Yeshiva, is the author  
of DERACHIM  
BEPARSHA.



ולא יהיה כקרח וכעדתו (יז:ה)

**“Do not to be like Korach and his assembly” (17:5)**

All one needs to do is take a peek at current events and who the “leaders” are in the world of politics and one can quickly gain insight into the prohibition mentioned in our possuk. Can one even assume for a half-a-second that each side is out there, purely for the sake of the people and saving the country?

Chazal give a clear differentiation between a *machlokes l'sheim Shomayim* and one which is *shelo l'sheim Shomayim*: Two opposing views that have zero ramifications concerning the disputants. The only difference between the two sides is their views. But once it becomes personal; the moment the two sides are out to hurt each other, calling each other names and slandering wherever possible, there can no longer be a claim that the argument is *l'sheim Shomayim*.

Throughout our history there have always been differences of opinion. In every daf of the Gemara and on every page of Shulchan Aruch, one can find a *machlokes*. However, this is not what the possuk refers to when it warns not to be like Korach or his cohorts. In fact, as great as the arguments between Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai were, they still inter-married, thus demonstrating that it was never anything personal.

Aside from the disputants, the Torah adds the word *וכעדתו* - *and his assembly*. Even in a situation where the argument is in fact *l'sheim Shomayim*, the Torah warns others from getting involved.

*At the end of the Seder, when reaching Nirtzah, the Chasam Sofer would say a story that he had heard from his rebbi, Rav Nosson Adler, saying it over precisely as he had received it. Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz and Rav Yaakov Emden were two gedolei olam who had a bitter machlokes, one that pitted many talmidei chachamim and kehillas against each other. Rav Yonasan would relate that the very worst day of the machlokes was when he entered a roadside inn while traveling. Exhausted and freezing, he approached the roaring fire, where a group of men sat chatting. None of them recognized him, and they continued their discussion on*

*the raging machlokes, each one of them feeling strongly that Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz was certainly wrong.*

*Forced to listen to their negative opinion of him, Rav Yonasan finally joined the conversation by asking a question. "You all know the story of chad gadya, the kid, from the end of the Pesach Seder, right?" he asked. Intrigued by the distinguished looking man, they leaned in to hear. "Yes, we do. "So let's quickly run through what happened there," Rav Yonasan said. "It started with a kid, walking innocently along, but then the cat came and ate her. So the cat was a villain, correct?" The men nodded. "Then a dog ate the cat, making the dog virtuous, and a stick hit the righteous dog. A fire burnt the wicked stick, but then water doused that honorable fire. An ox lapped up that water, so the ox was on the side of the worthy ones. The slaughterer who came for the ox was on the side of those who had acted improperly, right?" The group of men, who had been carefully following the calculation, nodded in agreement "But wait, then comes the Malach HaMaves to take the slaughterer and then, finally, Hakadosh Baruch Hu slays the Malach HaMaves - so what happened to our careful computation? How can this be?" The men were baffled. They pleaded with him to answer the perplexing question, and finally, he agreed. "My friends, Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz said, "the kid was fighting with the cat... they had reasons that they understood, which others did not. Who asked the dog to get involved? He had no reason to mix in to an argument he did not understand, and it was he who was wrong for doing so. "My friends, when two gedolei Yisrael, talmidei chachamim and authors of sefarim, are arguing about ideas that are beyond your understanding and grasp, you have no reason to get involved and share your opinions. (Chasam Sofer Haggadah- Artscroll- R'Yisroel Besser)*

We also find in our parsha that Moshe Rabbeinu went to Dassan and Aviram (16:25) hoping to put an end to the dispute. The Gemara in Sanhedrin 110 learns from here: *מכאן שאין מהזיקין במחלוקת* - *from here we derive that one should not maintain/continue a machlokes.*

Regarding the dispute between the Chassidim and misnagdim, Rav Shach z"l once related the following anecdote: There was a wealthy man that had two daughters to marry off. As was the custom in those days when full support was a condition of the marriage,

the married children would eat their meals in the home of the father-in-law.

The dowry of the first daughter provided a complete *fleishige* lunch every day. Due to a poor investment, the father-in-law was only able to offer the second daughter's husband a full *milchige* lunch every day. Halacha dictates that meat and dairy may not be on the same table at the same time, so a mechitzah was erected between the two of them. Thus, the daily meal would be eaten together, albeit, separately on the same table.

With time, the financial situation further deteriorated and the meals were watered down by the cook. The fleishige meal was actually parve, and the milchige one shared the same fate. But the mechitzah remained in place, because after all, they had their differences, one was called "milchigs" and the other was "fleishigs". This bothered the father-in-law terribly. Why should they continue their separate seating when they are both eating the same thing?

Rav Shach continued, "the same applies in our generation. The arguments of years gone by were of a completely specialized nature between the leading Gedolei Yisroel. But today, both sides are focusing on the same things: Torah, avodah, yiras shomayim, and strengthening the observance of all the mitzvos. Why should we continue to support an old machlokes, remaining separate from each other? When Hashem observes such separation between His children, this "bothers" Him terribly."

Another detail to take note of is the root of machlokes. The last Mishnah in Maseches Uktzin (3:12) states לא מצא הקב"ה כלי מחזיק ברכה לישראל אלא השלום – *Hakadosh Baruch Hu found no vessel which contains the blessings for Klal Yisroel other than peace.* The Ksav Sofer explains this as follows: there is no complete *bracha* without *shalom*. Peace is the greatest of all *brachos* because it allows us to experience contentment in all areas of our lives without succumbing to the curse of jealousy, which is the root of all *machlokes*. If I am truly happy with my lot and I believe without a doubt that all comes from Hashem and no one can change that without His express consent, then there is no reason that a *machlokes* should ever arise.

Understanding this Mishnah further, the Bnei Yissaschar (Igrah D'Kallah) writes that even if one is

worthy, in all respects, of the greatest *brachos* in the world – if he engages in *machlokes*, he does not have a vessel in which to contain the *bracha*. His vessel is like a sieve, effectively pierced with many holes. One can pour the most wonderful things inside of that vessel, but it will remain empty – because everything leaks right out.

The Shla"h Hakadosh writes in מסכת יומא פרק דרך היים (quoting a Chazal) – "מחלוקת אחת דוחה מ"ד" – *even one machlokes can drive away one hundred livelihoods.* Isn't it ironic that at times people are busy waging war on each other to recoup some *parnasah*, when that fight is precisely what will cause the *parnasah* to be driven away?

Each day in *davening* we say השם גבולך שלום חלב חטים – *He makes your borders peaceful, and [therefore] with the cream of wheat he satiates you.*" The Chasam Sofer beautifully explains this *pasuk* by saying that every person has their border, i.e. their limits – the red line that they will not cross. For one person the tipping point may be jealousy, which causes him to start acting irrational. For another, it may be money that causes a loss of *seichel*, and for others it is the constant pursuit of *kavod*.

For a *tzaddik* that is in control of his desires and impulses, his "border" is *shalom* and he doesn't allow anything to push him past it. Furthermore, he will even put aside his own *chochma* and look like a fool if it will stop a *machlokes* from happening. When one makes *shalom/machlokes* his "red line", he will be *zoche* to be satiated with the "cream of wheat," i.e. plentiful *parnasah*.

What happened to all the wisdom of Korach? Because he ignored this line in the sand, his own *seichel hayashar* became distorted as well.

May we be *zoche* to do whatever possible to run away from *machlokes*, thereby ensuring that we have the wherewithal to hold onto all the *brachos* that Hashem has in store for us.

**מרדכי אפפל, Good Shabbos,**