

## **Parshat Korach - 5772**

### **Rabbi Aharon Ziegler**

“Korach” represents symbol of Machloket, strife and disunity. The antithesis of Korach would be “Shalom”- peace, harmony and unity.

Shalom doesn't come about by itself. It requires effort and one to pursue it [as Aharon HaKohen did and was known as a “Rodef Shalom”] and often to even pay for it.

Shalom is so significant that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is willing to have His Holy Name erased in order to promulgate Shalom between a husband and wife [Yerushalmi Sotah 1;4]. How much more are we required to lower our dignity and pride at expense of Shalom? I have a sign above my desk that reads “Apologizing –does not always mean that you are wrong and the other person is right. It just means that you value your relationship more than your ego.”

A beautiful story I heard from Rabbi Frand illustrates this point. Reuven had a subscription to the Jerusalem Post. His neighbor Shimon did not subscribe to the newspaper. However, Reuven noticed every morning that his newspaper had already been read before he brought it into his house. Shimon knew that Reuven picks up his paper at 7:00 AM, so he came by at 6:00 AM, brought the paper into his house, read it for 45 minutes, then folded it and returned it to Reuven's door. Reuven suspected this and woke up early one morning and caught Shimon in the act. He challenged him, “How dare you take my paper before I read it!” Shimon responded “What are you getting so excited about? You're acting like people of Sodom. [Mishnah in Pirkei Avot- 5:13, “One who says ‘My property is mine and yours is yours- this is characteristic of Sodom”. I get benefit and you lose nothing. It's called, *Zeh Ne'hene Vezev Lo Chaseir*, You have no right to complain about what I'm doing.

Reuven did not know what to do, so he consulted his Rabbi about taking Shimon to a Din Torah. The Rabbi thought about it and then told Reuven he had good advice for him. Buy your neighbor a subscription to the Jerusalem Post. Reuven could not believe what he heard. “What? My neighbor steals my paper and I should buy him a subscription to the Jerusalem Post? I can't believe that such is a Torah Psak [ruling].

Ultimately, Reuven, a religious man, did listen to his Rabbi's advice and years later admitted that his purchase of the JP subscription for his neighbor was the best investment he ever made! He now not only can read a clean newspaper in the morning with his coffee, but he also has excellent relations with his neighbor, they have become the best of friends!

Reuven was certainly not obligated to buy his neighbor a subscription to the paper. Perhaps Reuven was not even obligated to forgive his neighbor [Gezeilah] for taking his own paper without permission and without offering to pay something. But, sometimes that which is ethically appropriate to do should take precedence over what one is legally entitled to do.

But, one may ask: It costs money to buy that subscription for his neighbor. Why should he have to do that? The Chafetz Chaim once responded to a similar question as follows: An Etrog and Lulav costs money, Matzot costs money. Kosher meat costs money. Every year one has to calculate how much money he needs for Mitzvot. Therefore, a person should open at beginning of year a "Shalom Fund". This is the money earmarked prepare for avoiding Machloket, to preserve Shalom among family, friends and community members. This "fund" may even be tax-deductible, but check this out with your accountant.