

פרשת קרח

גליון 31

ב' תמוז תשפ"א

מאת ר' ש. קאפלן שליט"א

His fall outside the camp

"אתה והם ואהרן מחר", קרח said to מרע"ה, in the morning – tomorrow you will see the truth. Later, מרע"ה called קרח a רשע, as it says in the פסוק, "סורו נא מעל אהלי האנשים, פסוק" (ט"ז, כ"ה) The הרשעים" (ט"ז, כ"ה) therefore ask: tell us that the רשעים in the מדבר did not receive the מן outside their tent, but rather they had to go outside the camp to fetch it. If מן his רשע was a קרח must have fallen outside the camp. Was this not enough

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of a ראייה that what קרח was doing was wrong? Couldn't they clearly see that קרח was a רשע? Didn't קרח realise what he was doing was wrong? Didn't he see he wasn't doing the רצון ה'?

When ר' יעקב גלינסקי זצ"ל was giving a דרשה in Monsey he said to the חסידים there, "From מופתים you can't bring a ראייה – you can't bring a proof from miracles." Similarly, regarding the פרשה

of אליעזר עבד אברהם when he came to find a wife for יצחק אבינו and saw the water rise up from the well to רבקה, he wasn't impressed, he still kept to his original plan, he still waited to see if she will do חסד by giving to drink to him and his camels. Then again we see, from מופתים you can't bring a ראייה, you can't bring a ראייה from miracles.

The חסידים were not happy with the פשט, "We have a different פשט," they said. "is," they

explained, "קרח was a Rebbe!"

So what that he was a Rebbe?! How is that meant to answer the question?

They explained, "A Rebbe has גבאים and שמשים... the גבאים and שמשים arranged for the מן to be there..."

The פשט explain with another פשט: When a person is convinced that what he is doing is לשם שמים and he is fighting to stand up for כבוד שמים and the דבר ה' he

doesn't see anything wrong going his way. קרח had an explanation why his men fell outside the camp, "I'm obviously not fighting strong enough against מרע"ה... מרע"ה is showing me that I must be more powerful against מרע"ה..."

מדרש ר' יעקב גלינסקי זצ"ל then brings a תנחומא which teaches: At the time of the fall since כלל ישראל were together באחדות. However, when it came to the קרח ועדתו of מחלוקת the men did not fall – the men never fell on that day.

it's so terrible that it stopped the men from falling, this is the power of a מחלוקת.

אמר, teaches, סנהדרין (ק"ט:), in גמרא The רב און בן פלת, אשתו הצילתו מן המחלוקת – *the wife of און saved און from the מחלוקת*, (when they came to pick him up, she uncovered her hair which caused them all to run away,) about this the פסוק writes, (משלי י"ד, "חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה" א) זו אשתו של און בן פלת, "ואולת בידיה – there was a תהרסנו" זו אשתו של קרח. תביעה on the wife of קרח for not stopping קרח from making a מחלוקת.

And the question is: How is one supposed to know that one isn't fighting לשם שמים? We're speaking here about קרח. קרח wasn't a פשטה-mench. קרח was

one of the נושאי הארון! קרח was a cousin of קרח! רוח הקודש! קרח had מרע"ה! קרח was a great person! How was the wife of קרח meant to know that he wasn't fighting לשם שמים? How was she meant to see that he really had a נגיעה and a הקנאה?

How is she supposed to know? It's very easy for us – 3000 years later to turn around and know because ה"ל teach us, "נתקנא באליצפן בן עוזיאל" – *he was jealous regarding the appointment of the נשיא אליצפן בן עוזיאל*. But how is she supposed to know this? She knew קרח as being a בעל רוח הקודש and one of the greatest people of the generation? What could such a great person be doing wrong!?! He must be fighting לשם שמים!?! Why was she expected to know such a thing?

סימנים

The answer is: There are many סימנים which show itself when a מחלוקת isn't לשם שמים, and these סימנים are applicable to our own lives and to the lives of those around us.

איזהו teaches, אבות (ה', י"ז) in משנה The מחלוקת שאינה לשם שמים? מחלוקת קרח לשם שמים? *What is a מחלוקת which is not לשם שמים? The מחלוקת of קרח and his people.*

There is a basic question we must ask on such a משנה. Why does the משנה call this מחלוקת a מחלוקת of "קרה ועדתו", wasn't this a מחלוקת between קרה and מרע"ה? The משנה should have written, קרה "ומשה!

There are many מהלכים to explain this משנה, each מהלך bringing out a different נקודה about the ענין of מחלוקת.

The מלבי"ם teaches: The משנה writes קרה because when a מחלוקת is שלא לשם then the faction which are not fighting לשם שמם, they have quarrels and squabbles within their own people – within their own faction. When there is a מחלוקת לשם שמם, there is no in-fighting amidst the faction which is fighting לשם שמם.

When we see a מחלוקת and within one faction – within one side there is a fight – they aren't getting along with each other – they have a difference of opinion, something isn't right, it obviously isn't a מחלוקת לשם שמם.

This is why the משנה writes קרה ועדתו. - "איזהו מחלוקת שאינה לשם שמם?" You want to know a סימן to see if a מחלוקת isn't לשם שמם? – "קרה ועדתו" – look and see if you find any fighting within one of the fighting parties, קרה and his

congregation were fighting amongst themselves, they certainly were not fighting לשם שמם. He had a מחלוקת within his own faction.

Nothing but the argument

There is another סימן to see whether a מחלוקת is לשם שמם. The משנה continues, "ואיזהו מחלוקת לשם שמם? מחלוקת שמאי והלל" – *What is a מחלוקת which is לשם שמם? A מחלוקת of שמאי והלל.* Why does the משנה choose הלל ושמאי more than anyone else? There are plenty of תנאים who have a מחלוקת in ש"ס?

In the סוגיות of (דף י"ד) we find a famous מחלוקת between שמאי והלל about a צרת ערוה. According to שמאי בית some families of בית הלל were ממזרים. Nevertheless, the משנה concludes, "לא נמנעו בית שמאי מלישא נשים מבית הלל ולא בית הלל מבית שמאי", *they still married each other*, "ללמדך שחיבה וריעות נוהגים זה בזה לקיים מה שנאמר האמת והשלום אהבו."

The first question for a שידוך wasn't, "Who do you follow? Who do you support? הלל or שמאי?" No! No such thing! In fact, the מפרשים teach us there that בית הלל would say to בית שמאי, "You can't marry into this family because you hold this family are ממזרים!"

They helped each other! They loved each other! There was no מחלוקת beyond the point of argument. If the מחלוקת spills out onto other issues, something is wrong. You fight about what there is to fight, but nothing more than that.

Often a person can have a מחלוקת with somebody – a disagreement, and suddenly everything he does is wrong, you have טענות on everything, “This is wrong! That is wrong! You don’t deserve this! You don’t deserve that!”

When you start saying bad things against the person which are not נוגע to the מחלוקת, somethings wrong – it’s not לשם שמים. If you dislike him for anything else besides for the point of argument, you should know that you have a נגיעה there which isn’t לשם שמים.

Getting personal

מוסד ר' שלמה זלמן זצ"ל once stopped a מנהל from taking a certain מנהל. The מנהל came to discuss the situation with ר' שלמה זלמן, to find out what he thought ר' שלמה זלמן had against him.

When he arrived, ר' שלמה זלמן treated him with כבוד מלכים, “don’t think I have something personal against you,” ר' שלמה זלמן exclaimed, “in fact, I hold very

highly of you, but I do not feel that you are the right מנהל for this מוסד.”

ר' שלמה זלמן then accompanied the מנהל until his gate, giving him the greatest כבוד.

The מחלוקת is not supposed to get personal. When it gets personal, this is another סימן that this מחלוקת is not לשם שמים. If it’s לשם שמים then why are you bringing your personal life in?? What’s the שייכות? Why is it נוגע?! You obviously *stam* want to make a fight...

The עולם are joining in

I’ll tell you another סימן to see whether a מחלוקת is לשם שמים. The יצר הרע loves מחלוקת, it gets him raging. By קרח it is stated, “ויקהל עליהם קרח את כל העדה” – the whole nation joined קרח! What’s פשט? Was it נוגע to them? Did they have anything to do with this מחלוקת?

But when the יצר הרע sees a מחלוקת with a נגיעה שלא לשם שמים he tries to get everyone to join in and hop on board, the more people the better.

When we see ourselves being *shlepped* into a מחלוקת which is not even נוגע to us, when we see a מחלוקת where everyone is giving their דיעה even though they have no שייכות to the מחלוקת, this is a סימן that this מחלוקת is לשם שמים. It’s clearly

the pulling in as many people as he can. If it would be לשם שמים, there wouldn't be such a big crowd – there won't be so many followers, the יצר הרע doesn't get involved in such a מחלוקת, he keeps such a quiet, he's not interested, he doesn't try to involve other people with it.

It's when you see an entire nation join up in a rampant מחלוקת, you can see that the יצר הרע is involved in this one – it must be לשם שמים.

קרה's wife could have see this. What's the whole עדה joining קרה for?! Why are they all saying their שיטות and דיעות? What has this got to do with any of them? What are they saying their opinion for – it's not נוגע to them? What are you all mixing in for?

There are so many סימנים by a מחלוקת לשם שמים, if you look for them, you will find them.

Listening to each other

The סימן הגיוני מוסר writes another סימן to a מחלוקת שלא לשם שמים: Are both sides prepared to listen to each other? Will they sit around the table and discuss the מחלוקת? The עירובין (י"ג) in גמרא tells us about שמאי והלל who argued for two and a half years! They discussed it all – they

went through it all – backwards and forwards for two and a half years! They sat around the table and listened to each other's opinions.

But when it came to the מחלוקת of קרה and קרה, the פסוקים relate to us how קרה and קרה were not interested in discussing their דיעות with מרע"ה, as they exclaimed, "וּיֹאמְרוּ לֹא נֵעֲלֶה" (ט"ז, י"ב), – *we're not coming to speak to you!* they didn't have any dialogue with מרע"ה, they weren't interested in speaking to מרע"ה, they just wanted to fight, to fight לשם שמים.

This is what the משנה means, "איזהו מחלוקת שלא לשם שמים? מחלוקת קרה ועדתו" – It was with קרה and קרה, *not* קרה and קרה! It's because their opinions and discussions was amongst קרה ועדתו – and nothing more than that! That's not a מחלוקת לשם שמים, they didn't want to discuss anything with the other faction. A מחלוקת לשם שמים is when one faction is prepared to speak to the other faction. It's when both sides are speaking together do we say that such a מחלוקת is לשם שמים, such as הלל ושמאי who spoke and discussed their opinions together for two and a half years! They heard what each side had to say.

Discussing it all amongst yourselves is nothing. Go and discuss it with the other side. Have a dialogue. Go see if you can sort it out. The discussion should be directed totally to the other side, not within your faction and within your supporters.

All areas of השם עבודת

The ספרים write about another נקודה: When it come to מחלוקת, suddenly people wake up. An entire week they are sleeping, but when a מחלוקת starts they wake up.

You often see these people in ירושלים that when a car drives past on שבת they scream at the top of their lungs, "שבת!! שבת!!" Or a קבוצה of people join up around ירושלים and they start walking around the streets screaming at the cars, "שבת!! שבת!! שבת!!"

And we often ask ourselves, "How do these people *daven* a שמונה עשרה or say a שמע שמע"?! Do they also scream "שמע שמע" with such a *bren* and with such an התלהבות?"

If you want to see if a מחולקת is לשם שמים, go and look at the front liners – go and look at those who are screaming and fighting with all their might, go and look if these People serve הקב"ה with the same

shtark-kite in other areas of their עבודת השם? Do they shake לולב and eat their מצה with the same חשק and the same passion?

This is an extremely important סימן. Have a look; did these people suddenly wake up screaming, "לשם לשם שמים!" "לשם שמים..." do they also do everything else with a such a level of "לשם שמים!! לשם שמים!!" Is this your normal behaviour when it comes to עבודת השם? If not, then stop for a second, think about what you are doing, somethings wrong over here – there must be a נגיעה involved.

"לשם שמים" can sometimes be misused. I once heard a *verrtel* from שמעון ר' "כל" The משנה writes, "הירשלער שליט"א – מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים סופה להתקיים", "When people come along and scream "לשם שמים" I must stand up for the כבוד of הקב"ה" – claiming they are fighting לשם שמים, you can't help them – there's nothing to do, "סופה להתקיים" – they will carry on forever, they won't stop fighting, you can't stop them, they get too carried away.

A true קנאי and a true לשם שמים lives his entire life with a *bren* and a התלהבות, *not* just when it comes to מחלוקת, they always serve the רבש"ע with a fire.

ליצנות

There is yet another סימן to see whether a מחלוקת is לשם שמים: How does one faction speak about the other side? If there is any ליצנות involved, it's all over – it's clearly a לשם שמים. If they speak badly – or if they *mach-a-*ליצנות, something is not right, it's not a מחלוקת לשם שמים.

These are just a few סימנים we have mentioned to see whether a מחלוקת is לשם שמים. When a מחלוקת comes your way and you start heating up, think for a moment – stop and think, “Is this really לשם שמים? Is there a סימן that I am fighting לשם שמים?”

Think about these סימנים and you will see how so many times a מחלוקת is a מחלוקת לשם שמים.

The חכמה is to never get involved in a מחלוקת in the first place, because once you are involved – once you've been pulled in, it's extremely difficult to get out.

A true miracle

About this the גמרא tells us: און בן פלת went away from the מחלוקת. Who was פלת? The גמרא teaches: פלת didn't exist! But און was called the son of פלת because he did a "פלא" – he did something

phenomenal, he actually removed himself from being involved in a מחלוקת! That is a פלא! It's a פלא he got out of it, because once you get involved it's usually too late, you get *shlepped* in with the tide – you get *shlepped* in with the tsunami, you can't get out.

Often, גדולים can have a מחלוקת between themselves, and it's for us to follow in the ways of our גדול, but it's not always that the people following the גדול mean לשם שמים.

The מאור ושמש writes: Why does the משנה write, "ואיזהו מחלוקת לשם שמים?" "בית שמאי ובית הלל" and not "מחלוקת שמאי והלל"? Because the followers – בית שמאי – were not on the same level as themselves.

It's well known that ר' יהונתן אייבשיץ זצ"ל came to a גדול in a dream after he died and he said to the גדול, “You should know, even after the great מחלוקת between myself and ר' יעקב עמדין זצ"ל which raged for decades, in שמים we are sitting together next to each other! But the חברה which mixed in – the people who got involved with something which has nothing to do with them, they are not sitting here with us...”

This is why the שמאי והלל writes משנה and not בית שמאי ובית הלל.

The napoleon coin

In 1915 during the terrible years of famine where people were starving to death, there was one איש יחיד who had some money which he had saved from before the war. The child of this גביר asked his father if he could go and buy some sweets.

“Go to my top draw, take a coin and go and buy yourself some sweets,” the father said to his six-year-old child.

Later that evening the father goes to his draw and sees that he only has a פרוטה there. He originally had a פרוטה and a napoleon coin there, a פרוטה can buy a few sweets and a napoleon coin can feed a family for two months!

He immediately called his child and asked, “Did you not get any change from the shopkeeper??!”

“No...” the child replied, “he didn’t give me any change...”

The next morning, the father went to the shopkeeper and exclaimed, “My son came to you yesterday with a napoleon coin and you didn’t give him any change!”

“That’s not true,” the shopkeeper replied, “he came with a פרוטה...”

“No question about it,” the father screamed, “You’re lying! He gave you a napoleon coin...”

The father took the shopkeeper to בית דין where על פי הלכה he was able to מחייב the shopkeeper a שבועה.

The דיין said to the father, “Have רחמנות... people are having a hard time making a living... people are starving to death... perhaps you are causing a person to make a שוא...”

בסדר – if that’s what the Rov said the father was prepared to listen, he let him off and went back home.

And as people start raising their voices and spreading rumours around town, people began to believe that this shopkeeper is a שקרן. Eventually, people stopped buying food in his shop.

Two years later the גביר receives a letter through his door together with a wad of notes.

On the letter was written the following, “Two years ago, I was walking down the street looking for some food. My family was starving, there was nothing to eat.

Your child was walking down the street when he saw other children playing gobs

on the floor. Your child did not have any gobs, so he played with a coin he was holding in his hand.

As I came closer to the boy, I saw he was playing with a napoleon gold coin!

I thought to myself, "What's going on over here? Playing with a napoleon coin during the years of famine?! Such a גביר! Playing with a napoleon in the street!? The family must have plenty of them!"

I went and sat on the floor and asked the child if I can play with him with my פרוטה.

After we finished the game, we both took a coin, making sure I took the napoleon coin, leaving the פרוטה for the child who couldn't tell the difference.

I haven't slept for two years, I felt like a real גנב. Finally, I have managed to save up, so here you go; והשיב את הגזילה אשר; גזל, please be מוחל me."

ל would say over this story and finish off with the punchline: Whose the villain of the story?

The shopkeeper: *nebech*, poor fellow, he was innocently accused of a crime he never did.

The גביר: he had the rights to assume that the shopkeeper took his napoleon, and in the end of the day he was taken מוותר on

the שבועה, he wasn't תובע the shopkeeper.

The child: a six-year-old child, what do you expect from him, he's only kid, how should he know anything better? A kid is a kid, you can't have טענות on a kid.

The poor man who took the coin: It certainly was not right what he did, but למעשה he had הרטה and he eventually did תשובה.

On whom will טענות have הקב"ה? On those people who stopped buying in the shop! What's it got to do with you? Carry on buying in the shop!

This is a *moridicker* מעשה which brings this point out. We have to make sure that we are not joining into a מחלוקת which is not נוגע to us and has nothing to do with us.

Don't mix in

This is something vital which we must remember when it comes to מחלוקת, as the א"ל תתעבר writes, in רא"ש "אל תתעבר" – don't join into a מחלוקת which is not נוגע to you. It's not נוגע to me, it's irrelevant to me – stay out!

And as we mentioned: the danger is, once you're pulled in, it's extremely difficult to get out, then it's already a פלא to escape and get out of the fire.

We must take this לימוד from the פרשה, to be extremely careful when it comes to מחלוקת.

כלל ישראל have suffered many tragedies during the past few weeks. It's not for us to say the reasons, but the גדולים have mentioned that we must be מחזק ourselves with the ענין of מחלוקת – to stop מחלוקת.

ל tell us, "צדיקים נתפסים בעון הדור", *the righteous are punished because of the sin of the generation*, these קדושים were great people.

One core which we can see runs through it all is: In Meron they fell, in Karlin they fell, in Italy the cable car fell, and this week a sinkhole in the middle of a parking lot in ישראל opened up!

Everything's falling, similar to what we find in this weeks פשרה when קרח was swallowed up by the ground.

The ספרים הקדושים teach us that because קרח made a מחלוקת and was חולק on מרע"ה – he had to go down – he had to fall.

It's time to wake up, the גדולים have told us; we must be מחזק ourselves with the ענין of מחלוקת, to stay away from מחלוקת and on the contrary, go out and be מחזק ourselves with the ענין of שלום.



"Thought on the פרשה..."

I want to say a *vort* on one *vort*. Everybody knows the רש"י at the beginning of this weeks פרשה which teaches, "בשביל שהיה שבט ראובן שרוי בחנייתם תימנה שכן לקהת ובניו החונים, או לרשע ואוי לשכנו." (ט"ז, א') קרה so they lived next to קרה by מושפע they became ממילא.

אי לרשע ולשכנו – my דיוק is: It should have said, "אוי לרשע ולשכנו", what's the two "אוי"s all about, what's "אוי לרשע ואוי לשכנו"? Why does it say again "אוי"? Likewise, "טוב לצדיק ולשכנו" ל חז"ל say "טוב לצדיק ולשכנו", then again, why couldn't חז"ל tell us, "טוב לצדיק וטוב לשכנו", The תירוץ is: Everybody has got his own מעלות, his own חלק, his own matzev, and if you're next to another good בחור – **you** become your own טוב – **you** become your own good! You don't share his טוב! "טוב לצדיק" is a different טוב to the "טוב לשכנו", everyone has their own חלק of "טוב" which is best for them!

And when it comes to a רשע, אי לרשע ואוי לשכנו – each person does there own עוולות, the אי לרשע is a different "אוי" to the "אוי לשכנו"!

A separate "אוי" and a separate "טוב", everybody has his own טובות not *yena's* טובות.

(ר' ישראל ראקאוו שליט"א)



Transcribed by Avrohom Dov Kohn – אברהם דוב הכהן כהן

All mistakes, omissions and errors are mine.