

## **“I will provide peace in the land.” (26:6)**

*Rashi* cites the *Sifra*, which suggests that the positioning of the blessing of peace climaxes the precious blessings of material abundance. The Torah teaches us that peace is equivalent to all the other blessings combined. What a wonderful blessing – peace among people. Imagine a community with no strife, no controversy. Indeed, when people are embroiled in dispute, they have no time or energy to enjoy the fruits of their success. They are too busy fighting.

How is peaceful co-existence achieved? Commenting on the *pasuk*, *Ibn Ezra* explains, *shalom beineichem*, “peace among you.” Usually, we translate *beineichem* as “among you.” Perhaps, we can go a bit further and suggest that *beineichem* is a reference to inner-peace, a sense of security and pride – “peace among/within oneself.” One who has been able to control the demons within himself, who has achieved inner satisfaction and is content and at harmony with himself, has no reason to contend with others. Hashem will cause *shalom* within us so that we will have no reason to clash with others.

*Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, cites an insightful incident concerning the *Alter, z.l.*, *m'Slabodka* that teaches how careful we should be to distance ourselves from any altercation, however innocuous, with another Jew. The students of the *Slabodka Yeshivah* exemplified *ahavas Torah*, love of Torah, at its zenith. Every endeavor, every action, was for *avodas Hashem*, service of the Almighty. It was no wonder that when the *Alter* spoke, everyone would push themselves to get as close to his *shtender*, lectern, as possible. They did not want to miss a word of his discourse.

As soon as the *Alter* entered the study-hall, everyone would hurry to obtain a close seat. Regrettably, at times, this involved pushing, as each student tried to get just the right seat for himself. The *Alter* would rebuke his students, explaining that they were defeating the whole purpose of the lecture. Where was their respect for their fellow? To take someone else's seat was disrespectful and wrong. Pushing another student aside was uncharacteristic of a *ben-Torah*.

The *Alter* substantiated his words with proof from the Torah. When the trees were created, they did not all spring forth together, one on top of the other. No! Each tree grew in its own place, removed from its “neighbor,” so that it would not infringe upon its neighbor's space.

*Chazal* teach us in *Talmud Chullin* 60a that the herbage/grasses derived a *kal v'chomer*, a priori argument, from the trees. Hashem told the trees to sprout forth *l'mineihu*, each according to its own specie. The earth yielded trees each according to its own specie, in its own place, not crowding its neighbor. Now, trees always grow one at a time. Yet, Hashem specified *l'mineihu*. Just as herbage which always grows together in clumps still retain space between each blade/bush, how much more so should we be sure to give each other space.

The *Alter* looked at his students and said, “If trees and herbage understand what it means not to

crowd one another, surely we human beings who might hurt each other by pushing should take great care not to jostle one another.” Sometimes we get so involved in the *milchamtah shel Torah*, battle for success in Torah study, that we forget who the enemy is.