

He took from the stones of the place, which he arranged around his head. (28:11)

In the *Midrash*, *Chazal* render this *pasuk* to mean that Yaakov *Avinu* took several stones, which began "quarrelling," each one vying for the *tzaddik* to rest his head on it. "*Alai yaniach tzaddik es rosho*," "Upon me shall this *tzaddik* rest his head." Noticing this argument, Hashem combined them all into one stone upon which Yaakov would rest. *Horav Zaidel Epstein, Shlita*, derives a profound lesson from here. Jewish tradition disapproves of *machlokes*, conflict, regardless of its goal, even if the dispute is about upon which stone the *tzaddik* should rest his head. As long as the "*alai*", "me", is the initial focus, if the goal is that it should be "me" and not the other person, it is wrong. Whenever a disagreement divides two people - regardless of the reason - Hashem will not condone it.

What did Hashem do? He transformed all of the stones into one stone. Once they became one equal unit, there was no longer any room for the "*alai*," me. Even though Yaakov would rest his head on one specific part of the stone, all had an equal share throughout the one unified stone. The only way one can protect himself from the tragic effect of *machlokes* is through harmony, in which the individual feels that he and his friend are one. He must share with him in life's happy and sad moments, celebrating his joy and lamenting his sorrow, as if they were his own. Unity is the only antidote for discord.