

The son of a Yisraelis woman went out – and he was the son of an Egyptian man –among the Bnei Yisrael; they fought in the camp, the son of the Yisraelis woman and the Yisraeli man. (24:10)

It all began with an argument. Veritably, it was not even a serious dispute. It was a question of allowing someone of tainted pedigree to move into the “neighborhood.” Perhaps the *ish haYisraeli* was justified in his attitude toward the one whose murky roots are intimidated by the Torah. One thing is certain: We see the sad consequences of controversy. A *machlokes*, dispute, can lead to a most egregious and tragic sin: *megadef*, whereby one blasphemes Hashem’s Name. How did such a terrible sin result from a *machlokes*? **Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita**, offers a powerful – perhaps frightening - explanation. Every Jew has within him a *neshamah*, soul, which is a *chelek Elokai mimaal*, miniscule component derived from Hashem Above. We all have a part of Hashem within us. When one insults, disputes, puts down a fellow Jew – he is impugning Hashem. Once this has happened, it is not long before he will denigrate the Almighty. Subconsciously, he has done so already. He is only following a pattern which he has created for himself. Therefore, one should distance himself from all forms of dispute, because once he has fallen in, he will be quickly absorbed like quicksand.

Why did the *ben ish Mitzri* react with such vulgarity? Why was his ultimate reaction blaspheming Hashem? What did Hashem have to do with his personal dispute with this man? Perhaps what the *ish Yisraeli* said to this man caused him to react in such a manner. He was basically told, “You are not like us. You are not good enough. You do not belong with us.” To insinuate that a person does not belong simply because of his *yichus*, pedigree, can enrage a person. Telling a person that he is unlike everybody else is like saying, “You are worthless.” Sadly, there will always be those who are not part of the clique.

This author remembers growing up as a refugee following World War II, when the other children in school were all “Americans.” Snide comments were not in vogue in those days, because the parents were simple people to whom lineage played no leading role. Indeed, the refugee children whose parents were survivors of the Holocaust were given special treatment. We were special. Our clothes were not the same, because we wore whatever our parents could purchase at the thrift shop. Our clothes did not always fit, because hand me downs are rarely custom made, but we were treated with respect, just like everyone else. I guess in “those days” people were more secure and, thus, not obsessed with their lineage and money. We all felt part of one large family: *Klal Yisrael*. Perhaps this was because, during World War II, the Nazis did not delineate between a Jew with *yichus* or one without. Neither did they differentiate between what type of home one lived in or what school he attended. It is sad when we need “them” to demonstrate that we are all the same part of a large, aggregate family.