

"If there is a matter concealed from you in judgement between blood and blood, between decision and decision, and between plague and plague, (even) matters of controversy within your gates." (17:8)

The *pasuk* encourages one to seek judgement by the higher courts in the event of doubt in various areas of Jewish law. *Horav Meir Shapiro z.l.* as well as many others have interpreted this *pasuk* homiletically in the following manner: If you are shocked and exasperated by the *bein dam l'dam* questions between the blood of nations, (i.e., when nations malign us with blood libels) even though our abhorrence of blood is apparent.

If a Jew wishes to eat a piece of meat, he must soak and salt it to the point that no drop of blood remains. Why then are we so wronged by suspicions of our performing such an abominable sin as making use of gentile blood? This libel has been the cause of many pogroms and other tragedies throughout our history.

You may question the *bein din l'din*, the obvious paradox and the seeming inconsistency between the law of the *Torah* which applies to animals and that which applies to *Klal Yisrael*. The *Torah* states that the "mother" ox or sheep may not be slaughtered on the same day as its young. If this is the case, why, then, have we for centuries had fathers, mothers, and children, slaughtered together on the same day, at the same moment? Yet, no one seems to cry out and protest.

Last you may question, *bein nega l'nega*, that Hashem does not exact punishment from people before hurting them materially and financially. This rule seems to have been inconsistently applied to the Jewish people, who have been plundered, beaten bestially, and tortured in the most heinous ways, and finally left to die as the lowest vermin. Why is all this? Why is there such an apparent anomaly regarding Jewish existence?

The *Torah* responds that this is because "*of matters of controversy within your gates.*" The sin of *sinaas chinam*, unwarranted and unmitigated hatred between Jewish brothers, has resulted in such terrible punishment. *Klal Yisrael* is one large body with each Jew's *neshamah* representing a small part of Hashem. We are all required to set aside our exaggerated differences and petty jealousies, so that we may be able to live in harmony, thereby hastening the advent of *Moshiach* and the end of our persecution.