

WHAT WE ALL REALLY WANT!

by Rabbi Label Lam

And I will give you peace in the land...(Vayikra 26:6) From here we learn out that peace is equal to all (the other material blessings).(Rashi)

Hillel used to say; "Be from the students of Aaron, love peace and pursue peace, love people and bring them close to Torah. (Pirke' Avos Chapter 1 -Mishne 12)

Who is the man who wants life, who loves days, to see good? Guard your tongue from bad and your lips from deceit. Turn from bad and do good. Quest peace and pursue it. (Tehillim 34)

The Talmud tells us that Aaron had an effective way of brokering peace between quarreling parties. He would approach one side and tell them that the other one really wants to make up and then he would turn to the other and tell them the same. When they would finally meet, the barriers of hatred and distrust having already been removed, the old sparks of friendship would easily and immediately re-ignite.

Even though it worked, and practically speaking, achieved its desired end, still the methodology seems to be based upon deceit. Why should truth be compromised to achieve the goal of peace? Can it really be a lasting peace if truth is not an active ingredient?

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger of Congregation Aish Kodesh of Woodmere, N.Y., told the following story at a weekend retreat in December last year. There is a young boy, a "special child" in their community who has an amazing habit that strangely exhilarates his soul. He loves to approach people and connect their hands. Then he claps his hands together and expresses glee when the people clasp each other's hands. This could probably be perceived as an innocent but not necessarily profound activity that brings a little extra measure of friendship to an already convivial community.

A few months early at a large wedding gathering this child grabbed onto the hand of a stranger. He started to gently, but to firmly tug on the man's arm as if he wanted to take him to predetermined place. A little embarrassed, not wanting to over resist, the man looked for assistance and continued to march along in the direction in which he was clearly being led.

Now over on the other side of the wedding hall, at this well attended affair, the boy did what was his usual custom. He took the hand of the one he was leading and connected it to the one to whom he seemed to have purposefully sought out. The two men turned out to be old times friends who for

some reason had not talked and had actually become enemies for a number of decades.

They shook hands hesitatingly, at first, but having been brought together under these circumstances by this sort of "divining rod", they yielded. The longstanding wall of ice soon crumbled and melted as they hugged and cried. The next hours of the wedding were spent talking and laughing and trying to recall the forgotten reason that had caused the habit of hate to build between them.

When Aaron approached each of the parties with a notion that the other desired to mend the relationship, he was not bending the truth. Although neither had approached him with a prior request, he was still playing the part of an honest broker.

Aaron, who truly loved and reveled in the experience of peace, understood that deep down, buried beneath layers of ego there's a soft sweet loving friendly soul that longs to unite with its kind. Although it's not always apparent, and may seem quite the contrary at times, Aaron, who knew the heart of his people through his own pure heart, also knew what's best for each and what we all really want.

Good Shabbos!

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