

PEACE

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God found no suitable vessel to contain His blessings other than peace (*Uktzin* 3:12).

Rabbi Yehudah the Prince taught: The power of peace is very great. God even overlooks the sins of Jewish idolaters when there is peace between them. But if there is strife, they are made to account for every sin. See therefore how beloved is peace and how strife is abhorred (*Bereishit Rabbah* 38:6).

Peace: mankind's most sought after, yet elusive, blessing. Peace: with it, everything is good; without it, what good is everything else? We all need blessings. Some of us need a blessing for health or *nachat*, others a blessing for

livelihood or wisdom or something else. The list is endless. Yet even when we have the blessing, if it is not accompanied by peace, what we have is of little value. Of what use is it to be blessed with all the money you need, if getting it or keeping it has filled you with turmoil and anxiety? It's not much different with our spiritual endeavors. No matter how much we may have worked at praying or acquiring Torah knowledge, no matter how many mitzvot we've performed in order to bring ourselves closer to God, there is no completeness without peace. Ultimately, peace is the clearest proof that our efforts have proven worthwhile and successful.

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SOME OBSTACLES TO PEACE

Yet, if peace is so desirable, so vital to everything else, why is it so hard to achieve? Why has man rarely succeeded at being at peace with himself? Why has mankind never really succeeded at bringing peace to the world? Obviously, peace is not all that easy to come by. If it were, we would have had it long ago.

As Rebbe Nachman said, "Many of the foolish and misguided notions which people in previous eras believed in have disappeared. This includes such practices as sacrificing one's children, worshiping idols and so on. But the foolishness involved in the pursuit of war has not been abolished." The Rebbe openly expressed his contempt for the scientists who develop new weapons: "What great sages they must be! Look how they make wonderful new weapons that can kill thousands of people at once!" (*Tzaddik* #546).

What makes peace so elusive? Surely, there is no one answer. The list is actually quite formidable. Dominant are the character traits which form such powerful barriers to truth that peace becomes an impossibility – for man as well as for

all mankind. Victory, jealousy, slander, conceit and anger – are examples of some of these traits. Recognizing them and understanding how they keep us from attaining peace will help us fulfill our desire to eliminate them once and for all.

(Taken from the book [Crossing the Narrow Bridge: A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman's Teachings](#), Chapter 10 – Peace)