Peace

Proverbs 3:17

Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths, peaceful.

Excerpts from the Tractate of Derech Eretz: The Peace Chapter

It was taught that Rabbi Shimon Ben Gamliel said, "The world is maintained by three things, by justice, by truth and by peace." Rav Muna said, "These three actually are one. If justice is present then truth is present and this makes peace. And all three are found in the same verse, as it is written, "Judge with the justice of truth and peace within your gates." Wherever there is justice there will be peace. And wherever there is peace there is justice.

YOUR PEACE CHAPTER NAVIGATOR

1. Which values are the means and which value is the end according to Rav Muna?
2. Is it true that peace will define justice?

Hezkiya said, "How great is peace, for every commandment in the Torah is written with it. [For example]

"When you encounter your enemy's ox or ass wandering, you must take it back to him." (Exodus 23:4)

When you see the ass of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him." (Ibid:5)

"If along the road you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting on the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the other with her young." (Deuteronomy 22:6)

"When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof so that you do not
bring blood guilt on your house if anyone should fall from it." (Ibid:8)
For when a commandment comes to your hand in order to be fulfilled you are obliged to do it with peace it is written, "Seek peace and pursue it..." (Psalm 34:15) Seek it where you are and pursue it in other places as well.

Great is peace for in all of [Israel's desert] travels it is written, "They journeyed and they set up camp." They journeyed divided, and they set up camp divided, but when they got to Sinai, they set up camp united as one, as it is written. The Holy One said, Since Israel hates to be divided and they are lovers of peace [which they have shown] by camping as one, the time has come to give them My Torah.

YOUR PEACE CHAPTER NAVIGATOR
1. Go through the list of commandments and explain what each one has to do with peace.
2. Can’t people be undivided and not be peaceful? What peace is there in unity?

Adoniahu was killed because he created quarrels and it is permitted to slander such people, as Nathan the Prophet did to Bathsheba, "...I will come in after you and confirm your words." (Kings I 1:14) And Rebbe said, "Lying is always forbidden except where the purpose is to bring peace between two parties."

YOUR PEACE CHAPTER NAVIGATOR
1. Why is peacemaking not an option here? Won’t rebuking just make things worse?

Bar Kapara said, "How great is peace that even the Torah has stretched the truth in order to bring peace between Abraham and Sarah. As it is written, "And Sarah laughed to herself saying...my master is old..." (Genesis 18) And later it is written, [that she said] "And I am old."

YOUR PEACE CHAPTER NAVIGATOR
1. Do you agree that truth should be sacrificed for peace?
2. Can peace be built on falsehood?

Rabbi Yehoshua said: How great is peace, for the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is peace, as it is said, "And he (Gideon) called [Him] God of Peace." ( Judges 6:24)
Rabbi Hiyya bar Aba said: Therefore, it is forbidden to greet (lit. to ask about the shalom, well-being) of someone in a polluted place. Why? Because it is written, "So Gideon built there an altar to the Lord and called it God of Peace." (Judges 6:24, read literally) If an altar which does not eat, drink, or smell, and is built only for the atonement of Israel, is called "Peace," how much more so is the one who loves and pursues peace, who offers and returns greetings, and who makes peace between Israel and their Father in heaven?

Rabbi Yossi Hagalili says: Even the Messiah's name is "Shalom," as it is said, "(He has been named 'The Mighty God is planning grace;) the Eternal Father, a peaceable ruler (Sar Hashalom)." (Isaiah 9:6)

YOUR PEACE CHAPTER NAVIGATOR
1. How does Rabbi Yehoshua prove that peace is a Name of God?
2. Rabbi Hiyya Bar Aba derives a law from this. How has he made a mere greeting of a friend a sacred occasion?

Genesis Rabba 38:6

Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi said: How great is peace, for even if Israel practice idolatry but manage to maintain peace among themselves, the Holy One, blessed be He, says, so to speak, “I have no dominion over them” ; for it is said, Ephraim is united in idol-worship; let him alone (Hos. 4:17). But when their hearts are divided, what is written? Their heart is divided; now shall they bear their guilt. (Ibid10: 2). So, here you learn how great is peace and how despised is discord.

YOUR MIDRASH NAVIGATOR
1. What does it mean for God to appreciate the unity of a blatant rebellion?

Babylonian Talmud Gitin 61a

The Rabbis taught: One sustains the gentile poor with the Jewish poor, visits the gentile sick with the Jewish sick, and buries the gentile dead with the Jewish dead, because of ways of peace.