Let’s Compromise

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**#1**

(from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective people, pp. 271-274)

*It’s vacation time, and a husband wants to take his family out to the lake country to enjoy camping and fishing. This is important to him; he’s been planning it all year. He’s made reservations at a cottage on the lake and arranges to rent a boat, and his sons are really excited about going.*

*His wife, however, wants to use the vacation time to visit her ailing mother some 250 miles away. She doesn’t have the opportunity to see her very often, and this is important to her.*

**Question: What compromise would you suggest to the couple?**



**#2**

Hebrew for “compromise” is *peshara.* It shares the same root as “lukewarm water” *(mayim poshrim).*

*“Hafshara” - “thawing” or “melting” has the same root as well.*

**Question: What could be the reason for that?**

**#3**

**Questions:**

**(a) What are pros and cons of compromises?**

**(b) Do people like compromises?**

**(c) Do compromises create resentment?**

**(d) When you had to go for a compromise - was there a time when you felt good/ bad about the decision?**

**(e) When should you go for a compromise?**

**(f) When should you not go for a compromise?**

**#4**

**Talmud Sanhedrin 6b**

*… Aaron, however, (was always trying to find compromise between people) loved peace and pursued peace and made peace between man and man, as it is written, “The law of truth was in his mouth, unrighteousness was not found in his lips, he walked with Me in peace and uprightness and did turn many away from iniquity.” ...*

*… It is a Mitzvah to compromise, as it is written: Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates (Zechariah 8:16). Any place where there is straight justice—there will be no peace; and any place where there is peace, there is no straight justice. So what is the justice that abides with peace? We must say: Compromise.*

**Pirkei Avos 1:12**

*Hillel says: Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them closer to Torah.*

**Question: Were you ever involved in helping people come to a compromise?**

**Pirkei Avos 1:18**

*The world endures on three things - justice, truth, and peace, as it is said: Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates (Zechariah 8:16).*

This Mishnah uses the same verse to tell us about things on which the world endures as the Talmud Sanhedrin 6b regarding the compromise.

**Question: Is it just a coincidence?**

**#5**

Another related word to “compromise” (peshara) is “pesher” - “solution” or “explanation.”

**Question: What could be the reason for that?**

**#6**

**Talmud Sanhedrin 32b**

*‘Justice, justice you shall pursue’ - one of the words, ‘Justice’, comes to tell us about a formal process of the dispensing of justice, the other comes to teach us about compromise.*

**Question: How do you enable justice and equality in compromise?**

The Talmud gives this example:

*If you have very narrow straights and two ships come along and they are heading for each other, or a narrow path on the slope of a mountain and two camels are coming towards each other – either the two sides will hit and that will be a tragedy, or there will be a stand-off. Or one of the sides in these situations needs to retrace their steps – there has to be an element of compromise.*

**Question: How can this be called a compromise when one side does not get what it wanted and the other one gets everything?**

**#7**

**Question: What’s your takeaway from today's discussion?**