1. What does it mean, in your opinion, that: “Torah scholars increase peace in the world”? How?

**Babylonian Talmud Berachot 19a**

(Very end of Shacharit services, very end of Yerushalmi Berachot, Babylonian Talmud Berachot, Chagigah, Yavamoth, Sukkah, Nazir, and Keritut, very end of Sifre Devarim, Avot deRabbi Natan and more)

R. Elazar said on behalf of Rabbi Chanina: Torah scholars (lit. students of wise people) increase peace in the world. As it is said: “And all your children will be students of Hashem, and your children will have peace” (Isaiah 54:13) – do not read ‘banaich’ (your children), but ‘bonaich’ (your builders).

2. How did Rav Kook understand the statement: “Torah scholars increase peace in the world”?

**Ein Aya (Rav Kook) - Berachot 64a**

“Torah scholars increase peace in the world” -

Some people are mistakenly misguided with the notion that world peace will not be built except by establishing one standard of beliefs and traits. If this is the case, then when they witness a Torah scholar engaging in intellectual inquiry, and via this study, differing opinions and sides to a matter are seen to increase, they believe that this is the cause of factionalism, the very opposite of peace.

The truth is not so. For absolute peace can only be obtained in this world through the format of a multiplicity of peace. A multiplicity of peace means that all of the divergent facets of a matter, and the understandings which derive out of study, will all be illuminated, and it will become clear how all of them have a place, everything in accordance with its value, purpose, and content. When the true wisdom is uncovered with all of its many facets, the matters which at first appear extraneous or contradictory, will be seen
as vital to the whole. It will become apparent that only through a synthesis of all the components, of all the details, of all the categories, and of all the opinions that at first appear different, specifically through them will the just and true light appear – the knowledge of G-d, His fear and His love, and the light of the true Torah. Therefore Torah scholars increase peace in the world. Through their exegesis, they evolve and explain new insights and reveal many new facets. Contained in each new understanding is a diversity of viewpoints. Through this multi-faced prism, which encompasses a matter from all of its sides, the Torah scholars increases peace. As it says, All your children are learned of G-d. It will be recognized that everyone, even people who are opposites in their paths and opinions, are all seekers of G-d. Within everyone of them there is a contribution that will be brought to light through the knowledge of G-d and the illumination of truth.
3. How have the contemporary followers of R. Kook understood the statement: “Torah scholars increase peace in the world”?

Our sages taught us that "Torah scholars increase peace in the world." On occasion, we may actually doubt the veracity of this statement. It’s enough to just read the announcements and stories signed by great Torah scholars - directed at people whom do not exactly go on their path - to prompt the question: Is it true that Torah scholars really increase peace in the world? Looking at the matter more deeply, however, we come to realize that it is really the Torah scholars who are bringing peace to the world. Each scholar introduces his own unique part in the wholeness of the Torah, adds his own special quality to the fabric. This is how "sheleimut" increases in the world...

Torah scholars discussing a particular issue at first argue with each other quite harshly - but in the end, “they become beloved to one another.” Even if at times it may initially seem that their relationship is distant, fraught with disagreement - in reality, a solid common interest unites them: clarification of the truth.... The task of Torah scholars is to unite the nation, to be of the students of Aharon. The difficulty in this role lies in the fact that from one angle, a scholar must be determined to stand up for the correctness of his approach; on the other hand, he must make sure that he does not remain in a state of strife with others.

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1 http://www.yeshiva.co/midrash/shiur.asp?id=402
2 www.yeshiva.org.il/Midrash/doc/doc0/korach60U.doc
3 ברכות, ד‚א, א
4 ע‚פ תרillegal, ל‚ע, ב
Rabbi Eliezer Melamed (b. 1961, Har Beracha)  
“Controversy of the Sake of Peace” (June 22, 2006)  

The sages said (Sanhedrin 100a) anyone who holds on to a conflict transgresses a prohibition in the Torah as it says (Numbers 17:5) "and do not be like Korach and his followers"...

Nevertheless, there are also positive controversies, substantive disputes, without personal hatred, such as the controversy between Shammai and Hillel. Because the reality is composed from many sides, and we do not have the ability to include all of them, so there are different scholars, that each one expresses the side that is most appropriate to him, and they argue between them and through this the matter becomes clarified appropriately. For a controversy as such, when it is done for the sake of Heaven, in order to clarify the truth, and with respect for the other’s opinion, there is a great value, and regarding this our Sages said “it will continue to exist” (Mishnah Avot 5:17) - meaning, each opinion will find its appropriate place in the end.

And so explained our Rabbi, Rav Kook, may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing, the depth of the words of the wise “Torah scholars increase peace in the world” (Olat Re’iyah I, p. 330), that by them clarifying the different views, and ultimately finding common ground - true peace is made in the world. However, when trying to ignore the various shades and try to assemble all under one shade only, those shades that are not expressed become frustrated and embittered, and finally come out as conflicts and division. And the more one thinks that all need to be united in one opinion, there will be greater anger upon any diversification and conflicts will multiply and there will be a decrease in the clarification of the truth. But Torah scholars that express their different opinions regarding Torah study, they increase peace, for through this all shades are expressed. And even if in the beginning of an argument there is much tension, in the end they are made friends (Kidushin 30b) and all see how different opinions of the Torah complement one another.

But when it comes to the wicked who separated themselves from God and His people, and from virtues
which are the expression of adherence to G-d, the dispute against them does not create separation. For they themselves decided to separate from the eternal unity, and therefore there is a need to disagree with them. On the contrary, through the disagreement against them, the crumbled “foundations” (yesod) is separated out, and it is prevented from further destruction...

And whoever refrains from protesting and standing up against the wicked, with the claim that they do not want to create a dispute (machloket), that person will be punished in the sins of the (wicked). For whoever does not protest and separate themselves from wickedness and injustice, is made a partner to them (Shabbat 54b).... And sometimes, for the sake of the many, it is even needed for this a great amount of self sacrifice, as it was after the sin of the Golden calf, when the sons of Levi gathered to Moses and killed according to the world of Hashem the sinners, even if they were family relatives, and like what Pinchas the son of Elazar the High Priest did to the prince of the tribe of Shimon. And the people of truth they are the ones who stand up in courage against wickedness, and are careful not to disagree with good people. And those whose fear of G-d is confused and phony, manipulate the prohibition against having disputes (machloket) in order to flatter the wicked who are in positions of power, like people in the government, heads of the army or the rich. And in contrast to this, they find all sorts of justifications to make a “dispute for the sake of Heaven” (machloket leshem shamayim) against the good and straight, that the only thing that unites them is their lack of power, like for example the youth of Amona, or the exiled ones (from Gaza) who criticize (for some reason) harshly those who expelled them.

And from here to the criticism of the booklet - "our path at this time," which claims to be "a document of principles of religious Zionist rabbis." In this booklet the value of unity is placed as the highest fundamental value, and almost the only (value), on which all is based. And so it was written in the first part: “And they camped out across from the Mountain (Sinai) – as one person and one heart’, and from this specifically we merited to receive the Torah”...The value of unity does not exist without the
other values.. If the value of unity was above all, when Moses came down from the mountain and saw the people dancing before the golden calf, he ought to have joined in the dances and try to correct them from within through an proliferation of love. And why did he ask members of the tribe of Levi to pull out their swords and kill their fellow sinners?

True it is impossible to reach completeness without the unity of Israel, and therefore the Torah was given within unity. But just as it is impossible to reach completeness without unity so too it is impossible to reach completeness without faith, or Torah or a demand for justice, or loyalty to the Land of Israel. It is clear that if Israel were standing in front of Mount Sinai united but not ready to say "we will do and we will listen" - we would not have merited receiving the Torah.

Rabbi Zalman Melamed, Praying for an 'illegal settlement' to not be evacuated
Several years ago already, I received the understanding that it is impossible to arrive at peace in the Holy Land without tilting the religious energy – which is very much nuclear energy – for the sake of peace. The ties I established throughout the years with Muslim leaders in the Land (amongst them leaders of Hamas) and in the region, strengthened in me the opinion that it is possible to curve some of the strongest Islamic spirits for the sake of peace.

Several of the most significant rabbis of the land strengthened me in the approach that the responsibility of actualizing the Jewish spirit of peace is placed first and foremost upon the people of spirit, in the spirit of what I say at the end of prayers before going out to the practical work of the day – “Rabbi Elazar said, Rabbi Chaninah said Torah scholars increase peace in the world.”

On all of this I wanted to speak with my distinguished one, Eli Wiesel, a man of the Jewish spirit (on the famous question: who is a Jew? I have the custom of answering: whoever is willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of peace).... It is possible that you have a central role in increasing peace in the world. I pray that the people of the Jewish spirit will take upon themselves this responsibility.

Rabbi Menachem Froman, praying for peace with religious leaders from other faiths.
4. How did other Rabbis explain the statement: “Torah scholars increase peace in the world”?

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizophren (1717-1787)
Noam Elimelech

And this is the meaning of “Torah Scholars increase peace in the world” – meaning, those wise scholars who hold themselves as students ... they increase peace both in Heaven and on Earth, and they bring blessings and good influences in the world below.

Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav, 15 cen. Spain
Menorat HaMaor

And a (Torah scholar) should be merciful with all creatures, compassionate to the poor, a salvation to the destitute, a friend to wise people, a brother to the rightous, a companion to the simple, a friend to the hassidim, merciful to students, a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a reminder to the intellectual, a teacher to the simple, a joy to the person struggling through the day. And any one who rejoices those who are in pain and suffering, and consuls the mourners, and speaks to the hearts of the poor and the unfortunate, it is certain that he will be of the world to come. As we have learned in the Babylonian Talmud Ta’anit about Rabbi Berokah Chozah who was in the marketplace, Rabbi Beroka Hoza’ah was standing in the market of Debey Lapat. Elijah came and appeared to him. [R. Beroka] asked "Who, in this market, has a share in the world to come?" ... He replied "These two have a share in the world to come." [Rabbi Beroka] asked them, "What is your occupation?" They replied, "We are jesters, when we see men depressed we cheer them up; furthermore when we see two people quarrelling we strive hard to make peace between them."..... And any Torah scholar, who is careful in any of these, and acts appropriately in all aspects of what I wrote, he is called a Torah Scholar, righteous and fair, honest, trustworthy, honors G-d and His Holy Torah. And through the merit of Torah scholars, G-d brings peace to the world, as it is said “Rabbi Eliezer said Rabbi Haninah, Torah scholars increase peace in the world”....
Rabbi Chaim Shabbtai, 1550-1647, Salonki, Responsa Torat Chayim
And may Hashem, blessed be He, place in the hearts of Torah scholars love, brotherhood, peace and friendship of Torah scholars increasing peace in the world.

5. Personal reflections
How may you personally apply Rav Kook’s understanding in your life?