

“Why have You done evil to Your servant... that You place the burden of this entire people upon me? Did I conceive this entire people... that You say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom.’” (11:11-12)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* despairs of the responsibility of leadership imposed upon him. *Sforno* explains Moshe's complaint in the following manner: Parents often have children with whom they are in dispute. Yet, despite the existing conflict, a basic feeling of trust exists deep within the children, asserting that their parents truly love them and will do them no harm. This nation, however, had not demonstrated such trust in Moshe, and they were constantly testing to see how he would react to them. Moshe's grievance still needs to be understood. Imagine if a great *rav* or *rosh yeshiva* would lament, “Why do I not find favor in Your eyes that you place such a difficult leadership upon my shoulders?” The answer would be simple. “It is specifically because you are a great and talented leader that you were chosen for this position. Whom else should we take – a weak leader?”

Moshe should have understood that it was because he found favor in the eyes of Hashem that he was selected for this most difficult mission. Fractious communities need strong leadership.

Horav Mordechai Rogov, z.l., explains that Moshe decried the fact that Hashem did not find him worthy of being elevated to a position where he would be as sensitive to *Klal Yisrael* as a mother is sensitive to her children. For a mother, nothing is too difficult. There is no time that is bad when it comes to her children. A mother never tires, never wanes from her commitment to her children. It is a labor of love – a love that prevails over whatever obstacle may be in the way.

This is what Moshe means when he says, “Did I conceive this entire people?” Do I then feel for them as a mother feels for her child? If I felt that way, nothing would be burdensome. I ask of Hashem that I be able to carry their burden as a mother carries her child – with love, patience and equanimity.

Moshe is teaching us a compelling lesson in education and leadership. A teacher/leader must love his charges as a mother loves her child. He must be sensitive to their every need and enjoy helping them grow.

No problem should be considered too demanding; no situation too troublesome. After all, one's student is like one's child. This is the key to success in teaching. Unless a *rebbe* feels like a parent, he is missing a critical component in the success quotient for *Torah chinuch*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* recognized that if he could be upset with *Klal Yisrael*, then he was missing this ingredient. Do we recognize this, or are we quick to fault the student?

Indeed, a true leader should want to see only the positive in his flock. The *Skverer Rebbe*,

z.l., always looked for the positive in each Jew, disregarding even the most blatant shortcomings. He had this mindset even at a tender age, as the following narrative indicates. With age, this attitude intensified until it became the hallmark of his very essence.

As a young child, he had a discussion with one of his cousins, also a scion of the famous Chernobyl dynasty. The question was: Is it more advantageous to be a *rav*/rabbi or a *rebbe*, *chassidic* leader? (A very interesting discussion – what is especially noteworthy is the topic of discussion among these young children. Apparently, there were no sports teams in those days!)

In the course of their debate, the other child posited that being a *rebbe* was more desirable, and he could prove it. “Compare the spelling of *rebbe* – *raish, bais, yud* – with that of *rav* – *raish, bais*,” he said, “and you will note that *rebbe* contains the letter *yud*, while the word *rav* does not.” The letter *yud*, which in their local dialect was pronounced *yid* – which in *Yiddish* means Jew – is present in the term *rebbe*. It would, therefore, indicate that a *rebbe* had superiority over a *rav*.

It was an insightful response, one that marveled those who had assembled to hear the discussion between the two young prodigies. They eagerly awaited the future *Skverer Rebbe*’s response. What could he say that would succeed in refuting his cousin’s logic?

He responded that, in principle, he agreed with his cousin that, indeed, being a leader of a *chassidic* sect was superior to being a *halachic* arbiter in a community, but for a different reason. He explained that *Chazal* say in *Pirkei Avos*, 1:8, “When the litigants stand before (the judge), he considers them to be *reshaim*, wicked. Only at the culmination of the trial when the verdict has been rendered, and they accept it can they be viewed as *tzaddikim*, righteous.

“It is for this reason that I prefer becoming a *rebbe* as opposed to a *rav*,” said the future *Skverer Rebbe*. “I do not ever want to be placed in a position where I will be relegated to view a fellow Jew as being anything less than righteous. I do not want to be aware of their shortcomings, only their positive traits.” Is it any wonder that this young boy’s sensitivity to every Jew was the cornerstone of a life dedicated to all of *Klal Yisrael*?