

## **"And Moshe and Aharon gathered together the assembly before the rock and said to them, 'Listen you rebels; are we to bring forth to you water out of this rock?'" (20:10)**

The *Ramban* cites the *Rambam* who states in *Moreh Nevuchim* that Moshe *Rabbeinu's* sin consisted of expressing himself in anger towards *Bnei Yisrael*. His statement, "*Listen you rebels*," signified a weakness on his part. For an individual of Moshe's exalted stature to express himself in such a manner was considered a *chillul Hashem*, desecration of Hashem's name. People considered Moshe to be a role model. They emulated his actions and words in the hope of achieving such success. How could Moshe then appear to be angry, demonstrating such an evil trait? *Horav E. Shach, Shlita*, suggests that a fundamental and central principle may be gleaned from the words of the *Rambam*. This concept focuses primarily upon those who hold positions of spiritual leadership, either in a communal or educational realm.

Undoubtedly, Moshe *Rabbeinu* did not become angry in accord with our perception of anger. He did not possess even the slightest vestige of anger. Nonetheless, since he was *Klal Yisrael's* virtuous leader, who served as the paradigm for all men to emulate, he appeared angry. This perception could not be tolerated, since it created a *chillul Hashem*.

It is the nature of people to seek ways to discredit their spiritual leadership, so that they have implied license to perform every form of iniquity. One who accepts spiritual leadership is privy to every form of critique. He must always be aware that he stands beneath the microscopic eye of his community and students, who will emulate his behavior.

*Horav Shach* reiterates the enormous responsibility which rests upon the shoulders of educators. Their function is to imbue and inculcate *Torah* into the hearts and minds of Jewish children. For the most part, the image of the next generation is placed in the hands of the educator to shape with the "tools" of *Torah* values and perspective. The *mechanech*, educator, should be careful to reflect the model image of virtue and ethicality, refinement and dignity which befits a *Torah* personality.