

And now if You would but forgive their sin! But if not, erase me now from this book that You have written. (32:32)

Rashi explains that the word, "*misifrecha*", "from Your book," applies to the entire *Torah*. *Rashi* suggests a reason for Moshe's well-known reaction to Hashem's desire to punish *Klal Yisrael* with annihilation: "That they should not say about me that I was not worthy to implore mercy for them." This is mind-boggling! We are referring here to *Moshe Rabbeinu*, the "*anav mikol adam*," the most humble of all men. He is prepared to have his name erased from the *nitzchiyus*, eternity, of *Torah*, simply because of what they may say, asserting that he was not capable/worthy of achieving clemency for *Klal Yisrael*. Does this seem rational for the quintessential leader of our people, a man who set the standard for personal humility and devotion to his flock?

In his approach towards explaining *Moshe Rabbeinu's* demand, *Horav Simcha Zissel Broide, Shlita*, cites a similar anomaly. In the *Midrash Shemos Rabbah 6*, *Chazal* say that *Shlomo Hamelech* would rather have been subjected to the most humiliating and lowly labor than to have it written about him, "*His wives turned him away*." Although *Chazal* tell us that "whoever says that *Shlomo* sinned is mistaken," the wisest of all men was extremely concerned about what was written about him - even if it was wrong.

Each passage in the *Torah* has a remarkable value. It is a chapter in eternity! This makes Moshe's sacrifice to have his name removed even more incredible. Indeed, without Moshe, the entire *Torah* would be changed. Yet, Moshe was willing to relinquish it all for *Klal Yisrael*. That is not what *Chazal* tell us. They seem to feel that Moshe was concerned that they would say about him that he could not effect *Klal Yisrael's* pardon. How are we to understand this?

Horav Broide explains that if there was a possibility that *Klal Yisrael* might have expected more from Moshe and he "failed" them, it would have indicated a deficiency in *Moshe Rabbeinu's gadlus*, pre-eminence. He is no longer the great "*rav*" who was the lawgiver. Even though it was a misconception on the part of *Klal Yisrael*, it would still be a blemish on the whole idea of *Kabollas HaTorah*. It would no longer be perfect. As far as *Klal Yisrael* were concerned, Moshe was the quintessential leader in every aspect. Therefore, Hashem selected him to be His agent through whom the *Torah* would be taught to *Klal Yisrael*. Any critique of Moshe would, regrettably, be perceived as a critique of the *Torah*. Moshe could not let this happen. Thus, he asked that his name be deleted from the *Torah* in order to circumvent any later problems.

At the end of the *parsha*, the *Torah* relates how Moshe would don a *Masveh*, mask, to cover the *Karnei Hod*, Rays of Glory, that emanated from him as a result of his close relationship with the Almighty. *Ibn Ezra* states that actually, when Moshe left the *Ohel Moed*, the unique light that shone from him remained inside. It did not follow him out. He wore the *Masveh* because the people expected to see rays of glory -- or something covering them -- emanating from Moshe. In order not to disappoint them, Moshe wore the *Masveh*.

Once again, we see that Moshe would not permit the people's perception of him to be denigrated. If they expected him to wear a mask covering the Rays of Glory, so be it, he would wear a mask - even though it was not necessary. If the lack of a mask would have created a blemish in their perception of *Kabollas HaTorah*, it was necessary to wear the mask.