

The Kohen who is exalted above his brethren - upon whose head the anointment oil has been poured. (21:10)

The *Kohen Gadol* "stands" above the other *Kohanim* as a result of certain qualities with which he has been vested. *Chazal* enumerate five areas in which he was "greater" than the others. One of these was strength. The *Kohen Gadol* was exceptionally strong. This is indicated by Aharon *Hakohen's* ability to consecrate twenty-two thousand *Leviim* - in one day. This process involved physically raising each one and moving them back and forth, up and down. The magnitude of this task is evident when one realizes that this was all performed in the space of one day!

Let us analyze this statement. When we take into consideration that such an incredible feat could be performed only through the intervention of a miracle, it no longer serves as evidence of Aharon's amazing physical strength. Furthermore, what difference does it really make if the *Kohen Gadol* possesses remarkable physical strength? Does this make him a better, more virtuous person?

We find another mention of the concept of strength in the *Talmud Nedarim 38a*, wherein it is stated that the *Shechinah* rests only on one who is strong. Incidentally, in his commentary, the *Rambam* explains *Chazal's* statement as a reference to one's ability to overwhelm the blandishments of his *yetzer hora*, evil inclination. The commentaries, however, disagree with this interpretation, leaving a consensus that specifically refers to physical strength.

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, defines strength as one's ability to overcome a tendency towards indolence. We tend to find excuses for not doing a specific task: it is either too hard, unnecessary or unimportant. The true reason behind our excuses is laziness. Why are we lazy? Is it because we do not appreciate or value the task at hand? When one is *machshiv*, appreciates and holds a given endeavor in esteem, he will somehow find the strength and vitality to perform it. It is difficult work to paint a house, but when it is one's own house, the difficulty seems to disappear. Why? Because the individual is *machshiv* his house more. When one values a project or endeavor, he attacks it with zest and vibrancy. No obstacles stand in his way. He overcomes any challenge that confronts him. Indolence creeps in when one does not have "*cheishak*," desire.

One who comes home after a day's work and finds the "time" and "strength" to study *Torah*, to leave the comfort of his home to attend a *shiur*, demonstrates his esteem for *limud ha'Torah*. One who is *machshiv Torah* will always find a way to study it. One who finds excuses to justify his laziness simply is not *machshiv Torah*! It is obvious that lifting twenty-two thousand *Leviim* in one day is impossible. Aharon had every reason to defer from this task. How could he do it? When one is *machshiv*, values, Hashem's command, however, nothing deters him. Aharon's incredible strength lay in his attitude, his drive, his overwhelming desire to fulfill *mitzvas* Hashem. He undertook the impossible. Hashem responded to Aharon's effort by miraculously transforming the impossible into the achievable.