

These are the offspring of Moshe and Aharon...These are the names of the sons of Aharon...(3:1,2)

The *Torah* is about to enumerate Moshe and Aharon's offspring. The *pasuk*, however, mentions only the sons of Aharon. In the *Talmud Sanhedrin 96*, *Chazal* infer that one who teaches *Torah* to someone else's children is regarded as if he has begotten them. Moshe was their *rebbe*; he taught them the *Torah*, which would sustain them. He was like their father. This idea applies to anyone who imparts his *Torah* knowledge to others. Our influence is far-reaching; our ability to inspire is unlimited. Moshe was mentor and spiritual father to Aharon's sons.

What about the rest of *Klal Yisrael*? Moshe was also their *rebbe*? Why are Aharon's sons singled out from the rest of *Klal Yisrael*? The **Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh** says that as a result of Aharon's participation in the sin of the golden calf, his sons should have died. Moshe, however, saved them through his supplication to Hashem. He, therefore, was regarded as their father.

Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita, interprets *Chazal's* words in a different manner. Moshe did not merit seeing his sons follow in his footsteps. *Torah* is not a possession that can be bequeathed or inherited. One earns the *kesser Torah*, crown of distinction, for *Torah* scholarship through his own *amelus*, diligence and perseverance in *Torah* study. Aharon did enjoy incredible *nachas* from his sons' *Torah* achievement as a result of Moshe's teaching them *Torah*. This is the *Torah's* intention in mentioning Moshe as surrogate father to Aharon's sons. Aharon's *nachas*, his merit to see *banim talmidei chachamim*, was because of Moshe.

Horav Yitzchok Hutner, zl, contends that only a *rebbe muvhak*, one who taught most of an individual's *Torah* to him, is considered as if he had begotten him. **Horav Shmuel Truvitz, Shlita**, comments that while all of *Klal Yisrael* certainly learned *Torah* from Moshe, Aharon's sons had exceptional opportunity to hear Moshe repeat the lesson three times. This gave them prominence over *Klal Yisrael*. We suggest that since Moshe was their uncle, there was an exceptional affiliation between Aharon's sons and Moshe. A student must feel this closeness in order to sustain an enduring bond in the *Rebbe – talmid* relationship. One does not necessarily have to be related to his *rebbe*, but the love and affection that is, and should be, prevalent among family should be inherent in a teacher – student relationship. A student learns when he feels that there is love and caring for him.

After all is said and done, we maintain that the *rebbe* has a parental obligation towards his student. He must concern himself about the student's scholastic, moral and spiritual achievement. *Torah* is life – the *rebbe* that teaches *Torah* provides the student with tools for living. Is it any wonder that one who teaches *Torah* is regarded as if he had begotten the student? If we agree with the above, it would serve us well to hold in greater esteem those who play such a critical role in our children's lives.