

May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man on the assembly. (27:16)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* expressed his request for a successor in a unique manner, delineating special criteria. He refers to Hashem as “G-d of the spirits of all flesh.” *Rashi* explains Moshe’s choice of words: “He said to Hashem, ‘It is revealed and known to You the thoughts of each person, and how they differ one from another; appoint a leader who is able to tolerate each and every one of them with their individual attitudes.’”

Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, explains that an effective leader does not decide on a specific approach to serving Hashem and then impose that approach on all of his constituents (that is a dictator, not a leader); rather, the true leader is someone who is broadminded, an individual who employs his G-d-given talents, strengths and personality in the service of those in his charge. He finds a way to reach each individual in accordance with his particular profile of strengths or weaknesses. His goal is to bring everyone closer to the service of Hashem.

The *Mashgiach* observes that *Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl*, was such a leader. He trained some of the greatest leaders of his generation. Yet, each and every one had his own unique *shtempel*, imprint. Each had his own approach, his own inimitable, distinctive manner of doing things. *Rav* Chaim polished each individual student’s qualities, and that student carried on his legacy. [Thus, the next generation of students might have differed one from another, such as: *Rav* Baruch Ber Leibowitz’s students as opposed to those of *Horav* Shimon Shkop, *Horav* Isser Zalmen Meltzer, and even those of the *Brisker Rav*. Their nurturing came from the same font – *Rav* Chaim Brisker – however, each of them produced his own unique bloom.]

Tolerance is a vital attribute for effective leadership. A truly great leader must be a tolerant person. This trait, says the *Mashgiach*, is crucial for relationships. Otherwise, we might condescend to our neighbor whose manner of *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty, differs from ours. Rather than denigrate his manner of dress, behavior or self-expression during prayer, we should laud his individuality (and courage to manifest it). Do we not all have the same goal: to glorify Hashem? Just because he prays differently, or does not wear the same hat as we do, does not mean that his *Yiddishkeit* is flawed. It is no more flawed than ours, only we are too busy looking at others to engage in introspection!

Another *Rosh Yeshivah* who exemplified fatherly love (in the sense that he acted towards each student as if he were his only son) was *Horav Eliezer Yehudah Finkel, zl*, son of the *Alter* of Slabodka, founder and *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Mir Eretz Yisrael*. He saw to it that every student was able to achieve his personal maximum in spirituality. He never ignored a student’s concerns. His home was open 24/7 to each student – whether it be for spiritual/intellectual advancement or spiritual/emotional encouragement. He was a father, a friend, a brother and a mentor; it all depended upon the needs of the individual student.

All this, however, is not unusual for a caring *Rosh Yeshivah*. The first concern of a *Rosh Yeshivah* should be his *talmidim*. *Rav Lazar Yudel* (as he was referred to lovingly) went one step further. His student's intellectual advancement was preeminent in his mind. Therefore, if he felt that a student's knowledge of Torah could be enhanced elsewhere, he sent him there! (Imagine that happening today.) At the end of 1929, *Rav Isser Zalmen Meltzer* intimated to *Rav Lazar Yudel* that it was a shame that the *Brisker Rav* was not a *Rosh Yeshivah*. Thus, he could not share his brilliant dialectic and Torah thoughts with students. His father, *Rav Chaim*, had been *Rosh Yeshivah* in Volozhin, but *Rav Velvel* was *Rav* in Brisk; he basically sat and learned all day – without the challenge and benefits derived from students. When *Rav Lazar Yudel* heard this, he immediately sent *Horav Michel Feinstein* (who later became the *Brisker Rav's* son-in-law) to Brisk. Every year after that, *Rav Lazar Yudel* sent a *chaburah*, group, of his hand-picked students, the finest and most brilliant, to learn from the *Brisker Rav*. This is the meaning of doing what is best for each individual student.