

Moshe did not know that the skin of his face had become radiant when Hashem had spoken to him. (34:29)

Rashi observes that, until this point, Moshe *Rabbeinu's* face had not become radiant - even after having achieved the spiritual heights necessary to receive the Torah. It was only after he received the second *Luchos* that he earned the merit of *koran ohr panav*, radiant face. What about the second set of *Luchos* made such a difference? *Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl*, explains that the second set of *Luchos* were obtained in a manner that distinguished them from their predecessor. Following *Klal Yisrael's* sin with the Golden Calf, Hashem was prepared to sever His relationship with the nation and rebuild *Klal Yisrael* from Moshe. The extraordinary love that our quintessential leader manifested for his people inspired him to plead their case and ask Hashem to forgive them. He went so far as to ask that his name be removed from the Torah if Hashem would not forgive the nation.

Moshe's consummate humility and self-sacrifice catalyzed the attainment of the second *Luchos*. His deference to showing concern for the nation was the cause of his radiant countenance. His extreme humility shone forth. While in human terms humility may appear to decrease one's honor, by Divine standards humility is in fact the cause for true honor.

Two outstanding qualities – humility and self-sacrifice – were the reasons that Moshe earned the *karnei or*. Perhaps we should digress a bit and expand on these qualities to gain a better appreciation of their value. The holy *Sanzer Rav*, the *Divrei Chaim, zl*, questions why the *Bais Hamikdash* was built on *Har HaMoriah* (site of *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the Binding of Yitzchak), rather than on *Har Sinai*, where the Torah was given to *Klal Yisrael*. He explains that the place in which a Jew was willing to be *moser nefesh*, sacrifice himself, for Hashem's Name has greater significance than even the place in which Hashem gave the Torah to *Klal Yisrael*. For a person to live in such a manner, he must be the paradigm of humility, his entire essence suffused with love for Hashem, to the point that he entirely abnegates himself for Him.

Humility does not mean diffidence, meekness or other expressions which reflect a lack of self-confidence. The humble man knows quite well who he is and what he is able to achieve. Moshe was the humblest of all men – even though he was the leader of the Jewish People and he conversed with Hashem. It really does not get better than that. Yet, he was humble to the point that he said, “What am I?” Humility means showing reverence to others, regarding them as important, no less important than you are. It focuses on the other fellow, holding him in esteem. Humility does not mean holding oneself low; rather, it means elevating the other person, being able to pay a compliment without fear of denigrating oneself. (For some people, to pay a compliment is a traumatic experience.) Greatness is humility. We are all children of Hashem, an illustrious lineage that supersedes all “imagined” pedigrees that some of us feel guide our lives and grants us distinction. In the eyes of our Father in Heaven, we are all the same. We are all royalty.

In his *Yismach Yisrael*, the saintly *Chortkover Rebbe, zl*, writes: “One of the most important goals of the path of *Chassidus* is to achieve true harmony and live among *Yidden*. The *Baal Shem Tov* and (his primary student and successor) the *Mezritcher Maggid* constantly underscored the need for all of their disciples to live together in *achdus*, unity.

“In order to reach this level of *achdus*, one must, however, acquire the trait of humility. As long as a person is proud and regards himself to be on a higher level than others, he will remain unable to live with them in harmony.”

In a second *dvar Torah*, the *Rebbe* makes the following observation: “The *mitzvah* to love one’s fellow as he loves himself (*V’ahavta l’reiacha kamocho*) is comprised of two components. The first half is to love one’s fellow Jew; the second half is to love him as oneself. It follows that one who is filled with himself, who has a high opinion of himself, will have great difficulty honoring his friends properly. He will never be able to love them “as himself,” for he has convinced himself that he is far superior to everyone.”