

Now you, bring near to yourself Aharon, your brother. (28:1)

Horav Naftali, zl, m'Ropshitz, interprets the *pasuk* instructing Moshe *Rabbeinu* to bring Aharon *HaKohen* closer as an admonishment to our quintessential leader to take a lesson from Aharon's approach to relationships with people. Moshe was prone to isolating himself from people. He never knew when Hashem would call on him; thus, he was always prepared. His tent was outside the camp. While he was always available when someone called, he was not as accessible as Aharon *HaKohen*, who was known for his outreach in loving and pursuing peace. As the great conciliator, he was always in the "trenches" with people. Hashem intimated to Moshe: A leader must spend time with his congregation, know what ails them and what they are missing. He must love them, be sensitive, and approachable.

At first glance, this exposition does not seem consistent with the Moshe to whom we were introduced in *Parashas Shemos*. As a young "prince" raised by Pharaoh's daughter, he could have led a refined life of privilege without a care in the world. Yet, he went out and was *nosei b'ol im chaveiro*, carried the yoke with his friend. He joined his brothers who were being persecuted by the Egyptian taskmasters. It seems to me that Moshe's behavior was far from that of an isolationist. One who is reclusive does not leave the comfort of his palace to break his back among his brethren.

A distinction exists, however, between *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice for a fellow, and friendship. Many of us are willing to run out and help the fellow in need – regardless of the demand it will place on our time, money and even health. How many are prepared to "sacrifice" our time and even spiritual advancement to befriend someone who could use a friend, who requires guidance, comfort, or emotional assistance? How many of us are willing to spend time with those Jews – both male and female – who are alone – single fathers, mothers, children, some of whom do not fit into the "mold." This is what is meant by friendship. When one is isolated, he is unaware.

A young *rav* once told the *Divrei Chaim* that he was unaware of the economic and emotional issues plaguing a certain family. The *Rebbe* told him that he had no business being a *rav*. A *rav* who isolates himself from the community should select another profession.