

So there was delivered from the thousands of Yisrael, a thousand from each tribe. (31:5)

Rashi says that the term "*vayimasru*," "there was delivered," implies that the Jewish soldiers were actually coerced into going to battle. They were well aware that Moshe *Rabbeinu's* demise was dependent upon his carrying out this last war, and they did not wish to see their beloved leader die. *Rashi* adds that, interestingly, for much of their forty-year sojourn they either complained to -- or about -- Moshe. There was rarely a peaceful moment in their relationship. Now, when confronted with the imminence of his death, they do not wish to see him depart. This indicates their deep love for him. We must endeavor to understand this *pshat*, exposition, of the *pasuk*. Did Moshe himself not say "*A bit more and they will stone me*"? He fully understood their ambivalent feelings towards him. How can this be considered love?

Horav Yosef Leib Bloch, zl, explains that *Bnei Yisrael's* true admiration and love were manifest by the fact that they were not always enamored with Moshe. They did not continually agree with his demands. Yet, when his life was dependent upon their going to war - they refused to go. Had their relationship always been idyllic, it would have been no surprise that they would not want to see his premature death. After an intense relationship of forty years, at times contentious and at times harmonious, we see that their negativity towards Moshe was rooted in their intolerance for his rebuke. After all was said and done, however, they loved their leader and would do anything to sustain his life.

An unwillingness to accept criticism can, at times, prove to be a cause for unnecessary resentment. A mature individual deals with his resentment quickly, when he realizes that the reproof is for his own good, and emanates from his friend's/teacher's/parent's love for him. This will then awaken within him the respect and love he should continue to develop for that individual.