

These are the offspring of Moshe and Aharon. (3:1)

The *pasuk* opens by stating that the following are the offspring of both Moshe and Aharon, but fails to mention Moshe's children. Indeed, the *Talmud Sanhedrin* 19b wonders why the sons of Aharon *HaKohen* are considered to be the sons of Moshe *Rabbeinu* as well. This teaches, explain *Chazal*, that one who teaches his friend's children Torah is considered as if he had begotten them. Since Moshe taught Torah to Aharon's sons, he is considered to have been their spiritual father. The text of the *Talmud* is: *Kol ha'melamed es ben chaveiro Torah, maaleh alav ha'kasuv k'ilu yoldo* – "As if he gave birth to him." In another place (*Sanhedrin* 99b), *Chazal* conclude with *k'ilu asahu*, "As if he made him." This is supported by the *pasuk* in *Bereishis* 12:5, concerning Avraham Avinu's outreach to the pagan population: *V'es ha'nefesh asher asu b'Charan*, "And the soul which they made in Charan." This indicates that teaching one Torah is as if he made him. What is the difference between the sources in *Chazal*? Why is the *rebbe*, at times, viewed as "making" the student and elsewhere considered as "begetting" him?

Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl, distinguishes between *asahu* and *yaldo*. *Asahu* means "make him," which denotes a relationship much like a craftsman with a utensil. He has made the utensil and, now that it is complete, he detaches himself from the vessel and moves on to the next one. This is in contrast to *yaldo*, in which he gives birth (so to speak) to the student, whereby his relationship is much like a father and son, which is an enduring relationship, an eternal bond that is fused between them. The son also inherits his father's characteristics and nature.

The concept of *k'ilu asahu* is derived from Avraham's relationship with the people whom he converted to monotheistic belief. They were students of Avraham, whom he had taught belief in the one G-d and infused with *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, but, at the end of the day, they remained *goyim*. They did not achieve the level of *banim*, sons. In no way did they become Avraham-like. They could not be viewed as his sons, his spiritual heirs. They were only *k'ilu asahu*, "made" by Avraham. Indeed, as is noted by *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* (29), they eventually all returned to their pagan origins.

One who teaches his student Torah transforms him. The entire essence of the student is changed because of the Torah the student imbibes from his *rebbe*. An eternal relationship is established, one that endures throughout time, as the relationship is transmitted to the next generation. Moshe taught the sons of Aharon the Torah, which was his precious legacy to them, as it is with every *rebbe* that transmits his Torah teachings to his student.

We can take this idea further by positing that, even within Torah learning, there is a concept of *asiyah* and *leidah*, making and begetting. A *rebbe* who gives all of himself to his student, who devotes his time, energy, soul and very life for his student, is creating, giving birth, transforming his student with his life. He becomes the student's spiritual father, creating an essential, enduring bond that transcends time. The Torah is our life, and, by infusing our students with this spiritual life, we are resuscitating them, imbuing them with energy, spirit and viability.

There is a lesser level, in which the *rebbe* imparts the lesson to the student. He has made him, but, without the sacrifice and vitality, he has not begotten him. Prior to the giving of the Torah, our relationship with Hashem was as if we had been made. The level of *banim laMakom*, Children of Hashem, appeared when we received the Torah. The Torah is our life source, without which we lack the vigor and vivacity associated with being “alive.”

In conclusion, it depends on what the *rebbe* is teaching and how he imparts the lesson. Torah can be taught as a lesson, or it can be infused as an injection of spirit, an infusion of life, to animate the soul of the student spiritually. In order to achieve this level of transmission, the teacher must himself be “alive” and willing to transmit “himself” into the student. Such a *rebbe* becomes a *rebbe muvhak*, primary *rebbe* to his student.

There is also the “professor” who teaches, delivers a lecture, remains aloof and distant from his student. He teaches – the student learns. He has “made” the student because he has taught him Torah, but he has not given him life; he is not his spiritual father in the true sense of the word.