

I said to you at the time... Let yourselves - wise, understanding men, known to your tribes, and I will place them at your head. And you answered me and said, "This thing which you have proposed to do is good." (1:9,13,14)

Chazal view Moshe *Rabbeinu's* words as a critique of *Klal Yisrael*. They should have answered, "Moshe, our teacher! From whom is it better to learn: From you or from your disciple? Surely from you, who exerted yourself so over the *Torah*." Moshe understood what motivated their silence. They assumed that it would be easier to sway a judge who was one of them to their point of view. This type of attitude is not novel. Everybody wishes to face a judge whom they think will readily acquiesce to their point of view. One area of Moshe's critique needs explaining. It seems that it is better to study from Moshe because he exerted himself over the *Torah*. What advantage does exertion provide that it is the sole factor for studying from the master instead of the pupil?

Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, suggests that it is human nature to attach greater significance to something for which one has exerted himself. As this is true in the area of materialism, how much more so regarding *Torah* insights. In his commentary on the *Talmud Shabbos 99b*, the *Rashba* suggests, "Take great care to understand this explanation fully, for only after great effort was it revealed to us!" *Horav Eliezer M. Shach, Shlita* writes in his preface to his *Avi Ezri* on *Nashim/Kedushah*, "Whoever studies these matters will see what a help this work can be, G-d willing, for I achieved it with much toil and exertion." *Torah* is acquired through *ameilus*, toil; it is ours, if we work for it. But, work we must. Moreover, our toil indicates our love and esteem for the *Torah*. In order to succeed in an endeavor, one must truly enjoy and love his work. One who enjoys what he is doing will exert himself -- joyfully -- in order to succeed.

Horav Bergman writes that he once heard from *Horav Shmuel Rosovsky, zl*, how *Horav Shimon Shkop, zl*, related a similar thought that he derived from a conversation with the *Netziv, zl, Rosh Yeshivah* of the famed *Volozhin Yeshivah*. *Horav Shkop* related that he never attended the *Netziv's* shiur, *Torah* lecture, feeling that he could accomplish much more by studying on his own during this time period. Late one night, he experienced a change of heart. It happened that he was studying *Talmud Bava Basra*, when he came across a difficult passage in the *Rashbam's* commentary. Try as he would, he could not make headway in understanding the depth of the commentary. He was about to give up, when suddenly the *Netziv* entered the *Bais Medrash*, as he was accustomed to do at all hours of the night. *Rav Shimon* went over to the venerable *Rosh Yeshivah* and asked him "*pshat*," to explain the *Rashbam*. The *Netziv* responded, "My child, I have several times visited the graves of *tzaddikim* to supplicate Hashem to reveal to me the meaning of this passage." This response so impressed *Rav Shimon* that from that day on he made sure to attend the *Netziv's* shiur.

We now have an idea of the effort which our *gedolei Yisrael, Torah* giants, expended in the study

of *Torah*. It was not merely an exercise in mental gymnastics. It was *Toras Hashem* which must be understood. They gave their lives for the *Torah* - not only for its preservation and dissemination, but also to understand its profundities and hidden message. Is it any wonder that they attained the distinction of *gadlus ba'Torah*?

This was Moshe's admonition to *Klal Yisrael*: If they had really cared about knowing the *Torah*, if proficiency in it really meant something to them, they should have insisted upon learning from Moshe *Rabbeinu*, whose life was a lesson in exertion and devotion for *Torah*. By relinquishing their right to the master, they indicated their true attitude. A student respects the teacher who exhibits his own effort in acquiring the knowledge he transmits. This is manifest with the joy inherent in teaching and conveying the *Torah's* message. One is enthusiastic in transmitting that which he has toiled to master.