

You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d, the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers...from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water. (29:9,10)

Since the *Torah* says "*kulchem -- all of you*", it obviously includes everyone from the "wood chopper" to the "water drawer." Why is it necessary to reiterate the various classes or positions held by individual Jews? **Horav Elyakim Schlesinger, Shlita**, suggests that the covenant did not necessarily bind only the *klal*, the collective community of *Klal Yisrael*, but also each individual Jew, regardless of his station in life. If ever a breakdown in the spiritual fabric of *Klal Yisrael* would occur, if the leadership for some reason errs, the covenant would be sustained via the individual Jew.

The Brisker Rav, zl, related how his grandfather, **Rav Yoshe Ber Solevetchik, zl**, the *Bais Halevi*, was once approached by a group of *rabbanim* who were undecided regarding accepting a government edict that they study the national language. The *Rav* felt that this was only the beginning of an attempt to assimilate their culture with ours, a move which would ultimately lead to total assimilation. The *Bais Halevi* protested vehemently against this move, asserting, "If the *Torah* will not be sustained through the *rabbanim*, it will be maintained by the shoe makers who would not be availed the opportunity to study the national language!"

Furthermore, *Horav* Schlesinger comments, we infer from here that the concept of "*areivus*", - mutual responsibility for one another - and the obligation to admonish whenever an infraction occurs, rests primarily upon the shoulders of our spiritual leadership. Each individual Jew, however, also is responsible for the fulfillment of this ideal. This is surely not a call to undermine the authority of our leadership. Yet, the situation may arise that either due to political expediency, or personal vested interests of a leader, he seems to be resisting confronting an issue of vital importance to the community. In this case, someone should take a stand for the sake of the *Torah*. This must be accomplished with respect and *kavod haTorah*, even if the leader does not seem to warrant this special deference. The position must be honored, if not the individual.

The *Ohr Ha'chaim Hakadosh* comments that Moshe divided the people into categories according to their stations in life in order to suggest that one's responsibility toward others is commensurate with how many people he or she can positively affect. Indeed, the higher the profile of one's position, the greater is the mass he can influence. Due to the limitations imposed by the laws of *tznius*, modesty, women can inspire their immediate families and friends. Some might find this demeaning and self-defeating. It is, however, only a state of mind that breeds contempt among those who lack the self-assurance that comes with a positive self-image and sense of pride in serving Hashem according to His will. The common laborer does not have the opportunity to reach out to the masses, but he can have a positive impact upon those with whom he comes in contact on a regular basis. The rule is simple: Hashem does not expect one to accomplish more than is feasible. On the other hand, He is not content with less.