

And they wept for Aharon thirty days, all the House of Yisrael. (20:29)

Aharon's special relationship with all people earned him the love of everyone. When he passed away, every Jewish man, woman, and child grieved. The quintessential *Ohaiv Shalom*, he extended himself to promote harmony among his fellow man and between husband and wife. The vacuum caused by his death was acutely felt by everyone. We see that Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the *Rabbon shel kol Yisrael*, the teacher who devoted his life to educating *Klal Yisrael*, was not as universally mourned. As the *Yalkut* explains, Moshe's responsibility was to judge and admonish, a function that was not always accepted by everyone. Thus, the love that everyone had for him was, at times, minimized. How did Aharon go about his "outreach" to others? *Chazal* tell us that he would greet all Jews with a bright hello. Afterwards, if a person desired to sin, he felt ashamed, since he would not be able to face Aharon after having done wrong. Consequently, Aharon's good cheer for everyone effected a positive rise in the spiritual climate of *Klal Yisrael*. Indeed, every Jew felt close to Aharon, so he would be unable to do something that would make him feel bad.

This would imply that at all times we are to act in a positive and amicable manner towards all people, regardless of their religious persuasion. This idea is apparently incongruous with the *middah* of *emes*, truth. If one is a *rasha*, his evil really cannot be mitigated. After all, is that not what Moshe *Rabbeinu* did? He admonished and criticized when an individual did something wrong. He seemed to "tell it like it is." Whose approach was actually more acceptable--Aharon's or Moshe's?

Interestingly, in the *Talmud Sanhedrin 6B Chazal* present these variegated approaches and posit a significant lesson. We are taught that Rabbi Eliezer *ben* Rabbi Yosi Ha'Glili said, "It is forbidden to arbitrate in a settlement, and he who arbitrates offends, and whoever praises such an arbitration contempts Hashem." He proves this statement by using Moshe as an example. Moshe presented the law as it was, literally as if it were to cut through a mountain. Nothing stood in the way of the law. Immediately after this statement, *Chazal* say that Aharon would act differently. He loved peace and pursued peace and would, therefore, attempt to effect a compromise between both parties, so that they would not need to go to court.

We note that while *Chazal* criticize the arbitrator and extol Moshe as the example of he who remains loyal to the truth, regardless of the consequences, they praise Aharon for his approach to peaceful conciliation. They seem to have high regard for Aharon's manner of doing things. *Tosfos* add that Aharon was able to seek and effect compromise only because he was not a judge. One who is a judge, such as Moshe, before whom the *halachic* dispute was presented, must adjudicate according to the law--without compromise. What is it to be--the way of Aharon or the way of Moshe?

Horav Avraham Yitzchak Bloch, zl, suggests that both Aharon and Moshe had the right

approaches. What appears to be incongruous is -- in reality -- consistent. We must realize, however, that rendering a decision of truth is different from the manner in which one conveys the decision to people. The actual *psak*, decision, must adhere totally to the letter of the law. There is no room for compromise when it affects the truth. The truth of *Torah* is immutable, leaving no room for error. When the decision is communicated to people, it is essential that it is given over in such a positive manner that it encourages optimum acceptance. We must respect the feelings and sensitivities of people, what appeals to them, and conversely, what affects them adversely. Not everyone is inclined to accept the truth in its stark reality. For many it must be couched in sensitive and soothing terms.

This idea applies equally to the individual. One cannot address a person in the same manner when he is on the upswing as when he is in a depressed state. In order for a person to accept the truth when his mind is under strain, it is incumbent that it be presented in a sensitive and caring manner.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* was the lawgiver. He was the vehicle through which *Klal Yisrael* would learn the *Torah* in its entirety. He was to present *daas Torah*, the *Torah's* "thoughts," on every issue as fact, in black and white. There are no gray areas in *halachah*. Our *Torah* is *Toras Emes*, the *Torah* of truth, without embellishments, unalterable, uncompromising, and unbiased. *Halachah* is an absolute, for it comes from Hashem. Moshe was to give over the *Torah* in its pristine form.

It was Aharon's function to imbue into the hearts of the people the *Torah* which Moshe transmitted. In doing so, Aharon had to consider each individual Jew. How is he to be inspired? What will impress him? How can he be moved to accept the *Torah* into his heart and mind? Unequivocally, Aharon did not sway one iota from the truth as Moshe presented it--even in the pursuit of peace. Never can *Torah* be compromised. He, however, sought different ways to make the *Torah* and some of the difficult decisions that must be rendered -- more "palatable" to all people. The *Torah* did not change--Aharon's presentation reflected the need of every individual.