

## "And this is the blessing that Moshe the man of G-d bestowed upon the Bnei Yisrael." (33:1)

The *Midrash* teaches us that prior to his death, Moshe *Rabbeinu* continued in the tradition which the Patriarchs had initiated. As Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov before him had blessed their sons before they took leave of this world, Moshe, likewise, blessed *Bnei Yisrael*, his spiritual children, before his death. The *Midrash* adds that the members of each ensuing generation began their blessing with the words with which the previous generation had closed. Hence, Avraham ended his blessing to Yitzchak with "*nesinah*," "giving," as is stated in *Bereishis* 25:6, "*And Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak.*" Yitzchak followed suit by commencing his blessing to Yaakov with the words, "*And may Hashem give you of the dew of the heavens and the fatness of the earth*" (*Bereishis* 27:28). Yitzchak concluded his blessing with "*Vayikra*," "*And Yitzchak calling to Yaakov and blessed him*" (*Bereishis* 28:1). When Yaakov prepared to bless his sons, he introduced his blessing with the word, "*Vayikra*," "*And Yaakov called for his sons*" (*Bereishis* 49:1). He terminated his blessing with the words, "*V'zos*," "*And this*" is what their father spoke to them and blessed them" (*Bereishis* 49:28). Moshe continued the tradition by beginning his blessing with the identical phase, "*V'zos ha'bracha*," "*And this is the blessing.*"

*Chazal* derive an interesting *halachah* from this *Midrash*. They rule that if one goes before the *Amud* to lead the congregation in *tefillah* and makes a mistake, the one who takes over/follows after him should begin in the exact place at which his predecessor finished. Since our ancestors commenced their blessings with the concluding words of their predecessors, we should similarly begin the *tefillah* where the previous *baal-tefillah* has concluded.

**Horav Yaakov Neiman, zl**, infers a remarkable insight from here. He comments that success or "blessing" in education -- be it in a *rebbe/talmid* or parent/child relationship -- is determined by a child following in the path forged before him by his parents. When a child continues to carry on and maintain the tradition for which his parents and ancestors sacrificed their lives, then -- and only then -- is the educational process considered to be successful. If, however, the new generation breaks ranks with the old, if they view their tradition and customs as old-fashioned, then we experience the converse of blessing. Parents and teachers must strive to imbue their children/students with an education that will survive the future, because it is grounded in the tradition of the past.