

And no prophet has arisen in Yisrael like Moshe... and for all the mighty hand... that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Yisrael. (34:10,12)

Moshe Rabbeinu was the quintessential leader of the Jewish People. His epitaph is stated in the last verses of the Torah, where he is lauded as the greatest Prophet in Yisrael who was the conduit for Hashem's miraculous signs and wonders, which revealed Hashem in His Almighty power. Moshe displayed his "mighty hand," the hand that would not brook any impudence from within – any form of deviation that would alienate his people from the truth. Moshe received the Torah from Hashem with his own hands. His hands were unique, representing an individual who had reached the epitome of service to the Almighty.

When the Jewish nation defended itself against Amalek's treachery, it was Moshe's hands that served as a symbol of encouragement. When he held them straight, the people triumphed, as "his hands remained an expression of trust until the sun went down" (Shemos 17:12). The Mechilta explains the "hands" of Moshe: With one hand he was lauded, because he never accepted anything from the people. With the other hand, he said to Hashem, "With/through 'this' hand You took the people out of Egypt; You split the Red Sea; You performed all the wondrous miracles, and with/through these hands You will continue to act for Klal Yisrael."

Moshe's hands represented purity and total virtue, faultless in all ways. He never personally benefited in any way from the Jewish People. He was a leader who served and was totally dedicated to his flock. In his commentary to Bamidbar 16:15, Sforno writes concerning Moshe's declaration to Hashem regarding Korach's accusation that his leadership was motivated for personal benefit and advancement: "I have not taken a donkey from them, I did not benefit from them even as a common man would benefit from his friend, for I did not even borrow a donkey from them. Hence, any rulership over them was totally for their benefit and to attend to their affairs."

To do things purely for the sake of others – not for personal self-aggrandizement; to serve Hashem unequivocally l'shem Shomayim, purely for the sake of Heaven – not for any other motives, that is the summit of Jewish service. We are here for one purpose: to serve Hashem and to serve others. Service defines Jewish existence. Moshe exemplified this quality. He was the consummate eved, servant of Hashem.

