

These are the garments that they shall make: a Choshen and an Eiphod. (28:4)

Midrash Tanchuma (Shemos 27) explains that the *Choshen*, Breastplate, which included the *Urim v'Tumim* worn over Aharon *HaKohen's* heart, was *middah k'negged middah*, reward measure for measure. When Hashem charged Moshe *Rabbeinu* with leading *Klal Yisrael* out of Egypt, he initially refused to accept the role. He claimed that his older brother, Aharon, had been serving as the leader of the people. He did not want to hurt his feelings. Hashem told him that, not only was Aharon not upset, he was actually filled with joy over his younger brother's selection. Thus, Hashem said, "The heart that was happy over his brother's appointment should be the place over which the *Choshen* should be positioned."

Horav Gershon Liebman, zl (*Rosh Yeshivas Novarodok*, France), adds that, when a person merits to be truly happy over his friend's success – despite the fact that this success comes at his expense (Moshe assumed Aharon's position) - it demonstrates the ultimate level of character refinement. He quotes the *Mesillas Yesharim* (*Perek* II) who underscores this concept, "The sum of the matter is: Lust for *kavod*, honor, is what drives the heart of man more than all the other yearnings and cravings in the world. And, were it not for this drive (lust for honor), a person would veritably be willing to eat whatever was available to him, to wear any clothing that would cover his body and live in any house that would shelter him from the elements... He would not require riches and would not need to work so hard. So why does he push himself to the limit? He does so in order not to view himself as on a lower level and inferior to his friends. As a result, he thrusts himself into the thick of the struggle, and no end exists to all his toil.

In summation, the pursuit of honor leads individuals to compromise values, chase recognition and manipulate situations in order to elevate themselves. They do not – or do not want to – acknowledge that true greatness lies in being able to step back and give others the spotlight. Such a mindset not only elevates the individual, but also creates harmony and mutual respect in relationships, fostering a community which gives honor and does not take it.

Aharon *HaKohen* was sincerely happy for, and proud of, his brother, because he was not shackled by cravings for honor. During the entire time that Moshe lived in Midyan, Aharon was the nation's leader and prophet. Why did he require a "partner"? He had been doing quite well on his own. Yet, Hashem made His choice and Aharon not only acquiesced, but he was overjoyed. Such a person is worthy of wearing the *Choshen* above his heart. His heart is "transparent," in the sense that the feelings he projects are real and not duplicitous. Such a person can peer deep into the *Urim V'Tumim* and extract their true message.