

פרשת בשלח

As Bnei Yisrael prepare to engage in war with Amalek, Moshe turns to Yehoshua and tells him, "בְּחַר־לָנוּ אַנְשִׁים וְצֵא הִלָּחֵם בְּעַמְלֵק" — *Pick some men for us, and go out and battle Amalek.*¹ But who is the "us" in this command? Rashi explains that the word לנו is referring to both Moshe and Yehoshua, as Moshe is equating the two of them. It is from here that Chazal say in *Pirkei Avos*² that the honor of a person's student should be as dear to them as their own.

This is not the only demonstration of empowerment and respect that Moshe publicly shows to Yehoshua. Later on, in Parshas Vaeschanan,³ Hashem tells Moshe to command Yehoshua and empower him with encouragement; Rashi⁴ explains that Moshe was simply priming his pupil for the bothers, burdens, and blowups that accompany the position of leadership, serving as a reinforcement and bolstering of confidence, while enabling Yehoshua to carry on with courage and composure. Evidently, the two men shared an incredible dynamic built on the foundation of mutual esteem and admiration for each other, which in turn allowed for each of them to reach tremendous heights.

However, this is not the only relationship that we see should be dealt with using tremendous reverence; the *Mechilta*⁵ in the week's parsha says that we learn from Aharon and Moshe that a person should honor his peer as he honors his mentor. After all, in Parshas Behaalosecha, Aharon says to Moshe, "I beseech you, my lord," despite being the older one in the relationship. Moreover, we see that one must honor his mentor as he honors the heavens, as Yehoshua tells Moshe, "My lord, Moshe, destroy (בָּלֵם) them," showing that the mutineers deserved to be annihilated because they were rebelling against him, [which is] equivalent in seriousness to having rebelled against HaKadosh Baruch Hu.⁶

Simply put, this parsha is a paradigm of the *mitzvah* of *bein Adam l'chaveiro* as well as the incredible reverence and veneration that each person can have for their fellow. In *Koheles*, Shlomo comments, "טוֹבִים הַשְּׂנִיִּים מִן־הָאֶחָד אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלָהֶם שָׂכָר טוֹב בְּעַמְלָם: כִּי אִם־יִפְּלוּ הָאֶחָד יָקִים אֶת־חֵבְרוֹ וְאִילוּ הָאֶחָד שָׁיְפוּל, וְאִין שְׁנֵי לְהִקְיָמוּ, אֶחָד יִרְאֵהוּ וְיִרְאֵהוּ — *two people will each enjoy greater benefit together than if each are alone, for should they fall, one can raise the other; but woe is one who falls with no companion to raise him!*"⁷ This parsha also foreshadows the unbelievable relationship that manifests between Moshe and his protégé as well as the continuous brotherly love that he shared with Aharon, mutual bonds of honor that serve as paragons and prototypes for us to follow in our endeavor to become model exemplars of the Ribono Shel Olam's servants.

¹ שמות יז: ט

² פרקי אבות ד: יב

³ דברים ג: כח

⁴ רש"י דברים ג: כח ד"ה וצו את יהושע

⁵ מכילתא תנחומא, בשלח כו

⁶ מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל יז: ט: א

⁷ קהלת ד: ט-י