

WHEN A REBBE IS EQUAL TO A FATHER

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 374, Bathing on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Good Shabbos!

When A Rebbe Is Equal To A Father

The pasuk [verse] says, "And these are the descendants of Aharon and Moshe on the day that G-d spoke to Moshe on Mt. Sinai" [Bamidbar 3:1]. Then the next pasuk mentions the names of the sons of Aharon, but Moshe's sons are not included. Rashi comments that Aharon's sons are called the descendants of Moshe as well, because he taught them Torah. For "whoever teaches the son of his friend Torah, the Torah considers it as if he fathered them" [Sanhedrin 19b].

The Maharal asks: based on this logic, the Torah should say that the entire population of Israel was like sons of Moshe. Moshe taught Torah to the entire nation. The Maharal answers that Rashi is making a specific point here. Although Moshe did, in fact, teach Torah to all of Israel, he must have taken extra time and extra care with his own nephews -- Aharon's sons. Certainly, he taught Torah to everyone, but he no doubt went the 'extra mile' to explain and review the Torah with his own nephews. The Maharal argues that a parent is defined by the willingness to go the extra mile. Set hours do not exist. There are no boundaries. A parent is always willing to do whatever it takes.

The principle that whoever teaches his friend's son Torah, is considered as though he fathered him, only applies when the "Rebbe" truly acts like a father in the sense that he is willing to go beyond the call of duty and in fact becomes like a parent.

I once heard a story from Rav Shiya Fishman, the Executive Vice-President of Torah U'Messorah. Rav Fishman had been a student of Rav Yitzchok Hutner (1907-1980). Rav Fishman related the following beautiful story involving his teacher.

When Rav Fishman was a young man in Kollel, he had a child with a serious medical situation. He went to his Rebbe, Rav Hutner, and unburdened himself with his personal problems -- to the extent that he broke down in tears and covered his face with his hands. After a few minutes, when he recovered, he looked back at Rav Hutner and saw that Rav Hutner too was crying. The disciple's pain

was the teacher's pain. The disciple's tears were the teacher's tears.

If one ever wonders why Rav Hutner was so successful in raising hundreds and hundreds of such special disciples, the reason is clear. Rav Hutner was not merely a teacher to his friends' children - he was their father as well!

The Torah is referring to this type of Rebbe, when it refers to Moshe as the father of Aharon's children.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.
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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (# 330). The corresponding halachic portion for this tape is: Sefer Rus and Its Halachic Implications. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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