



# Chukat

## The best way to influence people.

People will most likely be influenced by you, if they know that you love them.

In Parshat Chukat, we're told about the sad passing of Aharon, the High Priest, and the reaction of the people to his passing was quite extraordinary.

The Torah tells us 'vayivku oto shloshim yom kol Beit Yisrael' – the entire house of Israel wept for him for thirty days.

When Aharon's brother Moshe, the leader of the nation, passed away, as is described in the last chapter of the Torah, again we are told there that the nation wept for him for thirty days.

However, we are not told 'kol Beit Yisrael', the entire house of Israel.

Why this difference?

The sifrei explains Moshe's role was to be the national authority.

Rav Yisroel Salanter used to say, "If I am a Rabbi and everybody loves me, I am not a Rabbi, and if I am a Rabbi and nobody loves me, I am not a mensch."

You cannot be an authority and carry out leadership with conviction, if you are trying to please everybody all the time.

Some decisions will be unpopular because you have to do what is right. And that was

why the grief for Moshe was not as intense as it might have been.

Aharon's role however was very different. He was the high Priest. He was the spiritual role model. He reached out to people with compassion and with love.

In Pirkei Avot, Hillel tells us 'Hevei MiTalmidav shel Aharon', all of us should be like the disciples of Aharon: 'ohev shalom v'rodef shalom' – like Aharon we need to love peace and pursue it.

'Ohev et habriot umerkarvan laTorah' – and like Aharon we should love everybody and bring them close to Torah.

Notice, the two are connected, because you only stand a good chance of bringing people close to Torah, if they know that you love them.

If you want to enhance the lives of others, if you want them to improve their ways, if you want to inspire, guide and influence them, they need to know that you're doing it because you're interested in them – because you love them.

From Aharon we learn that if I would like to influence and inspire you, then you need to know that I want you to be the best you that you can possibly be and not because I want you to be just like me.

Shabbat Shalom.