

"And Moshe went and spoke these words ... a hundred and twenty years I am this day, I can no more go out and come in, and Hashem said to me you shall not go over. Hashem, your G-d, He will go over before you . . ." (31:2,3)

Moshe's farewell address to *Bnei Yisrael* seems enigmatic. Why does Moshe mention his advanced age and "frailty" in his closing words? *Horav Chaim Sheinberg, Shlita*, cites the *Sforno* who adds insight to Moshe's words, "*I am a hundred and twenty years old this day.*" Do not grieve over my death, for according to nature I should not be alive until today. "*I can no longer go out and come in.*" And even if I were to live, I would not be able to go out and come in on your behalf because of my advanced age. "*And Hashem has told me, 'You shall not go over.'*" Even if I were to live, I could not take you into *Eretz Yisrael*. Therefore, it is to your advantage that I die, so that you may enter into *Eretz Yisrael*. "*Hashem, your G-d, He will go over before you.*" You have no reason to grieve over the loss of my leadership, because, indeed, Hashem is your leader, and He will continue to provide for you.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* felt it was necessary to comfort *Bnei Yisrael*, who were obviously devastated by the knowledge of his impending death. The thought of losing their beloved leader forever cast them into a state of despair at a time when heightened joy was appropriate. *Bnei Yisrael* had just entered into the covenant with Hashem. In order to reinforce that contractual relationship it was critical that their resolve be strengthened and their spirits elevated. Moshe, the quintessential leader, roused himself during his last moments to reassure *Bnei Yisrael* that they would not be forsaken.

This, notes *Horav Sheinberg*, is the true hallmark of a *Torah* leader. He must be sensitive to the emotional concerns of his people. Moshe felt that his death would devastate *Bnei Yisrael* at a time when they should be overjoyed. Therefore, he minimized the effect of his demise to whatever extent possible. He allayed their concerns regarding his death and their consequent loss of leadership. Moshe neglected his personal emotions in deference to the need to nurture his flock.

Horav Sheinberg cites the *Siddur Ishei Yisrael*, who points out that this is the essence of our *tefillos*, prayers, on *Rosh Hashanah*. We do not ask favors for ourselves; we entreat Hashem that His Name and kingdom be universally exalted, that every human recognize that He is the source of all creation. When we defer our own personal requests and yield to *kavod Shomayim*, honor of Heaven, we will merit that our iniquities will be erased. We must be sensitive to the pain and anguish "suffered" by the *Shechinah*. On the *Yom Ha'din*, Day of Judgement, our *zechusim*, merits, are commensurate to the degree to which we are able to overlook our own personal needs and submit to the requirements of *kavod Shomayim* and our fellow Jew.