

M“And this is the blessing that Moshe, the man of G-d, bestowed.” (33:1)

Moshe Rabbeinu's last official action as leader of Klal Yisrael was to bless the people prior to his leaving this world. The Torah calls him ish Elokim, man of G-d – a very impressive

appellation. What did he do to deserve this title? Ish Elokim is a title comprised of two almost paradoxical aspects: ish, man, relating to people, interacting on an earthly level; and Elokim, G-dly, spiritual, divested of earthly contacts. It is a title that bespeaks his ability to be a person, and, simultaneously, to transcend the physical aspects, desires and emotions that are intrinsic to human beings. Moshe Rabbeinu fit this characterization. After forty years of leadership, of the strife, complaints, trials and daily tests that accompany leadership, he was about to take leave of his flock. Yet, he still blessed them! That is leadership at its zenith. They complained about a lack of water, that catalyzed the incident concerning getting water from the rock, which – in turn – ultimately brought about Moshe's death. Nonetheless, he was prepared to bless the people. He was not angry. He was not vengeful. He remained the same, loving Moshe who had cared for the nation throughout their sojourn in the wilderness. He was an ish Elokim, a man who transcended this world. He was still, however, an ish, a man, interacting.

We now have an idea of what comprises leadership. From a leadership perspective, people are not always right – or wrong. It does not mean that when they are wrong, it justifies becoming angry and spiteful. It means being loving and forgiving. Leadership means transcending one's emotions and doing what is right – even if it is not a popular response.

Hashem lauded Moshe Rabbeinu for his action in breaking the Luchos. In fact, the Torah considers it his greatest deed. He was prepared to destroy his life's work if it was not the right thing or if it was not the right time. Aharon Hakohen and the Zekeinim, Elders, disagreed with him. They asked him to reconsider. They urged him to wait, hoping that the people would repent and the Luchos could be given at a later date, a more propitious time. No – felt Moshe. There could be no compromise regarding Torah. His decision was not popular, but it was his decision based upon his understanding of Hashem's will. He spent his life immersed in G-d's will, and, consequently, understood what was right and what was best for Klal Yisrael. He acted accordingly, and Hashem agreed with him. He was an ish Elokim whose decision was governed by Elokim. Yet, he was still an ish. He taught us the true meaning of leadership.

