

“Who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall take them out and bring them in.” (27:17)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* presents what appears, at first glance, to be redundant qualifications for his successor – *Klal Yisrael's* next leader. The proposed leader “shall go out before them and come in before them.” He should lead them in battle, remaining at the forefront every time the nation went to war. Is this not the way that Moshe led the nation? Then Moshe asks that the leader take them out and bring them in. Is this any different from his first criteria which states that the leader shall go out before them? **Horav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, zl**, explains that these requests are not redundant, but, actually, represent two variant qualities of leadership, which are both necessary and combine together to make a successful leader.

A leader must be a focused person, who understands his nation, knows what makes them tick and who has pre-established goals and objectives set before him. He knows where he would like to bring them. He knows where their needs will be best served, and where their individual qualities will achieve their greatest fruition. He, however, has a problem, one that impedes his ability to guide the nation successfully: He can bring them to their goals, but he is neither able to settle them there, nor maintain their successful acclimation to the place where he has brought them. His people are a diverse group with varied perspectives on life and living. They have unity issues; they are not always able to work harmoniously with one another. As a result of this dichotomy in his leadership qualities, he remains a flawed leader, unable to realize his goals, incapable of catalyzing the aspirations he has for his nation to fruition.

There are such leaders who know what is best for their flock, yet are unable to bring about its realization. Indeed, they are able to prove that the course they have chosen is best for the nation, but if the people neither listen to nor believe in him or in their own capabilities, it will not just happen. They will remain at a standstill and then eventually atrophy. A leader must focus on two aspects of leadership: *Va'yisau*, “And they traveled” – he must move his people, help them focus on goals and how to reach these goals. *Va'yachanu*; “And they encamped” – once they arrive at their goals, they must be able to maintain and hold on to their achievements. This may often be the greatest test for a leader. Moshe asked that the next leader be one “who shall go out before them and come in before them” – a man with a vision, who knows where his nation should be; and is able to guide them towards the lofty goals that he has set for them. Then he must be able “to take them out and bring them in” – to settle them and catalyze the realization of his lofty goals. Some people can handle the “journey,” but find it difficult to “settle in” to the new place, new conditions, new responsibilities. This is where leadership plays a pivotal role. Individuals run for public office, talking up a storm and selling their ideas to the people. But when it comes to their realization, they are unable to pull it off, thus leaving office as ineffective and inept leaders.

Rav Weinberg applies this logic to illuminate an episode in *Navi* in which *Eliyahu HaNavi* prays to Hashem for His support in combating the *neviei ha'baal*, false prophets of the *baal* idol. *Eliyahu*

prayed to Hashem during the *zman Minchah*, time of the *Minchah*, afternoon service, saying, *Aneini Hashem aneini*, “Answer me Hashem, answer me” (*Melachim I:18,36*). The *Talmud Brachos* 6b explains the double *aneini*, answer me. Eliyahu asked that fire should miraculously descend from Heaven to burn the *Ketores*, Incense, which he was offering. Also, *aneini*, answer me, that the people will realize that the fire which descends is Divine – not some sort of physically-induced supernatural event, such as through the medium of witchcraft.

Eliyahu’s request is enigmatic. The word *aneini* means answer me, when, in fact, he is praying to Hashem that the people believe in the Divine fire and not allege that it is fake, a form of witchcraft or black magic. Why is Eliyahu taking this on himself? If they do not believe in the true source of the fire, it is an indication that they are heretics. It is not him – it is them!

Obviously Eliyahu’s prayer has a deeper meaning. This is a sad reality that is seen more often than we care to admit. A leader may know the correct and proper path that his flock should adopt in order to succeed. He is even able to substantiate his beliefs with Divine evidence, supernatural occurrences that have taken place, events which support his position. He still must pray to Hashem that the people trust in him and not utilize every excuse to denigrate and diminish the validity of his proof. For this, Eliyahu prayed to Hashem: *Aneini* – “Answer me!” – that the people trust me and not attribute the Divine assistance that I receive to ignominious sources.