

May Hashem... appoint a man over the assembly. Who shall go out before them and come in before them who shall take them out and who shall bring them in. (27:16,17)

The Jewish leader must possess the following two qualities: He must be strong, ready to lead his people into battle -- not cowering in the rear lines. He must also take a stand on Jewish issues, even if his position is not a popular one. When he sees the people veering from *daas Torah*, the perspective of *Torah* for our lives, then he must protest vehemently. He must do everything within his power to prevent their deviation. He must go "*lifneihem*," *before them*, he must lead - not be led. He must do what is right, even if the people do not approve of his actions.

In the *Talmud Moed Katan 25b*, *Chazal* tell us that when Rabbi Yaakov passed away, the stars which are usually seen only at night were manifest during the day. **Horav Mordechai Rogov, zl**, explains that this was a sign from Heaven that Rabbi Yaakov was not an ordinary leader. He was so strong in his conviction and *hashkafah*, philosophy, that even if everybody felt that things were fine - that literally the sun was shining for our people, that peace reigned - his perspective would pierce through the bogus peace to expose the fraud that prevailed. When he saw the darkness, he cried out, "It is night! The light you see is not the light of the sun, but of the stars! We are about to fall into an abyss of darkness." Hashem rewarded such staunch leadership with His approval. He brought out the stars during the day to demonstrate that Rabbi Yaakov was correct in his opinion. Only a true *gadol*, great man, presents the statements issued by various leaders -- even scholars, founders of movements -- in their clear perspective. Taking a stand entails courage, especially when it is against well-meaning people who simply are not erudite in *Torah* law and philosophy. This is a critical aspect of *Torah* leadership.

There is a second trait that a *gadol* must exhibit. At times, he must "*take them out and bring them in*." He must stand together with the people. He must give them courage and succor to go on, to triumph over pain and adversity, to withstand challenge, and to succeed under difficult circumstances. While many leaders possess both of these qualities, some have a difficult time discerning when to exercise strength and aggressiveness and when to be flexible and supportive.

Chazal tell us that when Avraham *Avinu* died, all of the world leaders stood in a row as mourners to lament his passing. They said, "*Woe is the world that has lost its leader. Woe is the ship that has lost its captain*." What is the implication of these two analogies? *Horav* Rogov explains that there are two types of leaders: one leads on land; the other leads in the water. Land and water are analogies for two divergent situations. Land symbolizes stability, normalcy and peace. Water - with its waves - implies stormy circumstances, strife, challenge, situations that challenge the capabilities of the leader. Some leaders are great in times of peace, when everything seems to go smoothly, when all factions of the community seem to get along, when everyone sublimates himself to *Torah* directive as expounded by the *gedolei ha'dor*. If things were to change, if a crisis were to appear, this leader would probably disappear.

The alternative type of leader seems to thrive on crisis. He is able to stand tall. He leads his flock during crucial periods, when the correct decision means survival and ambiguity can instantaneously transform into serious dilemma. This leader is great under pressure, decisive in the face of challenge, but uninspirational when stability and peace are the standard. He just has nothing to do. He is a problem person; he actually thrives on solving problems. A real leader governs under all circumstances. He is a man for all seasons and all situations. Avraham *Avinu* personified this trait. His passing was felt by everyone. The man who was related to all people under all conditions was gone. Moshe *Rabbeinu* followed in the Patriarch's footsteps. He now sought a leader that embodied both qualities.