

## **Moshe called to Yehoshua, and he said to him... Be strong and of good courage, for you will come with this people into the Land. (31:7)**

Moshe *Rabbeinu* said to Yehoshua (*Rashi*), "Make sure that the elders of the generation are with you; act according to their opinions and advice. For you will come with (*tavo*), the people when they come into *Eretz Yisrael*." Moshe's idea of leadership (as implied by the word *tavo*) is one of consensus, in which everybody is on the same page. Such a leader must successfully navigate the various opinions of the people and establish a workable situation in which his authority is accepted.

Hashem seems to have different plans for Yehoshua's leadership, when He says (Ibid 23), "Be strong and of good courage, for you will bring (*tavi*) the people into the Land." *Tavi* is different from *tavo*. *Tavi* does not mean "come along" with the people. It means that you will lead them from the front. You are in charge. No consensus, one leader; one man who gives the orders while everyone listens.

Let us analyze the varied approaches to leadership. Moshe has been leader for forty years. He has suffered through rebellion, complaints, individuals questioning his authority and dedication and ingratitude. He understands the importance of having support from the elders and other community leaders. He knows the people can be difficult. The *Sifri* (end of *Parashas Vayeilech*) writes the following: "Moshe said to Yehoshua, 'This nation whose reins I hand over to you, they are still *gediim*, young goats; they are *tinokos*, young children. Do not be overly demanding of them, for even their G-d says about them, *naar Yisrael v'ohaveihu*, "When *Yisrael* was a lad I loved him" (*Hoshea* 11:1).'"

Apparently, Moshe was instructing Yehoshua to lead with patience and compassion, seeking to exculpate, rather than punish – very much in the manner that one raises a child. Yehoshua was to lead, rather than serve as an authority. This seems incongruous with Hashem's instruction to Yehoshua to "be strong and of good courage." *Imrei Shamai* asserts that ideal leadership must establish its authority and jurisdiction to demonstrate its supremacy, such that the message is: one leader; one voice; one direction. This is what Hashem was apprising Yehoshua: to take command of the nation; to hold the reins tightly; and to be unyielding to dissent.

Moshe focused on the aspect of teaching and guidance. The leader of *Klal Yisrael* is also its quintessential *Rebbe*. As such, his responsibility is more than to lead followers, but also to teach and train his followers to grow and themselves become leaders. Such a leader need not be one of authority, but rather, one who leads by personality, whose charisma is such that people gravitate to him, who want to learn from him, who are invigorated by his effusive passion. At the same time, such a person must lead from strength, otherwise his authority is undermined and his personality no longer serves as the basis for his ability to reach the masses. A great leader integrates both qualities: authority and leadership. Thus, he must focus on the needs of the *klal*, collective

community, but he may never forget the individual Jew and his needs. What is important to him should be important to – and understood by – the leader.

*Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, zl*, leader of Pre-World War II Eastern European Jewry, was such a person. He was once informed of an unlearned shoemaker who had sustained the untimely loss of one of his eight children. *Rav* Chaim Ozer was inconsolable. Those who were present could not understand the extent of his tears. It was not long before this that *Rav* Chaim Ozer himself had suffered the loss of his daughter, his only child, who had succumbed to the bite of a rabid dog. She had just become engaged. Yet, even then, he had not cried as bitterly as he did now. Indeed, he had continued writing *halachic* responsa up until the moment that she returned her soul to its Source.

He explained, “When my daughter passed away, I could console myself with the knowledge that she was going to a better world. That is clear to me. I do not know, however, if the World to Come is as real to the shoemaker. I am crying for his pain – not mine.”

*Rav Simcha Zissel, zl*, the *Alter m’Kelm*, teaches, “The role of a king is to deal with the needs of the people.” Thus, the more one identifies with the plight of others (*nosei b’ol im chaveiro*), the more fit he is to be a king.

In order to identify with the needs of the people, one must understand them. This is the message Moshe *Rabbeinu* conveyed to Yehoshua as he was about to transfer the reins of leadership to him.