

Who shall go out before them and come in before them. (27:17)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* asked Hashem to appoint his successor – one who would seamlessly move into the position of leadership, both in the practical sense in his ability to address the spiritual needs of the Jewish nation. Among the criteria which Moshe suggested was that the leader be one who would lead from the front – leading the men into battle and successfully leading them home. It is understandable that a leader be at the fore front in the battlefield to encourage his men, letting them know that he, too, is fighting alongside together. Why is it necessary for the leader to be at the front for their victorious homecoming? How does this show the leader cares for his people?

Horav Chaim Toitu, Shlita (Torah v'Chaim) explains this with the following story. A terrible plague broke out in the city of Warsaw, Poland. Many Jewish residents of the Warsaw community contracted this illness and, as a result, many ended up in the hospital for treatment. On *Erev Yom Kippur*, the Rav of the community, *Horav Shlomo Zalmen Lipshutz, zl (Chemdas Shlomo)*, made an announcement that any Jew who was serving in the hospital in any capacity, should not come to *shul* on *Yom Kippur*. One would think that he feared them to be contagious themselves, risking the health of the community. No. He explained that the patient's welfare was more important than their *davening*. These special Jews had a responsibility to their patients who should not be left alone.

On *Yom Kippur* night, the *shul* was packed. Everyone was in attendance – except for the *Rav*, who was nowhere to be found. After some time, a messenger was dispatched to the *Rav's* house to learn the reason for the *Rav's* absence. The problem was: the *Rav* was not home. No one knew where he was. Their *Rav* seemed to be missing. They divided up into small groups to search for him throughout the community. In the end, on a hunch, one group went to the hospital to ascertain if the *Rav* might be there. Lo and behold, the *Rav* was there addressing the needs of the patients. He explained, "I checked at the hospital if the volunteers were there. I was dismayed to discover that these wonderful *baalei chesed*, kind people, decided to go to *shul* at the expense of the patients. So, I stayed to do whatever I could to alleviate the pain and loneliness of the patients."

We derive from here that a true leader never leaves his people. He waits until the very end to see to it that no Jew is left behind. This is to what Moshe alluded. *Klal Yisrael* required a leader who would not simply lead them in battle, but one who would remain with them until the very end of the campaign in order to accompany everyone home.