

Moshe summoned Yehoshua and said to him before the eyes of all Yisrael, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall come with this People to the Land.” (31:7)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* summoned Yehoshua in front of all *Klal Yisrael* in order to build Yehoshua's esteem. Let everyone see and note that Yehoshua has been designated as Moshe *Rabbeinu's* heir and successor. Moshe was the quintessential leader, but taking the people into *Eretz Yisrael* was not an option that was available to him. *Yaan lo he'emantem Bee l'hakdisheini*; “Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me” (*Bamidbar* 20:12): Certainly, Moshe believed in Hashem, but, as the *Kli Yakar* explains, *shelo gerantem l'haamin li*, “Because you did not cause others to believe in Me.” Moshe should have realized (explains *Kli Yakar*) that *Klal Yisrael* was a multifaceted, complex people which included many *geirim*, converts, who required constant inspiration. He should have employed every opportunity for increasing their *emunah*, faith. Otherwise, Hashem would not have taken away Moshe's leadership. This was a new crowd, however, born-again Jews and Jews by choice, who demanded constant care and sensitivity, with heavy doses of inspiration. Miracles to bolster their faith were necessities. Different souls are drawn to different aspects of Torah and Judaism. A leader must realize that a new generation is not a “one size fits all” generation.

This idea applies as well in contemporary times, when a leader must address the variegated spiritual and emotional needs of a multifaceted crowd of listeners. The leader must be well-grounded, not only in Torah, *halachah*, *hashkafah*, Jewish philosophy, but he must also be well-versed in the full panoply of Torah expression – and know how best to convey his knowledge to his listeners. Otherwise, he will have misguided, confused listeners – or worse (might be better than confused), no listeners.

It all begins (and ends) with *emunah*. One whose faith in Hashem is deficient does not have much of a chance for spiritual survival. The challenges out there are many, and the people seeking to undermine his beliefs are constant. They are equipped with the knowledge that their own misguided beliefs and deviant lifestyle are in vogue only as long as they are able to ensnare others, who are as spiritually crippled as they are. The *Lelover Rebbe*, *Shlita*, relates an incident which occurred one hundred and fifty years ago in Yerushalayim, whose lesson resonates even today.

A simple (unlearned) Jew brought his chicken to the *shochet*, ritual slaughterer, which was soon slaughtered. The man brought the chicken home. As he was cleaning the chicken, he noticed that the chicken was covered with lice. Unsure if this condition would render the chicken unkosher, he returned to the *shochet* and showed him the chicken. The *shochet* replied, “So what? Where does it state in the Torah that a chicken may not have lice?” Most would be calmed with this response. Not our “hero”; he wanted another opinion. He sought out a *rav* who concurred with the *shochet*: the chicken was kosher. Nonetheless, this Jew was not placated. He wanted to be certain that the chicken was kosher. The *gadol hador*, preeminent leader of the generation, *Horav Yehoshua Leib Diskin*, *zl*, lived in Yerushalayim. He would be the next stop.

Unlike the previous *halachic* arbiters, the *Maharil Diskin* (as he was reverently called) instructed the man to locate the chicken's head and open it up. The man returned to the *shochet*, located the head, opened it up and found it to be infested with lice. This meant the chicken's brain was rotting inside – rendering the chicken unkosher. *Rav Yehoshua Leib* explained, "All chickens have lice, which they are able to shake off. This chicken obviously was unable to shake off the lice. This led me to believe that the lice were an internal problem. As I suspected, the lice were infested in the brain. The problem was in the chicken's head."

The *LeLover* derives an important lesson from this incident. All people go through life confronted, at times, with various issues and challenges. It is never smooth sailing for anyone. As long as the "head" (the mind) is healthy and aware that everything comes from Hashem, he will be able to shake off all notions of difficulties. If, however, a person's head is not healthy; if he has deficiencies in his basic *emunah* in Hashem; if he does not grasp the notion that everything which occurs is orchestrated by Hashem for a reason – then he will find himself in difficult predicaments.

When a person believes that events happen naturally, that Hashem does not play a role in one's life, then the spiritual lice have invaded his mind. When the mind is, however, securely anchored in its commitment to Hashem, when one knows that whatever occurs in his life is Hashem's edict, the challenges to his *emunah* might arise, but he will be able to shake them off.

I close with a selection from the *Ohr HaChaim's* commentary to *Shemos 22:6*, which is especially apropos at this time of year with the *Yimei HaDin*, Days of Judgment, approaching quickly. He writes: *Ein lecha shah v'rega she'ein Hashem Yisborach oseh peulah im ha'adam bein b'bechinas gufo bein b'ebechinas tzarachav*; "There is nary a moment that Hashem is not doing something for a person, whether in regard to his physical existence or his mundane needs." There is never a moment that we are detached from His care and from His surveillance.