

And Hashem said to Moshe, Behold your days are drawing near to die, summon Yehoshua and both of you shall stand in the Ohel Moed, and I shall instruct him. (31:14)

It would seem that Hashem could instruct Yehoshua, even if Moshe's days were not drawing to a climax. Why does the *Torah* seem to emphasize that Yehoshua was receiving his instruction only because Moshe's life was ending? Could Yehoshua not have received his charge after Moshe's demise?

The *Netziv, zl*, cites *Chazal* in the *Talmud Bava Basra 75a* who teach us that the *zekeinim*, elders of that generation, compared the "face" of Moshe to the "face" of the sun and the "face" of Yehoshua to that of the moon. The analogy is interpreted in the following manner: The moon receives its light only from the sun, since it does not have its own luminosity. So, too, the source of Yehoshua's spiritual brilliance was Moshe. We now understand the reason for specifically instructing Yehoshua prior to Moshe's death. As the moon shines only as the sun sets, so, too, Yehoshua could not shine as long as Moshe's light was in full luster.

Perhaps this analogy would serve us well in communicating the feeling a *talmid*, student, necessarily has for his *rebbe*, *Torah* teacher. The *talmid* must sublimate himself to his *rebbe*. He must feel that his own spiritual ascendancy reaches its zenith only as long as he renders himself insignificant. The shine/inspiration of the *rebbe* becomes infused in the *talmid*. The light permeates the student and shines through him outward to the world. If the student, however, "blocks" this light by filling himself with arrogance, he cannot serve as a vehicle for transmitting the *mesorah* to others.

We may wonder why it was the elders who commented about the disparity between Moshe and Yehoshua. Did not anyone else notice the apparent distinction between the two? *Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl*, comments that the younger men of that generation never knew Moshe in his prime so they had no way of knowing that Moshe achieved preeminence even as a young man. Thus, they felt that Yehoshua, although young and inexperienced, would attain Moshe's spiritual plateau in due time. The elders, on the other hand, remembered Moshe as a youth. They were acutely aware of Moshe's outstanding brilliance and extraordinary spiritual and moral persona. They were the ones who recognized the disparity between the Yehoshua of the present and the Moshe of the past.