

Moshe came and spoke all the words of this Song... he and Hoshea bin Nun. (32:44)

While it was only Moshe *Rabbeinu* who proclaimed the Song, on the last day of his life he stood with Yehoshua, his worthy successor, to symbolize the transfer of leadership. Otherwise, cynics might belittle Yehoshua's qualifications for leadership, saying that, as long as Moshe was alive, Yehoshua was afraid to lift his head. Actually, it was not Yehoshua who was different – it was the nation that was about to enter *Eretz Yisrael* that was different. The nation that left Egypt and journeyed for forty years in the Wilderness was *melumad b'nissim*, used to miracles. They were entering a land where miracles would no longer be overt.

In *Parashas Nitzavim* (*Tanchuma Nitzavim* I), *Chazal* focus on Moshe's gathering all the Jews and standing them up before him, as he initiated them in the *bris*, covenant, with Hashem. When Moshe stood them up before him, he wanted them to witness his passing the reins of leadership to Yehoshua. Likewise, prior to passing the baton of leadership to the *zekeinim*, elders, Yehoshua gathered together the nation and had them stand before Hashem. Thus, when the *zekeinim* transferred their leadership to Shmuel *HaNavi*, they stood the people up. When Shmuel *HaNavi* was about to take leave of this nation and transfer it to *Malchei Yisrael*, Jewish Kings, he also called the people to stand up before Hashem.

Horav Tzadok HaKohen, zl, m'Lublin (*Pri Tzaddik Nitzavim* 3) writes that *Chazal* are teaching us one of the most critical principles of *avodas Hashem*, serving the Almighty. Our nation can thrive only when we “stand up before Hashem” under the leadership of our Torah giants.

Leaders differ from one another; their leadership styles and foci are often consistent with the generation they are leading. Every tzaddik who stands at the helm of the generation serves the particular needs of the flock to which he is ministering. Thus, when a transition of leadership occurs, it is understandable that it may take some work on our part to attune ourselves to the new leader's style. We must adjust and accept his approach to leading us to our destiny. Change is real; change is, at times, necessary; change is difficult; change is a part of life.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* led the nation during a period in which miracles were commonplace. The liberation from Egypt, with its accompanying miracles and wonders, set the tone for Bnei Yisrael's forty-year journey through the Wilderness. Moshe stood at the helm of the nation as Bnei Yisrael was pushed beyond the limits of normal everyday living. These miracles -- such as bread/manna from Heaven; protection courtesy of the Pillars of Cloud and Fire – requiring no need to change or launder their clothing. In other words, this generation was free from worry concerning the mundane aspects of life, allowing them the time and peace of mind to serve Hashem.

Yehoshua's function and challenge were to take a nation accustomed to supernatural living and prepare the people for leading a life of sanctity in a materialistic society. They would now farm the land, make their own clothes, live off the products of their labors – and continue to live a life of kedushah, studying Torah and observing mitzvos. Thus, Moshe's standing the nation before both

of them had a dual purpose. He intimated to them to fortify themselves for their future entrance into the Land. Their next mission, to live as a mamleches kohanim v'goi kadosh, kingdom of priests and a holy nation, would continue in Eretz Yisrael. Moshe had taught them well, as he wanted the transition to Yehoshua's leadership to be as seamless as possible.

Perhaps Moshe's standing with Yehoshua sent another message to the nation. Unquestionably, the future requires innovation and, to an extent, forward-thinking. Grounding it in the principles and experiences of the past, however, ensures that progress is informed, stable and ethically sound. This balance helps create a future which honors the past by incorporating its timeless principles, thus honoring our heritage, while simultaneously embracing new possibilities.

When the nation would look up to Yehoshua, they would also "see" Moshe, his principles and values, expounded by Yehoshua. When people see continuity, they sense stability, which is the bedrock of upward growth. Yehoshua honed his mind on the myriad lessons he gained. Thus, when Yehoshua spoke, the nation also heard.