

“May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly, who shall go out before them and come in before them.” (27:16,17)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* asked Hashem to appoint his successor, hoping that his own son would be the one to succeed him as the nation's leader. Hashem had other plans: “Yehoshua, who has never departed from the (your) tent, deserves to be granted leadership over the nation.” As Shlomo *Ha'melech* says (*Mishlei* 27:18) *Notzer t'ainah yochal piryah*, “He who watches over the fig tree should eat its fruit.” *Rashi*, who cites the above *Chazal*, indicates that Yehoshua was selected as a result of his devotion to the *ohalah shel Torah*, incredible diligence in not leaving the tent of Torah. *Lo yamush mitoch ha'ohel*, “He never departed the tent,” is the description of the quintessential *masmid*, diligent student of Torah, Yehoshua. From his early youth, Yehoshua displayed an unparalleled devotion to the Torah and to his revered *Rebbe*, Moshe. This, apparently, earned him the position as successor to Moshe.

Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl, distinguishes between two types of *yerushah*, inheritance, which Moshe bequeathed to Yehoshua. Moshe was the *melech*, king of *Klal Yisrael*. He was, however, not a king in the conventional sense. His monarchy consisted of *malchus mikoach HaTorah*, monarchy as a result of his greatness in Torah. *Va'yehi biYeshurun melech*, “He became a king over Yeshurun” (*Devarim* 33:5). While there is a difference of opinion among commentators as to who is the “king” of the *pasuk*, some *Midrashim*, followed by *Ibn Ezra*, render Moshe as the king, since the entire nation showed its allegiance and obedience to him as a result of his greatness in Torah and for being their quintessential *Rebbe*.

Yehoshua's diligence was very much like that of Moshe, who toiled in Heaven without food or water for forty days and nights to learn Torah. Yehoshua became Moshe's heir apparent by emulating his *Rebbe's* devotion to Torah. Thus, he too, became the *melech* over *Klal Yisrael*.

There is, however, a distinction between Moshe's *malchus*, monarchy, and the monarchy of other kings. When a king dies, his son succeeds him, because *malchus oveir b'yerushah*, monarchy is passed on through inheritance. Moshe's *malchus*, founded upon his *koach HaTorah*, power of the Torah, could only be bequeathed to someone who could be called Moshe's spiritual heir. As a result of Yehoshua's peerless devotion to Torah, he was worthy of succeeding Moshe.

This idea (distinguishing between *malchus mikoach HaTorah* and conventional monarchy) is established by the **Meshach Chochmah** in his commentary to *Parashas Yisro* (*Shemos* 18:2). We find Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the leader and king of *Yisrael*, serving Yisro, Aharon *HaKohen* and the *Zekeinim*, Elders, during Yisro's welcome “banquet.” Moshe was a king. How could someone of such exalted stature perform the menial task of serving others? Even if we were to argue that Moshe was *mochel*, forgave/absolved his honor, *melech ein kevodo machul*, a king's honor is not exculpatory, may not be absolved. *Rav Meir Simchah, zl*, explains that this law applies only to

conventional monarchy, not to monarchy that one earns as a result of his Torah. Thus, Moshe was able to act as the waiter and serve the guests.

We turn now to another aspect of Yehoshua's right to leadership: *Ish asher ruach bo*, "A man in whom there is spirit," an individual who understands the nature and spirit of each of his constituents. This does not seem to be an inherited qualification. Yehoshua had this characteristic because of his unique personality, which was honed by the Torah that he learned.

Rav Eliyahu Baruch posits that, actually, we are not dealing with two qualifications for leadership. Rather, we are concerned here with two bequests which Moshe bestowed upon Yehoshua. First, Moshe transmitted to Yehoshua the Torah which he received from Hashem on *Har Sinai*. Yehoshua earned this as a result of his diligence and greatness in Torah. Torah bequeaths Torah. Second, was Moshe's ability to lead the nation. This came as a result of Yehoshua's personal qualifications, his ability to understand the unique differences between men.

We have identified two aspects of Moshe's leadership bestowed on Yehoshua: *mesiras HaTorah*, transmitting to him the Torah and *mesiras ha'hanhagah*, transferring to Yehoshua the power to lead the nation. At first glance, one would suggest that these two leadership qualities distinguished between the spiritual and the mundane. I do not think so. Yehoshua's greatness in understanding each person, in knowing how to address their concerns, was derived from his greatness in Torah. As the quintessential *ben Torah*, he absorbed *daas Torah*, the unique wisdom of Torah. One's mind is transformed, and the abilities and insights not granted to the average person become the sole possession of one whose mind has been transformed through *daas Torah*.