

Hashem said to Moshe, “Ascend to Me to the mountain... and I shall give you the stone Tablets and the teaching and the commandment... Moshe stood up with Yehoshua, his servant. (24:12,13)

Hashem instructed Moshe *Rabbeinu* to ascend the mountain, so that He could teach him the Torah and give him the *Luchos*. Moshe left together with Yehoshua, his trusted servant. What was Yehoshua doing there? He was not asked to attend – nor did he have any function at the mountain. This “party” was for Moshe alone. *Rashi* explains that Yehoshua accompanied Moshe out of a sense of loyalty. He waited for forty days at the foot of the mountain for his revered *Rebbe* to return. *Chazal* teach us that it was this fidelity to his *Rebbe* that earned Yehoshua the position as Moshe’s successor.

According to *Rashi*, Yehoshua’s presence at the foot of the mountain was his elective choice. If this is the case, why did Yehoshua wait at the foot of the mountain – why did he not go home and return forty days later to welcome his *Rebbe* back? This indicates, explains **Horav Arye Leib Heyman, zl**, that Yehoshua’s presence at the foot of the mountain has greater meaning than a simple accompaniment. Indeed, *Chazal* inform us that *Manna* descended from Heaven for Yehoshua alone – at his solitary outpost. Apparently, he was needed there. Rav Heyman suggests that the Torah was to be given to *Klal Yisrael* through Moshe in the accompaniment of Yehoshua.

When Moshe ascended the mountain, the official process of the Giving of the Torah began. Certain parts of the Torah had been given to us earlier, such as *Shabbos* and *Kibbutz Av V’Eim*, Honoring one’s parents. This was, however, the first time that Hashem gave the entire Torah to the nation. This required a descendant of Rachel *Imeinu* (Yehoshua descended from Ephraim, Yosef’s son) to collaborate with Moshe, a descendant of Leah *Imeinu*, in giving the Torah. Rav Heyman posits that every seminal event in *Klal Yisrael* required the involvement of a partnership between Rachel and Leah’s descendants. He traces it all back to the very beginning, when Leah was switched for Rachel, and Rachel gave up her *simanim*, private signs, that had been given to her by Yaakov *Avinu*, who feared that exactly what happened would indeed occur.

Let us take a hard look at *galus Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exile. It was catalyzed by *Bnei Leah*, who reviled Yosef, the son of Rachel. Although Yaakov was the one who gave them reason for the jealousy and ensuing hatred, he encouraged them neither to kill him, nor to sell him as a slave. It was all their own doing. The mere fact that much later the *Asarah Harugei Malchus*, Ten Martyred Sages, died brutal deaths as punishment for the ten brothers who sold Yosef is a strong indication that their action was acrimonious and blameworthy.

The hatred toward Yosef was quite possibly the result of the brother’s claim to the tradition of the Patriarchs. They felt that they were the ones who should serve as the conduit for the transmission

of the Patriarchal *Mesorah*, tradition. Why should Yosef be the one to assume this mantle of leadership? As a result of the envy that, regrettably, the brothers manifested towards Yosef, they could never accept a position of co-leadership in which they would share with him. Therefore, Rav Heyman posits, since the sons of Leah were “responsible” for the exile, one of their descendants, Moshe *Rabbeinu*, would have to be charged with liberating the Jewish People from the Egyptian bondage.

We still have not traced the issue to its original source. Yaakov worked for seven years with the objective being quite clear: Rachel was to become his wife. Hashem manipulated events, so that Leah became Yaakov’s wife. He saw the bitter weeping of Leah, the fear that she had of falling into Eisav’s portion. It was too much for this woman to endure. Hashem stepped in, and she married Yaakov. Without Rachel’s willing participation, however, it would not have happened. Hashem, thus, allowed Rachel to play a leading role in Yaakov and Leah’s marriage. At the end of the day, however, Leah married Yaakov, and Rachel was left out in the cold. Therefore, Hashem, Who never deprives anyone of their rightful reward, established in the Jewish tradition that whenever Leah or her descendants achieved a position of prominence or were involved in executing an important milestone for *Klal Yisrael* – Rachel must have her fair share, because without Rachel, theoretically, Leah’s marriage would not have occurred.

The miracle of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exodus, catalyzed an awesome revelation of Hashem’s might and glory. Likewise, the seminal event in Jewish history, the Giving of the Torah, created a spiritual stir in this world unparalleled by any other event. Both of these occurrences were executed through the medium of *Bnei Leah*. Moshe, Aharon, Miriam. Rachel deserved her due. She was compensated with the miracle of *Purim*, in which the Jewish People were saved as a result of Mordechai and Esther’s devotion. Both Mordechai and Esther were descendants of the tribe of Binyamin, Rachel’s younger son. As a result of the *neis*, miracle, of *Purim*, the Jewish People affirmed their commitment to the Torah – this time with supreme, eternal joy.

So much more can be said, but we will, for the sake of brevity, return to our original question. Why did Yehoshua wait at the foot of the mountain for an entire forty days? The Torah is the purpose of Creation. Without the Torah, there is no need for the world. It was given to the Jewish People through Moshe *Rabbeinu*, Leah’s descendant. It is understandable that Rachel must be acknowledged; she must somehow share in this event.

Moshe was called to ascend the mountain. Yehoshua accompanied him without being called. After all, as a descendant of Rachel, he belonged there, going along with his *Rebbe* to the foot of the mountain. At this point, only Moshe was invited to ascend. Yehoshua waited for forty days until he returned. This was not a simple case of waiting. It was Yehoshua’s way of receiving the Torah together with Moshe. This is why Yehoshua received his own *Manna* at the foot of the mountain. He belonged there. Yehoshua deserved to be present, because it was his great-grandmother who had facilitated Moshe’s grandmother’s marriage to Yaakov.