

## And Moshe called Hoshea Ben Nun - Yehoshua. (13:16)

*Chazal* tell us that Moshe added the "yud" to Hoshea's name, so that his name would now begin with the letters of Hashem's Name. (*yud-hay*) Moshe apparently suspected that the spies were not acting in good faith. Realizing the disaster that awaited his student, Moshe prayed that Yehoshua be spared and not fall under the influence of the other spies. The obvious question is why Yehoshua merited his prayers more than Calev -- or anyone else for that matter? The commentators offer various reasons for this. **Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita**, cites **Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl**, who offers a profound analysis.

In the *Talmud Bava Metzia* *Chazal* relate that when Reish Lakish passed away, Rabbi Yochanan, his *rebbe* and colleague, became ill. He simply could not tolerate the death of his closest student. His colleagues, seeing that Rabbi Yochanan was apathetic, prayed for his death, so that he would be relieved of his overwhelming pain and anguish. *Rav* Chaim wonders why did they not pray for him to be healed. Was death a better alternative than relief from his sickness? Apparently, Rabbi Yochanan sustained an unreplacable irreparable loss; healing him would not remedy his circumstance. Rabbi Yochanan could not go on without his unique student. Life without him was simply not life.

Let us now attempt to understand Rabbi Yochanan. He was the *Tanna* who was struck by tragedy many times. *Chazal* relate that he had ten sons who all died during his lifetime. In fact, he kept a small bone from his tenth son that he would take with him when he went to console others who had sustained a similar loss. He sought to show them that Hashem gives one the energy to persevere.

He consoles the mourner. This is enigmatic! Rabbi Yochanan was a man who was able to overcome such crushing blows one after another, to bury ten children and be able to maintain himself so that he could console others. Yet, he lost his mind when his student died! How are we to understand this?

We derive from here the essence of a *Torah* relationship between a *rebbe* and *talmid*. The *Rambam* in *Hilchos Rotzeach* 7 writes that if a *rebbe* must be exiled because he killed someone unintentionally, his *talmidim* are to go with him. For a person who devotes himself to *Torah*, this relationship is his lifeblood without which he will perish. We now understand why Moshe singled out Yehoshua for prayer. Moshe could not live without his prime *talmid*. With whom would he share his *Torah*? Yehoshua was the quintessential student who was devoted to his *rebbe b'lev v'nefesh*, with heart and soul. For Moshe to lose Yehoshua would be to lose a part of his life.

We may supplement this idea. There was an even greater dread presented to Moshe. If Yehoshua would have died, as tragic as it would have been, Moshe would have been able to heal. In this circumstance, however, Moshe feared for Yehoshua's spiritual life, not his physical one. What greater pain could there be for Moshe to endure than to see his favorite, most promising student rebel against the Almighty? Is there any wonder that Moshe prayed for him?

*Horav Bergman* suggests a different reason that Moshe's *talmid* Yehoshua needed an extra prayer on his behalf. A person's sins also blemish the *neshamah* of his descendants. We infer this from the *mekalel*, blasphemer, who the *Torah* emphasizes was the son of Shlomis *bas* Divri. *Chazal* tell us that Divri is a reference to the mother's character, rather than her name. Shlomis had a tendency to prattle endlessly. The content of her conversation was not always complimentary. This had an effect upon her son who, when he grew up, used his mouth in the most reprehensible manner. In contrast to this story, *Chazal* tell us that much of the reward and good will of which *Klal Yisrael* was the beneficiary was due to the two words, *naase v'nishmah*, "*we will do and we will listen*," uttered by their ancestors at *Har Sinai*.

Yosef *Ha'Tzaddik* spoke about his brothers in what might be viewed as in disparaging manner. The *Torah* says, "*He brought evil reports of his brothers to his father.*" While Yosef's intentions were apparently noble, he, nonetheless, did speak *lashon hora* about his brothers. This would have left a serious blemish upon his descendants. Indeed, the *Ramban* says that when the *Torah* delineates the spies' ancestry according to their tribe, it attributes *Shevet* Yosef to Menashe, since the spy from Menashe slandered *Eretz Yisrael*, while Calev, the spy from *Shevet* Efraim, did not. The taint of *lashon hora* which emanated from Yosef left an impression on his descendants from Menashe. Moshe *Rabbenu* feared that this stain might also infect his *talmid*, Yehoshua, a descendant of Efraim. He, therefore, interceded on his behalf for that extra protection.