

Take to yourself Yehoshua ben Nun, a man in whom there is spirit... You shall place some of your splendor upon him, so that the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael will pay heed. (27:18,20)

Targum Onkelos comments, *B'dil di yikablum minei kol k'nishta divnei Yisrael*; "So that the entire congregation of *Bnei Yisrael* will accept him." *Rashi* writes, "So that they treat him with respect and fear, in the manner that they treat you."

It is wonderful to have Moshe *Rabbeinu's* approval, but is it not superfluous? Once Hashem gave the order, "Take to yourself Yehoshua," what else was necessary to segue to Yehoshua becoming Moshe's successor? Is Hashem's approval insufficient that it was necessary for the people to see that Moshe, too, was on board with this choice? Why did Moshe have to make *semichah*, lean his hands on him, to demonstrate to the nation that Yehoshua had his full support?

Horav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal, zl, explains this practically. He begins by relating an incident that occurred concerning *Horav Shlomo Kluger, zl (Maharshak)*, *Av Bais Din* and *Maggid* in Brody, Galicia. He was a prolific author who wrote 160 volumes (of which 115 were sizable) of commentary on all areas of Torah. Following his father's death, he had grown up as a homeless orphan. The *Maggid, zl*, of Dubno met the boy wandering the streets of Zamosc, Poland, and took him in, arranging for *rebbeim* to tutor the young prodigy. He sat on a number of *batei din* (at age 22), together with more seasoned scholars, finally assuming a *rabbanus* in Kelokow, Galicia, at age 36.

Rav Shlomo was the paragon of integrity, a man who was unwilling to bend or compromise *halachah* out of fear of a litigant's power, social or economic standing. This attitude (which is the only attitude a *rav* should adopt) led to his early departure from this *rabbanus*. In those days, *rosh hakahal*, head of the community/president, was a very powerful position. Indeed, some rabbinic leaders would acquiesce to the demands of their *rosh ha'kahal*. He was usually a distinguished, powerful leader who was extremely wealthy and well-connected. The average member of the Jewish community would act submissively in the presence of the *rosh hakahal*. Rav Shlomo did not. In fact, when a *din Torah* between the *rosh ha'kahal* and a member of the community presented itself before him, he rendered judgment according to *halachah* as he saw it. Sadly for him, in one instance, it found the *rosh hakahal* liable to pay a hefty sum of money.

It did not take long before the *rosh hakahal* made the *Rav's* life miserable. As a result, poverty reigned in Rav Shlomo's home. Every avenue of income was closed before him, because the *rosh ha'kahal* controlled the community. He could no longer afford the type of clothes worn by the *rav* of a community. His old ones were torn, and he suffered the final indignity on *Shabbos* when he sat down on his seat up front and felt moisture beneath him. He stood up to see that "someone" had

put filthy grease, generally used for the wheels of a carriage, on his seat. It ruined the rabbinic garb that he was wearing. Between the worn-out material, the holes and the grease, *Rav Shlomo Kluger* looked like an itinerant vagabond, which is what he had become. The *rosh hakahal* had won the first salvo.

Everyone eventually answers for whatever injustice he causes, especially if he denigrates a Torah scholar, because then he is disagreeing with Hashem and His Torah. Nonetheless, the man's ultimate punishment would neither put food on *Rav Shlomo's* table, nor would it give him some presentable garments. He packed his bag and left town. He planned to seek a tutoring position teaching children. The rabbinate was not for him. His deferential, unpretentious temperament precluded him from assuming a rabbinic position (or so he felt). He could hardly go on an interview in torn, foul-smelling clothing.

As he was traveling, he chanced upon *Horav Yosef Stern, zl, Rav* of Zalkova, one of that generation's premier Torah giants, who immediately recognized the young *Rav* of Kelokow. He remarked, "How does someone of your stature go out in public in such attire? Where is your *kavod haTorah*, honor for the Torah?" (As a distinguished *Rav*, *Rav Shlomo Kluger* represented Torah at its apex. He could not present himself publicly in such a degrading manner.) After *Rav Shlomo* poured out his heart to *Rav Yozpa*, the *Rav* suggested traveling to Brody, where *Horav Efraim Zalman Margolis, zl*, lived. (*R' Efraim Zalman* was a successful businessman who was also Brody's leading Torah scholar. He had authored the *Matei Efraim* and *Shaarei Efraim*.) He had two sons who required tutoring. *Rav Shlomo* thanked the *Rav* and asked for a letter of approbation, since he did not know *Rav Efraim Zalman*. He was certain that without some kind of letter attesting to his erudition and character, he would be hard pressed to land a job.

Rav Shlomo continued his journey toward Brody, where he met *Rav Efraim Zalman*. His home was palatial, which added to the *Rav's* discomfort, standing there in his filthy, torn clothing. *Rav Efraim Zalman's* impeccable character refinement matched his brilliance in Torah knowledge. When *Rav Shlomo* related to him that he was seeking a position as a children's tutor, *Rav Efraim* demurred, "You are far over-qualified for that. The city of Brody needs a *Maggid*, preacher, and *Av Bais Din*, head of its rabbinical court. I think that you are a perfect fit," *Rav Efraim* said, "but first, we must obtain new clothes worthy of a distinguished *Rav*." *Rav Efraim* barred *Rav Shlomo* from leaving his home for three days until the clothes were ready. If anyone were to see him in his shabby, foul-smelling clothes, all bets would be off. He would never get a job.

The next stop was the home of *Horav Meir Teumim, zl, Rav* of Brody, so that the *Rav* could converse with *Rav Shlomo* in learning and get a sense of what kind of peerless *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, he was. After the *Rav* was favorably impressed with the young *Rav's* brilliance and unsurpassed erudition, it was time to visit Brody's *rosh ha'kahal*. Obviously, a city of 25,000 Jews, which was home to many scholars, had a unique *rosh ha'kahal*. He was an individual who was not just wealthy and well-connected, but who was also an individual who knew his way around *Shas*, all of *Talmud Bavli*, and was comfortable in *Shulchan Aruch*, code of Jewish Law. He was a man

who enjoyed his share of *kavod*, honor, and, due to his position, came to expect it. This time, *Rav Shlomo* had to be convinced that the man was actually erudite. *Rav Shlomo* felt that it was below the dignity of a *talmid chacham* to cower before an *am ha'aretz*, an illiterate person. He felt that the man's money and power did not empower him with a level of dignity such that the Torah embodied within a *talmid chacham* should be denigrated for him. *Rav Efraim Zalman* explained that while he was absolutely justified in his feeling, the man was a scholar. If he wanted the position, he would have to accept the *rosh ha'kahal*.

All went well until the first *Shabbos*, when it was announced throughout the community that the new young *Av Bais Din* and *Maggid* would address the congregation during *davening*. That *Shabbos*, the *shul* was packed, standing room only. When *Rav Shlomo* ascended the podium, he took one look at the crowd and nearly passed out. He had never seen so many people, let alone delivered a lecture to them.

He began to speak, and his anxiety took over to the point that the words that he emitted from his mouth were foreign to everyone – even to him! *Rav Efraim* understood what was happening, and he immediately exclaimed, “Fantastic, *gevaldig!* Brilliant! What an incredible thought!” Nu, when *Rav Efraim* spoke, the *shul* listened. They, too, “convinced” themselves that the gibberish they were hearing was brilliant dialectic from a young master. This caused *Rav Shlomo* to calm down and speak eloquently for the next four hours, during which he held the congregation spellbound.

The question is obvious: Why did *Rav Efraim Zalman* focus so much on the externals, i.e. clothing, oration, presentation? Was his approbation not enough to garner support for his candidate? *Rav Teichtal* explains that, “No, it was not enough, because people expect a *Rav* to present himself to be authoritative, impressive, and commanding obedience and respect. If the powerful people who expect everyone to defer to them do not respect the *Rav*, do not expect that he can be a people's *talmid chacham*, an unparalleled *posek*, an individual who can engage young people and reach them, then he will not be successful. It is all about authority. While it is true that one must be able to appreciate greatness, something which is beyond the average boor, one must know whom he is expected to impress before he begins the interview. Even *Yehoshua* needed *Moshe Rabbeinu* with him.