



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ד תמוז תשע"ו - פינחס - 30th July 2016 - Volume 9 - Issue 1

News This Week

מזל טוב

- Mazel Tov to the Rov & Rebbetzen on the birth of a granddaughter to Rabbi and Mrs Sholom Cohen in Gateshead.
- Mazel Tov to Mr and Mrs Shua Dansky on the occasion of Motti's Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after clavening in the Shul hall.
- Mr and Mrs Joel Ross invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush to celebrate the recent birth of their daughter, Avigail Brocho, at their parents in law at 11 Vernon Road - Mazal Tov.

Yehoshua's Coronation

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Hashem said to Moshe, "Take to yourself Yehoshua ben Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lean your hand upon him. You shall stand him before Elazar the kohen and before the entire assembly, and command him before their eyes. You shall place some of your majesty upon him, so that the entire assembly of the Bnei Yisrael will pay heed. He shall stand before Elazar the kohen, who shall inquire for him of the judgment of the Urim before Hashem. At his word they shall go out and at his word they shall come in, he and all the Bnei Yisrael with him, and the entire assembly.

Maybe you figured a simple swearing-in ceremony would have been nice. HKBH clearly thought otherwise. Yehoshua assumes the role of successor-appointee through a rather involved exchange with a number of people. Looking carefully at the words of the holy Torah, we will find important insights into the relationship between a leader and his flock, and the checks and balances that assure his integrity.

Moshe is told to "take to yourself" Yehoshua. While Moshe's chief concern is continuity of leadership, there is no question that he is pleased with the appointment. Moshe finds personal satisfaction in the elevation to power of his cherished disciple. For Moshe, then, the appointment of Yehoshua contains an element that is very much a taking for himself.

Yehoshua is described to us here simply as one in whom there was "spirit." This means that he possessed his own sense of mission and purpose. He would not be easily swayed by forces within (his baser desires) or without (the opinions of others). He held firm to his own principles, guided by his own spirit of individuality.

Moshe is to place his hand upon Yehoshua. This simple gesture proclaims that all of Yehoshua's impressive accomplishments and qualification will be insufficient to the job without the beracha of Hashem. Moshe's hand upon him signaled to Yehoshua that He could count on Divine assistance in comprehending the facts and the principles in every case that would be brought before him for a decision. His great "spirit," as important a job qualification as it was, would not be sufficient; he would not succeed in his role as judge without special help from Hashem. Yeshoshua is to become acutely aware of his inadequacies at the very moment that the community gathers to celebrate his accomplishments.

Next, Yehoshua is presented before the kohanic leadership, i.e. Elazar, and before the assembly. The purpose is clear. Yehoshua is introduced as the next leader of the nation, the figure to whom all would, in some form or another, be subservient. Curiously, the Torah

expresses this presentation with the words "he shall stand him." Just a few pesukim later, Yehoshua is depicted as "standing" before Elazar, when the need would arise to determine Hashem's wishes though the Urim ve-Tumim. Yet it is very clear there that Yehoshua would not be in control of the inquiry of the Divine mind. Yehoshua would remain subservient in such inquiries to Elazar, who will instruct the nation about certain matters. "At his word they shall go out and at his word they shall come in." Yehoshua will have to defer to Elazar. Is "standing before" someone a sign of demonstrating power over the second party, or a sign of deference?

We cannot escape the conclusion that Yehoshua is stood before the people chiefly in order to offer them their new leader – effectively their new king. (The Rambam illustrates the need to appoint a king through a beis din and a navi through the example of Yehoshua's appointment by Moshe and his beis din.) By using the same word – "standing" – that the Torah uses later to indicate subservience to Elazar, the Torah here offers a sobering thought to the new future-king designate. Yehoshua is given enormous power over the people. But the power is not for him to abuse or even to savor. Entrusting the Jewish ruler with power makes him, ironically, subservient to the people. Wielding power must be a form of service, not a form of privilege. He is stood before the people as if he serves them, rather than the opposite.

In the pasuk that depicts the presentation of the future leader to the nation, Elazar is mentioned as well. This is consistent with Yehoshua's role, which legally was equivalent to king. Kings exercised some dominion at times over the kehunah. A medrash, for example, sees King Yanai ordering the kohen gadol to disallow any other voluntary offerings on a day that he, the king, chose to offer one.

Now the Torah turns to instructing Yehoshua regarding the core task of guiding his generation of Jews. Rashi explains that Yehoshua was "commanded" in the sense of being forewarned that his charges would be a difficult group. He was commanded to stay the course, despite it being unglamorous and unattractive at times. "Know that they are troublesome and contrarian. You accept this job with the

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת פינחס	שבת מברכין אב
Candle Lighting	7.31 - 7.45pm
Mincha	7.20pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.18am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.06pm
Rov's Shiur, Halachos of 9 days	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	10.11pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Fri Rosh Chodesh	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

understanding that you accept these realities.”

Ramban objects that it would be extremely unseemly to paint such an uncomplimentary picture of the Jewish people to Yehoshua as he stood before them. Such a depiction to their faces would precipitate even more rebellion of the people against his authority. The “assembly,” however, does not mean the Jewish people. (This becomes obvious in the later pasuk that speaks of “all the Bnei Yisrael with him, and the entire assembly.” The terms “Bnei Yisrael” and “assembly” cannot both mean the same thing! Rather, assembly means the Sanhedrin.) It was not so terrible that the Sanhedrin heard an honest appraisal of the more difficult traits of the Nation. To the contrary, hearing Yehoshua instructed to bear with the people even when they would be obstinate, would have the effect of impressing the members of the Sanhedrin that they, too, had to be patient and forbearing in dealing with the people.

Although we have removed Ramban’s objection to Rashi’s approach, there is no question that Ramban’s interpretation is also correct. Moshe here directed Yehoshua in his new role through words of mussar regarding how to shepherd the masses.

The coronation of Yehoshua did not require some bejeweled diadem. Moshe gave Yehoshua something more meaningful and more lustrous. “You shall place some of your majesty upon him.” This refers to a visible form of honor and splendor. It was available in fixed amount. As a midrash explains it, this splendor was like a substance poured from one vessel (i.e. Moshe) into another (Yehoshua). The face of the student was like that of the moon relative to the sun. Yehoshua’s light was a reflected one, deriving from his master. Like the moon, however, which cannot be seen when the sun is at its brightest, but only after it weakens somewhat, the light of Yehoshua’s glory only shone when that of Moshe began to diminish.

A different line in the same midrash says that confirming the role of Yehoshua was like lighting one lamp from another, in which the lighting of a second lamp does not diminish the light of the first at all. This would seem to offer an opposing view of the relationship between teacher and disciple than that of pouring from a vessel. In truth, there is no tension between the images. The latter image, in which Moshe’s power remains undiminished, applies to the power of Torah study. Creating a powerful student did not diminish Moshe’s power. The image of the substance poured from one container to another applies to the honor and splendor of position. In regard to this alone – the honor and majesty of malchus – Yehoshua’s greatness became a shining beacon only with the diminution of the role of Moshe.

Moshe’s Sales Pitch

Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffmann (Torah.org)

In Parshas Pinchas, Hashem repeats to Moshe that as a result of his hitting the stone, he will die in the desert, and will not accompany his beloved nation to the Land of Israel. Moshe responds by requesting that they be given a new leader (27:15-19):

Moshe spoke to Hashem saying: “May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation; who shall go out before them, and come in before them... and let not the congregation of Hashem be like sheep without a shepherd.”

Hashem said to Moshe: “Take Yehoshua bin Nun... stand him before the congregation, and command him [regarding the leadership] before their eyes.”

Rashi has a rule that in the language of Scripture, one never “takes” a person. “Taking” something means to move it regardless of its will. One could take an object, or even an animal, but a person, who even if he comes along, does so of his own accord, is not “taken.” Whenever the imperative “to take” is used in the context of humans, it refers to the act of convincing: Influence them to come with you.

How, then, was Moshe to take Yehoshua bin Nun?

Rashi explains: Move him with your words: “How fortunate you are that you have been chosen to lead the children of the Almighty!” Yehoshua was being offered the reins of a nation destined to lead the world, G-d’s chosen people – quite an honour indeed! In an example of true salesmanship, Moshe was to “sell” Yehoshua on taking over the helm by impressing on him just what an honour it was to be given the leadership of such a prestigious nation.

Yet the picnic was short lived. By the time he finished his sentence, Moshe was to allude to the difficulties of tending the Jewish flock: Rashi comments on, “and command him before their eyes”: Tell him that they are a stubborn, troublesome people: You must accept their shortcomings.

Imagine you’re looking for a used car. “Sir, this one here’s a beaut! Just one owner – and I know him well. This guy takes care of his cars; oil changes, tune-ups, the whole bit. And not a scrape. And look at the low mileage. Plus, she’s got new tires, and a new paint job, and the interior’s spotless. And at this price – what more could you ask for in a car! As long as you don’t mind looking like a fool driving a seventeen-year-old jalopy that could have belonged to your alte- bubby – why it’s a steal!! Bahahaaaa.” You’d probably look elsewhere.

Any salesman that’s worth his name knows: Sell the positive – ignore the negative. The customer wants to buy, and he needs your help to do so. The drawbacks are obvious, so at all costs avoid focusing on them!

It thus seems strange that, in what is clearly being presented as Moshe’s “sales pitch” of the leadership to Yehoshua, the good and the bad are seemingly blended in an altogether unappetizing mix. “How fortunate you are to be asked to lead such a stiff-necked and irritating nation!” Yehoshua was well aware of their shortcomings. He had stood faithfully by Moshe’s side for the last forty years. He knew all there was to know. So why did Hashem insist Moshe “convince” Yehoshua to take over the leadership by reminding him about their shortcomings?

A couple gave birth to a child with a rare birth defect. After endless months of doctors, hospitals, and operations, the child’s heart gave out, and he returned his pure soul to its Creator. They were crestfallen. To be blessed with a child, only to have it snatched from their hands a few months later – what were they to think? Where had they gone wrong? What had they done to deserve such a bitter lot?

They approached a great tzaddik (sage), someone intimately familiar with their circumstances, and, with due respect, asked him to help them address their feelings of abandonment.

“A few months ago,” he began, “Hashem found Himself in a dilemma. He had a most precious soul in need of a body. A soul so close to perfection that it needed only a short time on this world, just a few passing months, after which it will have completed its ‘finishing touches,’ and will be ready to ascend to the highest Heavens. As long, that is, as no harm were to come it in the meantime. To whom, Hashem asked Himself, can I entrust such a precious treasure? Whom can I rely on to treat this soul with the attention and care it deserves, to nurture it and love it, and make sure its short sojourn on the earth will be pure and untainted?”

“Hashem chose you. From so many other couples and families, He entrusted His beloved treasure with you. He knew that only you were up to the task; capable of giving of yourselves heart-and-soul for His child, and willingly accepting it being wrenched from your arms after so short a while – never having had the opportunity to reap the fruits of your labour. You have not been punished, G-d forbid; you have been rewarded. As hard as it is, you must realize that his soul was not meant to be here any longer, and that you were singled out by Hashem as the only ones fit to keep watch over His treasure.”

The hardest situations require the most capable individuals. Anyone can look great teaching a highly-motivated and over-achieving class, but only the most seasoned and skilled of teachers can take a hapless bunch of misfits and mould them into fine, educated individuals. In a war, “mission impossible” is given to the spy par- excellence; only he stands a chance at success.

Perhaps, then, this is all part of Moshe’s sales-pitch. How fortunate you are to be chosen to lead Hashem’s children. After all, it’s not just anyone that is capable of standing up to such a stubborn nation – only a person with rare leadership qualities could even consider taking such a position!

When life’s avenues present us with detours we felt we could do without, and we ask ourselves: Why? What have we done to deserve this? Perhaps, instead, we should offer a silent prayer of thanksgiving, for being trusted by Hashem to be able to deal with such a difficult and trying situation!