

Pinchas - Rabbi Lerner - June 23, 2013

The Appointment of a Successor to Moshe

27:12-3: Hashem said to Moshe "Go up to this mountain of Avarim and see the Land that I have I have given to the Children of Israel. You shall see it and you shall be gathered unto your people, you, too, as Aharon your brother was gathered in. **Rav Hirsch**: It was not a coincidence that it was called Har Ha'avarim - it means the mountain of transition; it is where Yehoshua was to be named to succeed Moshe. [Some say it was also named Har Nevo.] **Rashi**: What is the connection of this story to what preceded it? The preceding section was about the daughters of Tzelophchad, women who were concerned about being deprived of a yerushah in the land of Israel because their father had no sons. Hashem told Moshe that they should not be deprived of an inheritance and **he should give them** (Titain Lahem) a possession. Rashi says the reason this follows is because once Hashem said that the daughters should certainly get some portion of the land, they should inherit their father, Moshe assumed that since Hashem commanded him to give them the land, perhaps God's decree was rescinded and he would enter the land. Hashem therefore told him that he should teach Bnei Yisrael the laws of inheritance, but not personally distribute the land from within the land himself.

27:15-17: Moshe spoke to Hashem, saying (**Laymor**) - this is a very unusual pasuk that appears rarely in the Torah - it is nearly always the other way around, where Hashem tells Moshe something to pass on to the Jewish people - what does it mean here? Who is Hashem supposed to tell this to? "*May Hashem, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly, who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall take them out and bring them in; and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd.*" This refers to the special quality of Jewish leaders - they will lead the people from the front, even in battle; a Jewish king gets very involved in all of the difficulties of leadership; he takes them out and brings them in, even in battle.

Rashi: When Moshe heard that Hashem said to give the inheritance to the daughters of Tzelophchad, he said it was time for him to lay his own claim, for his sons to inherit him as he is soon to die. Hashem answered that it was not what He had planned - Yehoshua is deserving to inherit the mantle of leadership, as he was Moshe's assistant his whole career; he never left the tent of Moshe. As it says in Mishlei - "*The one who planted the fig will enjoy the fruit.*" It was Yehoshua who put in all the work, not Moshe's sons, so he deserved to follow Moshe as the leader.

Rabbeinu Bachya: Why does Moshe say to Hashem **Laymor**? It doesn't make sense. It is put in because Hashem wanted to create a pasuk that equates the talmid (Moshe) to the teacher (Hashem) - it propels Moshe to the highest level; it shows the gadlus of Moshe, even though it doesn't have a true meaning of retelling to someone else. The rebbi and the talmid are equated; a similar structure is created for the praise of Moshe.

Rashi: the word Laymor means something else here - Moshe is telling Hashem to give him an answer now - will He appoint a leader now or not? He raises the question and demands a response. And Hashem does indeed appoint Yehoshua now.

Meshech Chachmah: this is one of four places in the Torah where this pasuk appears. The **Sifri** says that Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah says that there were four places that Moshe demanded an immediate answer from God and received one. The first was after his encounter with Pharaoh ended in failure, and Moshe said the Jews rejected him; he told Hashem the people didn't believe him anymore, they rejected him; how will Pharaoh listen to him; will this work anymore? Hashem says it will work and it will end well. The next time was after Miriam was stricken with leprosy and Moshe asked Hashem will He heal her or will He not help her? Hashem answered that He will. The third time is at the beginning of Vaeschanan, when Moshe asks if he will enter the land or not? The fourth one is here,

where Moshe asks if God will appoint a leader or not. In each case, Moshe showed his power, as he negotiated with God for an immediate answer and received one.

27:18-20: *Hashem said to Moshe, "Take to yourself Yehoshua Bin Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lean your hand upon him. You shall stand him before Elazar the Kohain 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 Israel will pay heed.*

Rashi: What does it mean the God of all spirits? **Midrash Tanchuma:** What Moshe is really saying to Hashem is that He knows what each Jew is thinking, each one is unique who thinks differently and has different needs; God should appoint a leader who is going to be able to deal with all of these diverse people; he needs people skills to deal with whatever these people will throw his way. But does Moshe think his own children are worthy of this, that they can deal with all of these diverse people? **Ksav Sofer:** If Moshe had really wanted his children to inherit this job, how could that possibly be a good fit for them? His children hadn't been involved with leadership - they are not qualified? Moshe didn't actually bring this request to his lips - Moshe didn't clearly express this; Hashem always knows what is in each person's heart and understood Moshe's desire. What Moshe was really saying here was who can really do this job? You can be the most brilliant Torah scholar, but who is a giant in psychology who can deal with all of these people? What would be best is someone who was raised in the house of Moshe - his kids were always in his tent and have observed everything that Moshe went through these 40 years; they have observed and learned how to deal with the diverse experiences. They have seen and observed a great deal of the interactions between Moshe and the people - maybe they have enough experience, maybe more than anyone else. Hashem answered that there is someone who has been a better apprentice to him, who has also lived in his tent all these years - and that is Yehoshua.

27:20: *You shall place some of your majesty upon him.* **Rashi:** what does it mean to place his hands on him? It means by placing his hands on him and empowering him, that he should begin to teach the people Torah while Moshe is still alive, so that people should not say that Yehoshua was like nothing in the time of Moshe; he has to prove his qualities and skills while Moshe was still alive.

Rabbeinu Bachya: it means that Moshe should lean on Yehoshua; that the relationship should change - the student who had been leaning on the teacher all these years, should now be the one who gives the support; the rebbi will now lean on the Talmid.

27:19: *You should stand him before Elazar and command him before their eyes.* **Rashi:** you should charge Yehoshua before their eyes - the **Sifri** says Moshe should relay to Yehoshua that they are very burdensome, stubborn people - he wishes Yehoshua good luck managing them! He tells Yehoshua that he is going to be in for it, that the Jewish leadership job is no picnic. **Ramban:** this makes no sense - it says *before their eyes* - you don't tell him that they are difficult people right in front of them - you would say something like that privately, in confidence; otherwise it would make the people even more rebellious. You give mussar individually. So it must mean something different - you are now charged with the responsibility of carrying them, of bringing them in and out, of taking care of them, of teaching them; - Moshe spells out the entire job in front of the people so that his role should be clear to him and the people.

27:20: By placing your hand on him, you bestow some of your glory. **Rashi:** this is part of Moshe's radiating face - some will go on Yehoshua as well; he will glow as well; he will get some of Moshe's majesty, but not all of it - the face of Moshe was like the sun - dazzling, blinding - while Yehoshua was like the moon - dimmer, one whom people can approach. The moon reflects the light of the sun, it does not have its own light; Yehoshua will reflect the light of Moshe. **Rabbeinu Bachya:** this mashal teaches us the lofty level of each of them; for Moshe to have that glow indicates that Hashem placed that directly on him, a frightening, dazzling glow that represents the shechina; Yehoshua reflects all that he learned from Moshe. But where does the sun get its illumination from? Hashem invested His energy into the sun; Moshe gives off the light of God, a blinding light of God.

Yehoshua was at a lower level. The next generation cried when Moshe was gone, that Yehoshua was a pale reflection of Moshe. This is why Yehoshua could not create any new ideas himself - he only continued to disseminate the teachings of Moshe.

Chassam Sofer: when it comes to Moshe, Hashem made his face 70 times the brightness of the sun, and he was forced to wear a mask his whole life so as not to frighten the people; the moon however is not blinding. Hashem deliberately did this, so that Bnei Yisrael should look at Yehoshua, have direct contact with him his whole life; not just the elders. Sometimes when the leader is so blinding, it creates a distance and separation; they could not relate to Moshe because he was so far above them; Yehoshua fares far better as a leader than Moshe, with the Jews disobeying him just once. Sometimes if you are so blinding, you overpower and distance the people, and they cannot relate to you. It is easier to relate to the moon than the sun; Yehoshua was the more effective leader, with the people more easily following him and relating to him.