



THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A REBBI

HOW YEHOShUA WAS APPOINTED TO BE LEADER

The *parshah* talks about the appointment of Yehoshua. The Torah says (Bamidbar 27:18):

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה קַח לָךְ אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נּוּן אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֹת יָדָיו עָלָיו.

“And Hashem said to Moshe, “Take for yourself Yehoshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him.”

What does, קַח לָךְ, take for yourself, mean? Rashi explains, קַחְנוּ בְּדַבָּרִים, take him with words. Draw him in convince him and say to him, אֲשֶׁרְךָ שְׂזִכִּיתָ לְהַנְהִיג בְּנֵי שָׁל מְקוּם, fortunate are you that you are *zocheh* to be *manhig* the children of Hashem.

You should know, there are many people who receive an opportunity to be *mezakeh* Klal Yisrael in different ways, and for whatever reason, they choose to bow out and say, “I don’t really want this. I’m overwhelmed. I’m afraid.” There are all kinds of stories. There is such a *metzius*.

You’d think that when somebody is offered a position to become the leader of Klal Yisrael and take over Moshe Rabeinu’s position, he should be excited. But Yehoshua was a little overwhelmed at the responsibility. It was not because he was lazy, or because he was afraid that this life changing opportunity would deprive him of the relaxation and the pursuit of some of his hobbies. No. He was overwhelmed because he understood his responsibility. “Tell Yehoshua as follows,” Hashem said to Moshe, אֲשֶׁרְךָ שְׂזִכִּיתָ לְהַנְהִיג בְּנֵי שָׁל מְקוּם - “fortunate are you, that you merited to guide My children.”

Now, we have to learn from this. This is an instruction. Whatever *naaranim* (fools) are going to tell you otherwise: “What do you need this for? It’s such a big responsibility,” or *ahin* and *aher* – when Hashem is giving you an opportunity, you seize it.

Then it says לָךְ. What does that mean? *Zogt* Rashi, אֶת שְׂבֻדוֹךְ לָךְ, אֶת שְׂאֵתָהּ מִכִּיר, That means to say, Hashem is saying, “We’re not fooling him. We’re not ‘selling’ him a sales job. You know and I know that he is fit for the position.”

And it says, what is his name? אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נּוּן אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ בּוֹ. What does that mean, a man אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ בּוֹ? Rashi explains, כְּאֲשֶׁר שְׂאֵלָתָ, כְּאֲשֶׁר שְׂאֵלָתָ, שְׂאֵלָתָ לְהִלָּךְ כְּנֶגְדְּ רוּחוֹ שֶׁל כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד - Hashem said, “You asked me for a *manhig* who knows how to deal with all different types of people and he knows how not to lose it.” That is the first *yesod* of a leader. A leader of a group has to be an *ish asher ruach bo*. It is not somebody who only works with very limited types of people – “I only work with people who smile at me all day long. I only deal with people who are not so stubborn. I only deal with people who are not this or that.” And it says, וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֹת יָדָיו עָלָיו, meaning to say - says Rashi - תֵּן לוֹ מֵתֻרְגָּמוֹן שִׂידְרֵשׁ בְּחֵיךְ - Give him a *meturgamon*, a person that is going to stand next to him who will *darshan*, שְׁלֹא יֹאמְרוּ עָלָיו, so that they shouldn’t say about him after you die, לֹא הָיָה לוֹ לְהָרִים רֹאשׁ בַּיָּמִי מִשָּׁה, that Yehoshua was never given *reshus* מִשָּׁה - to raise his head during Moses days but did so only after his death. So therefore it says: וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֹת יָדָיו עָלָיו. “Let him have this *reshus* right now.”

וְצִוְיָתָהּ אֹתוֹ לְעֵינֵיהֶם, “and command him in front of their eyes.” Look at this Rashi, a *moradige* Rashi. הם, “You should know that Klal Yisrael are *matriach* their leaders. הם, סִרְבָּנִים, they are ‘refuseniks.’ They refuse to do what the leader instructs them to do. They don’t like to listen to him. So I’m telling you up front, I’m making you the chief commander, עַל מְנַת שְׂתִקְבֵּל עָלֶיךָ, - you have to be *soivel* them and accept your position having in mind that you will have to take upon yourself all this. That is part of leadership.” And nevertheless וְנִתְתָּהּ מִהוֹדָךְ עָלָיו, “invest him with some of your authority” and imbue him with that power.

Now, in the *passuk* in Devarim (34:9) it says, וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נּוּן מָלֵא רוּחַ חֲכָמָה, Yehoshua was full of *ruach chochmah*, אֶת, כִּי סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֹת, “because Moshe placed his hands on him.” וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, “and the people heeded him.” So Rashi (Bava Kamma 92b) says, *vos shteit* in this *passuk*? Rashi says, that in spite of the fact that the *chochmah* and the *gedulah* of Yehoshua came from none other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu, as it says: וַיִּתֵּן הַחֲכָמָה מִפִּי דָעַת וַתְּבוֹנָה (Mishley 2:6), still תִּלָּה בַּמֹּשֶׁה - it was attributed to Moshe. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, “You know why Yehoshua was successful? כִּי סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֹת יָדָיו עָלָיו. You know why he’s *malei ruach chachmah*? Because you, Moshe, were *soimech* your hands on him.”¹ *Vos shteit doh?* Why in the world was Moshe commanded to be *soimech* his hands on Yehoshua if the *gedulah* and *chochmah* comes directly from Hashem?!

¹ וַיִּסְמֹךְ אֶת יָדָיו - תִּלָּה הַחֲכָמָה וְהַגְּדוּלָה בַּמֹּשֶׁה כְּאִילוֹ הוּא נֹתֵנָה לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ וְהָיָה אֵינָה אֵלָא מִפִּי הַקַּב"ה

WHY WAS MOSHE SOMEICH HIS HANDS ON YEHOSHUA?

The answer is, says R' Chaim Shmuelevitz (1902-1979), that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give us an instruction in his Torah, that this is the way that Hashem gives *chochmah* to a person. Indeed, ה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה (Mishley 2:6) - every *talmid chacham* that sits and learns, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is יושב כנגדו וקורא ושונה עמו (Tanna Debei Eliyahu Rabbah 18:1). Hashem is your *chavrusa*. But still and all, do you want to know how Hashem gives it to you? From a *rebbe* to a *talmid*. Starting from Moshe Rabeinu. משה קבל תורה מסיני, ומקרה ליהושע (Avos 1:1). Until this very day, there has been no change. It's a *noradike* lesson!

The *gemara* (Bava Kamma, *ibid*) tells us that there is a saying: חמרא למרא וטיבותא לשקייא - *the wine belongs to the master but the 'thank you' is given to the one who pours it* (i.e. the butler). Who gets the 'thank you'? The guy who pours it for you. What is the source of that saying? Why is it like that? So you think, "I've got to give you all the *narishkeit*, why psychologically it's like that." *Ober* the *gemara* says the source is right here.

The Torah is from Hashem, the *chochmah* is from Hashem. *Da'as* is from Hashem. Everything is *mipiv*. But you know what Hashem says, you know who gets the credit? Moshe Rabeinu! Hashem told him, "Vesamachta, pour for him. You be the one who pours it for Yehoshua." And that's why Yehoshua was *zocheh* to become appointed. Because we know, *Chazal* tell us (Bava Basra 75a), פני משה כפני חמה פני יהושע כפני לבנה, Moshe was like the sun, Yehoshua was like the moon. What is unique about the moon? The moon doesn't have its own light. It only has what it is *mekabel* from the sun. And as Yehoshua said to Moshe Rabeinu before Moshe died (Temurah 16a): כלום הנחתך שעה אחת והלכתי למקום אחר: "Did I ever leave you for one moment and go somewhere else? Did you not write about me in the Torah, ומשרתי יהושע בן נון נער, לא ימיש מתוך האהל, He was 56 years old at that time and he never left the *ohel*.²

How come Yehoshua never 'grew up'? He never said, "It's time to learn for myself, it's time to spread my own wings, it's time to develop myself." Develop yourself, otherwise you end up back in pretzels. And Yehoshua was *melaveh* Moshe Rabeinu to *Har Sinai*. Yehoshua went and he made his tent by *Har Sinai* and stayed there 40 days. Yehoshua didn't know about the *eigel*. And Hashem made a special *nes* and the *mann* fell right next to Yehoshua, *be'oifien prati*. That's what the *gemara* says in Yoma (76a). Why did Yehoshua do this? Because he wanted to be the first one to greet Moshe upon his return and accompany him to the *machaneh* Yisrael. You know why? Maybe Yehoshua will get to hear something from Moshe on the way. *Ulai*. But he didn't say to Moshe, "Moshe, you've got something for me? Give me some tips." He thought: "Maybe I'll hear something from Moshe Rabeinu, so it's *kedai* to wait at the mountain for 40 days." Unbelievable!

THE SECRET OF TOTAL SUBMISSION TO A REBBI

You have to know that the ideal relationship between a *talmid* and a *rebbe* is what people today would tell you is "unhealthy." You'll tell people that you have this relationship - they'll tell you it's very unhealthy to have *aza min dveikus* to a *rebbe*! Ahh! It's psychotic! It's too submissive! But *Chazal* (Makkos 10a) tell us that if a *talmid* kills someone by mistake - let's say, a *talmid* is driving a car and runs over a kid by mistake, *chas v'shalom*, and now he's *chayav* to go to *galus*, to *arei miklat* - *shteit* in the *gemara*, his *rebbe* has to go to *galus* with him. You know why? Because it says in the *pasuk*: ונס אל אחת מן הערים האל וחי "he should run to one of these cities and live." (Devarim 4:42). That means, the *rebbe's* responsibility is, he shouldn't die. The *rebbe* has to keep him alive. And without a *rebbe*, he's dead. What?! That's already a dependency. That's called way too dependent. *Ober Chazal zogen nisht azoi*. When certain *tannaim* came to visit R' Eliezer, he rebuked them for not learning under him. He said, תמיה אני, אם ימותו מיתת עצמן *if you'll die a natural death, I'll be amazed* (Sanhedrin 68a). You know why? Because they were *mevater* on their *rebbe*, so it's as if they were *mevater* on their life! And he said this to Rabbi Akiva, who was there as well! This is very scary.³

We find this idea of a *talmid* being so *davuk* on his *rebbe* in the *gemara* in Sukkah (28a). R' Eliezer, the *talmid* of R' Yochanon ben Zakai said לא אֶמְרתי דְּבַר שְׁמַעְתִּי מִפִּי רַבִּי מֵעוֹלָם מפיו רבי מעולם לא, *I never said over anything that I did not hear from my rebbi*. That's marvelous!

Somebody once asked R' Chaim Kanievsky (1928-2022) the following. In the first *perek* of Avos it gives us the whole *shalshelas* of the *mesirus hatorah midor ledor* until Hillel and Shamai. Later (פרק ב משנה ח), it says, R' Yochanon ben Zakai was *mekabel* Torah from Hillel veShamai. But, *lichorah* it's *shver*. The *gemara* (Sukkah 28a) tells us that Hillel Hazakein had 80 *talmidim*. 30 from them were *ro'oi* that the *shechinah* should be *shoreh* upon them like Moshe Rabeinu. They made it to the *gadlus* of Moshe Rabeinu. They would have been competition to Moshe if they had been in the *dor hamidbar*. Another 30 were on the level of Yehoshua bin Nun. The sun would have stopped for them like Yehoshua bin Nun. And there were also 20 *beinonim*. The greatest one of them all was Yonason ben Uziel. He was the giant of them all. *Katan shebakulam*, the least great one, was R' Yochanon ben Zakai. So, somebody asked R' Chaim Kanievsky: "It says that R' Yochanon ben Zakai was *mekabel* Torah from Hillel veShamai. What do you mean? He had 80 *talmidim*. What happened to the other 80? Of all the 80, it just mentions that R' Yochanon ben Zakai was *mekabel* Torah from Hillel veShamai!? It should say, Yonason ben Uziel and so on, and give us a list over there. At least it should mention the 30 that were *roi shetishreh shechinah keMoshe Rabeinu!*"

By the way, next time, take a look at Yonason ben Uziel with a little bit more respect. You know one thing - do you know anybody who ever made it like Moshe? The Rambam says, "Every person can be like Moshe" (Hilchos Teshuva 5:2). Do you know anybody like that? I know one of them - Yonason ben Uziel, *gadol shebakulam*. That much I know. So what happened to the other

² אמר רב יהודה אמר רב בשעה שנפטר משה רבינו לגן עדן אמר לו ליהושע שאל ממני כל ספיקות שיש לך אמר לו רבי כלום הנחתך שעה אחת והלכתי למקום אחר לא כך כתבת בי (שמות לג, יא) ומשרתי יהושע בן נון נער לא ימיש מתוך האהל מיד תשש כחו של יהושע ונשתכחו ממנו שלש מאות הלכות [רש"י]: ונשתכחו ממנו של משה שנשטער משה על יהושע בעצמו שהיה גדול כמותו] ונולדו לו שבע מאות ספיקות ועמדו כל ישראל להרגו [רש"י]: להרגו - עד שיאמר להם]. אמר לו הקב"ה לומר לך אי אפשר לך וטורדך במלחמה שנאמר (יהושע א, א) ויהי אחרי מות משה עבד ה' ויאמר ה' וגו' ³ א"ל למה באתם א"ל ללמוד תורה באנו א"ל ועד עכשיו למה לא באתם א"ל לא היה לנו פנאי אמר להן תמיה אני אם ימותו מיתת עצמן אמר לו ר' עקיבא שלי מהו [רש"י]: שלו מהו - במה תהא מיתתו] אמר לו שלך קשה משלהן [רש"י]: שלך קשה משלהן - מפני שלבך פתוח כאולם ואילו שמשתיני היית למד תורה הרבה]

You know what R' Chaim answered? R' Chaim said, "R' Yochanon ben Zakai was the only one of the 80 who was never *amar davar shelo shama mirabo*." He was the only one who never said anything that he didn't hear from his *rebbe*. You know what we would say today? "That's not how you spread your wings! That's not how you develop yourself. *Dos is* a 'tape recorder.' A *mentch* is a person *vos hot far zich chiddushim*, he says over his own *chiddushim*." R' Yochanon ben Zakai was a *talmid*. You want to know how big a *talmid* he was? You can see it from the *rebbe*. What kind of *talmid* was Hillel? R' Yochanon ben Zakai was a *talmid* of Hillel, the smallest *talmid* of Hillel. And what kind of *talmid* was Hillel? Let's take a look.

The *mishnah* in Eiduyos (1:3) says: הַלֵּל אוֹמֵר מְלֵא הֵינּוּ מֵיִם שְׂאוּבֵינּוּ פּוֹסְלִין אֶת הַמִּקְוֵה, אֲלֵא שְׂאָדָם חֵיב לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ - Hillel says a rule, "If you have an amount of 'hin' of drawn water - it passuls the mikveh. However, a man must speak in the language of his *rebbe*." Now what does that mean? The Bartenura explains that the *Mishnah* is bothered by the following: Why did Hillel use the word *hin* which is usually not the term used by Chazal? So the *mishnah* answers: שְׂאָדָם חֵיב לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ, because a person is *mechuyav* to say it בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ. Hillel's *rebbe* used the word "hin."⁴

The Rambam in his *Pirush Hamishnayos*, cited by Bartenura offers another *pshat*.⁵ The Rambam writes *besheim aviv* (in his father's name), *sheshama meirabo*, who heard from his *Rebbi*, the Ri Migash. *Verabo*, and the Ri Migash heard it from his *rebbe*, the Rif *zatzal*. You know who the *Rebbi* of Hillel was? Shmaya veAvtalyon. Hillel learned by Shmaya veAvtalyon. And they were *geirim* and they used to talk a bit strange; they pronounced some words differently, because they came from a foreign background. And when they said the word, they didn't say the word "hin." They couldn't say *hin*. They said "een." And Hillel said it exactly how they said it, "een." So *be'emmes*, what the *mishnah* is saying that, הַלֵּל אוֹמֵר מְלֵא הֵינּוּ (i.e. he didn't say "hin" but "een"). But the *mishnah* changed it to a "hin" because that is the proper word, *hin*. Now, if the *rav* makes a mistake, should his *talmidim* should make mistakes? If the *Rebbi* was *megamgem*, he stutters, so the *talmid* should also stutter? What is the *pshat*?! The *pshat* is שְׂאָדָם חֵיב לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ, לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ, *shteit azoi* in Chazal! To be *medayek* in *leshono*. I would have thought the *deveikus* is just to get a good *mesorah*. But if the *rebbe* makes a mistake, nu, it's a mistake. *Nein*. There is a concept of שְׂאָדָם חֵיב לֹמֵר *mamash betzuroso veamroso*. That is why I noticed in my youth that in a certain *yeshivah* I used to go to, the *talmidim* there used to all emulate and speak in the same sing-song voice of the *rosh yeshivah*. I was a *bachur*, and I used to make fun of it: "What kind of *shtusim* is that? Talk normally! What are you *hakn a tshaynik*?" *Ober nein*: שְׂאָדָם חֵיב לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ!

And then you go to Brisk and you see some of the Brisker *talmidim* and the Brisker *Rav's* kids, they all try to talk the same way. They try. שְׂאָדָם חֵיב לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ. *Es is doh aza zach. Dos is a dveikus* (this is what you call clinging with *deveikus*)

DO YOU HAVE A REBBI OR ONLY A REBBE FOR BRACHOS?

Because *raboisai*, you have to understand, the way the Torah is transmitted is from a *rebbe* to a *talmid*. And that's why, when I want to get to know someone the first thing I do, I ask somebody, "Who is your *Rebbi*?" Now, if he tells me he has a *Rebbe* that is a Chassidische *Rebbe* that he goes to for *brachos*, then you know he doesn't have a *Rebbi*. That is a *Rebbe* for *brachos*. A *Rebbi* means, "Can you tell me someone you learn Torah from?" And to me, it's mind boggling because so many people, when you ask them, "Who taught you Torah?" they have no idea. "Who taught you *hashkafas hatorah*?" "I don't know, I saw it in *sefarim*." You know what they actually know? Zero. It's not *shayach* otherwise. Two people could hear the same *yesod*, one has it *al yedei* the *mesorah* of a *rav le'talmid* and one who saw it in a *sefer* somewhere, *nisht al pi hamesorah*. Maybe he even thought about it on his own. *Nisht dos is dos*. It is not the same thing at all.

Have you ever seen in Brisk how they say, "*Tatte azoi hot gezukt, de tatte azoi hot gezukt*"? My *rebbe*, R' Meir Soloveichik (1929-2016), always said, "My father said this, my father said that, my father did this." It was amazing. It was like an encyclopedia of what his father did, and it was said with such emotion, with exact wording, etc.

A LONG CHAIN OF TALMIDIM: WE WILL NOT SHAME

There is a *gemara* in Sanhedrin (11a) that says *Rebbi* was once sitting giving a *shiur* and *Rebbi* was an *istenis*, the *gemara* says, and he smelled the smell of garlic, a strong smell of garlic coming.⁶ And he was getting disturbed in the *shiur*. So *Rebbi* said, whoever ate garlic should leave the *shiur*. So R' Chiya got up and he walked out of the *shiur*. Nu, everybody saw R' Chiya get up, they felt bad for him, so they all got up and they left the *shiur*. And the *shiur* was over. The whole talmud Torah of the *rav* and the *rebbe* was stopped.

The next day, *Rebbi* Shimon, the son of *Rebbi*, meets R' Chiya and he says, "Were you the one who caused the pain to my father? You started this all with the garlic?" So he said, "*Lo kein, chas veshalom. Ich volt nisht geton aza zach to the rebbi*. I would never do that to the *Rebbi*." So *Rashi* says, so what is the *pshat*? He didn't want to shame the person who really had the garlic, so he went out and because everybody knew he was not the guilty party, they walked out with him, and *mimeilah* no one chapped

⁴ שְׂחִיב אָדָם לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ. כלומר, הֵינּוּ מֵיִם שְׂאוּבֵינּוּ פּוֹסְלִין אֶת הַמִּקְוֵה אֵלָּא לִשׁוֹן מִשְׁנֵה אֵלָּא לִשׁוֹן תּוֹרָה, אֵלָּא כִּךְ שָׁמַע מִרְבוּתוֹ שְׁמַעִיה וְאַבְטְלוּן. וְרַמְבַּ"ם קִבַּל מֵאֲבוֹי זֶ"ל שֶׁמִּפְנֵי שְׁהוּ שְׁמַעִיה וְאַבְטְלוּן גָּרִי צִדָק לֹא הָיוּ יוֹכוֹלִין לְהוֹצִיא מִפִּיהוּ מִלַּת הַיּוֹ, וְהָיוּ אוֹמְרִים אֵין בְּמִקּוֹם הַיּוֹ, כִּדְרָךְ בְּנֵי אָדָם עַד הַיּוֹם שְׂאִינִם יוֹכוֹלִים לְחַתּוֹךְ בְּאוֹתוֹת [אַחַח"ע], וְהָיוּ הֵלֵל גַּם הוּא אוֹמֵר אֵין, כְּמוֹ שְׁהוּ רְבוּתוֹ שְׁמַעִיה וְאַבְטְלוּן גָּרִי צִדָק אוֹמְרִים [בְּרַשְׁטְרוֹרָא] שְׁמַעִיה וְאַבְטְלוּן. הֵם רְבוּתֵיהֶם שֶׁל שְׁמַאֵי וְהֵלֵל כְּמוֹ שְׁמִבּוֹאֵר בְּאִבּוֹת וְהָיוּ גְרִים וְנִשְׂאָר בְּשִׁפְתָם לְעֵנִי שִׁפְתֵי הַעֲבוּדֵי כּוֹכְבִים וְהָיוּ אוֹמְרִים אֵין בְּמִקּוֹם הַיּוֹ וְהֵלֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר כֵּן מְלֵא אֵין כְּמוֹ שֶׁשָׁמַע מִהֶם הוּא מֵה שְׁמַעוּ רְבוּתוֹ ז"ל חֵיב אָדָם לֹמֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבּוֹ וְיֵשׁ מִי שֶׁקּוֹרָא מְלֵא הֵן מְלֵא הֵן וְאוֹמֵר שֶׁהִשְׁיֵנוּ כְּאֵילוֹ הוּא בֵּין הֵן לְהֵן וְהִקְרִיאָהּ הָרַשׁוּנָה הוּא שֶׁלְּמִדְתֵּי מֵאֲבָא מוֹרֵי ז"ל שֶׁלְּמִדּוּ מִפִּי רַבּוֹ וְרַבּוֹ מִפִּי רַבּוֹ ז"ל וְהָיוּ הוּא שֶׁלֶשֶׁת קְבִין וְהוּא חֲצֵי סָאָה וְלֹג רֹבַע הֶקֶב לְפִי שֶׁהֶקֶב ד' לֹגוּן וְכַבֵּר בְּאֵרְנוֹ שֶׁם שְׁעוֹר הֵלֹג בְּמִסְכַּת פִּיאָה.

⁵ כִּי הָא דִּיתֵיב רַבִּי וְקָא דְרִישׁ וְהִרְיָח רִיחַ שׁוּם אִמְרַ מִי שְׂאֵבֵל שׁוּם יֵצֵא עִמָּד רַבִּי חֵיִיא וְיֵצֵא עִמָּדוֹ כּוֹלֵן וְיֵצֵא מִצָּחַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בְּר' לְרַבִּי חֵיִיא אִמְרַ לִיה אַתָּה הוּא שְׁצִיעֶרַת לֵאבָא אִמְרַ לוֹ לֹא תֵּהָא כּוֹאֵת בִּישְׂרָאֵל. וְרַבִּי חֵיִיא מְהִיכָא גְמִיר לֵה מְרַבִּי מְאִיר דְתֵנִיא מְעִשָׂה בְּאִשָּׁה אַחַת שְׁבַאתָה לְבֵית מְדַרְשׁוֹ שֶׁל ר' מְאִיר לֹא רַבִּי אַחַד מִכֶּם קִדְשֵׁנִי בְּבִיאָה עִמָּד רַבִּי מְאִיר וְכַתְּבַל לֵה גַט כְּרִיתוֹת וְנָתַן לֵה עִמָּדוֹ כְּתָבוֹ כּוֹלֵם וְנָתַנו לֵה. וְר' מ' מְהִיכָא גְמִיר לֵה מְשִׁמוֹאֵל הַקְּטָן וְשִׁמוֹאֵל הַקְּטָן מְהִיכָא גְמִיר לֵה מְשִׁכְנִיה בֵּן יִחִיאֵל דְכַתִּיב (עוֹרָא ; ב) וַיֵּעַן שְׁכֵנֵיה בֵּן יִחִיאֵל מְבַנֵּי עֵילָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְעוֹרָא אֲנַחְנוּ מְעַלְנוּ בְּאַלְהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁבַּח נְשִׁים נְכַרְוִית מְעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְנָתַן יֵשׁ מִקּוֹה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל זֹאת. וְשְׁכֵנֵיה בֵּן יִחִיאֵל מְהִיכָא גְמִיר לֵה מִיְהוֹשֻׁעַ דְכַתִּיב (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ; י) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ קוּם לֶךְ לְמָה זֶה אַתָּה נֹפֵל עַל פְּנֵיךְ חֲסָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אִמְרַ לְפָנָי רַבִּי ע' מִי חֲסָא אִמְרַ לוֹ וְכִי דִילְטוֹר אֵנִי לֶךְ הַסֵּל גְּדוֹלָת וְאַיְבָעִית אֵימָא מְשַׁח דְכַתִּיב (שְׁמוֹת טז, כח) עַד אַנְה מְאֵנָם.

who did it. Asks the gemara, and Rebbe Chiya מהיכא גמיר לה? *Where did R' Chiya learn this hanhagah?* What is the question of the gemora?!

Did he learn it from the Mesilas Yesharim, Orchos Tzaddikim?! Of course he learned *mussar*, what do you mean?! *Zogt de gemara, nein!* *Azar hanhaga tut man nisht* (this type of behavior you will not learn) unless you have a *rebbe*. You know what the *gemara* says? You know where he learned it from? From R' Meir.

What was the *ma'aseh*? One time, a lady came into the *beis medrash* and claimed that one of the people in the *beis medrash* was *mekadesh* her and she didn't know who it was. "So please, the one who was *mekadesh* me, stand up." Now, you understand, it wasn't exactly a *bekovodike ma'aseh*. So what does the *gemara* say? The *gemara* says, R' Meir got up and he said, "Come here, I'm going to write you a *get krisus*. I'm going to write the *get* for you." And he wrote a *get*. That was the *rebbe*. עמדו כתבו כולם ונתנו לה, all the *talmidim* got up and each one of them said, "I'm also going to give a *get krisus*," so that *talmid* shouldn't *chap bushos*. *Frekt de gemara, מהיכא גמיר לה, where did R' Meir learn it from?* He learned it from his *rebbe*, Shmuel Hakatan.

Al pi hahalacha, you can only decree when there will be an *ibur* Hashanah, a leap year, with seven people who were invited. You had to be *mezumanim mignedolei* Yisrael, specifically appointed and invited from the great sages. So Rabban Gamliel instructed his *gabbay* to invite seven people. They came to this room to be *me'aber* the *shana* and what do you think happened? There were eight sages. So they said, whoever came *shelo birshus*, please leave. So Shmuel Hakatan gets up and he says, "I'm the one who came *shelo birshus*, but I didn't come to join you in the *ibur*. I just came to learn the *halacha lemaaseh*. I want to know how it's done." Rashi says, *keitzed atem nohegim*, "I want to know what the *minhag hadvarim* is." *Amar lo Rabban Gamliel: "Shev beni shev - sit my son, sit."* *Reuiois kol hashanim lehisaber al yadcha*. Rabban Gamliel said to him, "You sit, it is fitting that all the leap years should be decreed by you. But the *chachamim hoben gezokt* you can only do it with *mezumanim*. So the *gemara* says that really it wasn't Shmuel Hakatan. He wasn't the one who came uninvited. It was somebody else. But because of the *busha*, so they shouldn't know who came without *reshus*, Shmuel Hakatan got up. *Frekt de gemara veiter, ושמואל הקטן מהיכא גמיר לה, where did he learn it from?* *משכניה בן יחיאל*. Because it says in the *navi* Ezra, *ועתן שכניה בן יחיאל מבני עילם ויאמר לעזרא אנחנו מעלנו*. Because it says in the *navi* Ezra, *ועתן שכניה בן יחיאל מבני עילם ויאמר לעזרא אנחנו מעלנו*, Shechanya ben Yechezkel said we transgressed against Hashem and we married *goyishe* ladies *me'amei ha'aretz*. So Rashi says, Shechanya ben Yechezkel was a *tzaddik*. He didn't marry *goyishe* ladies. But he put himself together in the *klal* so the ones who did shouldn't be embarrassed. You hear that?! *Ad kedei kach*, that's how far it goes! A guy marries a *shiksa* in Eretz Yisrael *noch de galus, noch de oinshim* of Hashem, married *shiksas* and what does he say, *mir hob gezindik* (we sinned).

Frekt de gemara, מהיכא גמיר לה, ושכניה בן יחיאל מהיכא גמיר לה? Answers the gemora: *מיהושע*. Who did Shechanya ben Yechezkel learn it from? From an incident with Yehoshua. When Yehoshua went to conquer Eretz Yisrael, there was a man named Achan who stole something, he took something he wasn't allowed to take. So Hashem said to Yehoshua, *הטא ישראל*, and He didn't say the name of the person who did it. And when Dasan veAviram went out to collect *mann* on Shabbos, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, *עד אנה מאנתם לשמור*, "How long will you all refuse to obey My commandments and My teachings" (Shemos 16:28). And Hashem didn't mention Dasan veAviram's name. What do we see from the *gemara*? Besides for how *chashuv* it is, not to be *מלבין פני חבירו ברבים*, you see here that a *mentch*, his *binyan*, is made through a *mesorah*. And even more than that: R' Chiya learned it from his *rebbe*, who learned it from his *rebbe*, who ultimately learned it from Hakadosh Baruch Hu *bichvodo ve'atzmo*. So they were *mekayem* זה קלי ואנוהו and *הלכת בדרכיו* *Noiradik*.

SUBMISSION FOR THE SAKE OF TRANSMISSION

The Pri Megadim brings down that a *talmid* should be *machmir* like his *rebbe* even if the *halachah* is not like that. He says more. There is a *gemara* in Sukkah that says Rav Kahana said that a *hadass* is kosher even if it's a *hadass shoteh*. Instead of having three coming out of one place, it says if you have two and then one on a whole different level, it's kosher. (We hold *lehalachah* it's a *hadass shoteh* and it's *pasul*). The *gemara* (Sukka 32b) says R' Acha Berei Derava was *mehader* to take such *hadassim*. You know why? Because *הואיל ונפק מפומיה דרב כהנא* (Rashi there). Since Rav Kahanah said so, it's kosher, even though Rav Kahanah himself is *maskim* that it's better if it comes three out of one place.

So you see from this one thing. That the *kfifus* (subjugation) that a person has to a *rav* is a *tenai* (condition) in *haavoras haTorah*, it's a condition necessary for transmitting the Torah through the generations.

I remember hearing R' Shlomo Wolbe say, "A *yid* at any age has to have a *Rebbi*." He didn't have a *Rebbi*, so he got himself a *Rebbi*. First, R' Yerucham was his *Rebbi*, then he had another *Rebbi*, and then he made Rav Hutner his *Rebbi*. He was *mekabel* him as a *Rebbi*. He used to sit by him *mamash* like a *talmid lifnei rabbo*. Why? Because it doesn't stop. He wanted to be *kafuf* to somebody so that Hashem will use him as a *tzinor*. That is the *tzinor* for Hashem to give you *daas usevunah*.

Moshe Rabeinu was the one who was *somech yadav* on Yehoshua.

BEWARE OF TEACHING HALACHA IN FRONT OF YOUR REBBI

The *gemara* in Menachos (68b) ⁷ says that Rabbi Tarfon asked a *kasha* and R' Yehuda ben Nechemiah, his *talmid*, answered it. And the *gemara* says, *שהתק רבי טרפון*, R' Tarfon was quiet, as if he said a good *teretz*. So the *gemara* says, *בהודעה רבי יהודה*, R' Yehuda ben Nechemiah was *mamash* smiling. The *Rebbi* is asking a *kasha*, and R' Yehuda ben Nechemiah answered it,

⁷ יתיב רבי טרפון וקא קשיא ליה מה בין קודם לעומר לקודם שתי הלחם. אמר לפניו יהודה בר נחמיה לא אם אמרת קודם לעומר שכן לא הותר ממכללו אצל הדיוט תאמר קודם לשתי הלחם שהותר ממכללו אצל הדיוט. שתק רבי טרפון צהבו פניו של רבי יהודה בן נחמיה אמר לו רבי עקיבא יהודה צהבו פניך שהשבת את זקן תמהני אם תאריך ימים אמר רבי יהודה ברבי אלעאי אותו הפרק פרס הפסח היה כשעליתי לעצרת שאלתי אחריו יהודה בן נחמיה היכן הוא ואמר לי נפטר והלך לו.

and the rebbe was shosak (silent). אמר לו רבי עקיבא, Rabbi Akiva turned to him and said, יהודה צהבו פניך, your face became lit up, שהשבת את זקן, that you were able to respond to the zakein? (Now, what would you say today? “No, not at all, *baruch Hashem*, the rebbe is happy with me. I got a *teretz*, he wants a *teretz*, we’re all looking for the *emes* over here.”) But Rabbi Akiva saw from his face, you know what he said to him? תמהני אם תאריך ימים, I’ll be amazed if you live much longer.” פרק אותו הפרק, it was before chag haPesach. So R’ Yehuda bar Ilai says, כשעליתי לעצרת, when I came for Shavuot, שאלתי לי, גפטר והלך לו, they said to me, גפטר והלך לו, he died. The *midas hadin* was *poigei’a* him immediately.

The Chazon Ish used to say that we don’t find that Rabbi Tarfon had a *kepeida* on him. Rabbi Tarfon wasn’t upset with him, and Am Yisrael lost *aza gadol* who had the *koach* to answer a *kasha* of R’ Tarfon. *Hot* the Chazon Ish *gezokt*, if there is no *kfifus* for a *Rav* - if there is a lack of submission to a *Rav* - it is better that the person does not continue to be in this world!

The *gemara* in Meilah (17b) says that R’ Shimon bar Yochai was once sent on a *shlichus* by the *chachamim* to be *mevatel* the *gezeiros* in Rome. The Chachamim chose R’ Elazar bar R’ Yosi, to accompany him. So R’ Yosi, his father, was petrified. He said, “R’ Shimon bar Yochai is fire. My son - R’ Elazar - may not do the right thing and he’s going to end up a pile of bones because R’ Shimon bar Yochai may get upset at him for something]” So he didn’t want him to go. So R’ Yosi said, “I’m not sending R’ Elazar unless R’ Shimon bar Yochai is *mekabel* that he’s not going to cause him any harm.” R’ Shimon bar Yochai agreed. But it happened anyway. On the way, somebody met them and asked what the *mekor* was for a certain halachah. So the *gemara* says, R’ Elazar twisted his mouth and he whispered silently, so R’ Shimon bar Yochai shouldn’t *chap*, so he shouldn’t be a *moreh halachah bifnei rabo*, and he answered him. But R’ Shimon *chapped* and he turned to him and said, מעקימת שפתיך אתה ניכר שתלמיד חכם אתה - *from the twisting of your mouth, I see you’re a talmid chacham*. I see you know how to answer. But since you were *moreh halachah bifnei rabo*, אל יחזור הבן אצל אביו, *you’re not going to go back to your father*. Shreck!

So Tosafos says over there *bsheim* Yerushalmi, what happened to him?⁸ He contracted the worst of all sicknesses, *askarah* - *kosheh shebemisos*. He talked with his tongue, that’s what caused him this illness. He was about to die and all of a sudden, R’ Shimon bar Yochai remembered, “Oy, I promised his father that he will return. I am not going to let him die!” So he davened for him and brought him back. Unbelievable!

The Alter from Kelm *hot gezokt*, “It’s better for Klal Yisrael they shouldn’t have *chachamim muflagim* that are *moreh halachah bifnei rabo*. Do you know why? Because it’s a challenge to the whole *haavaras hatorah*.” And that is the *matzav* today. Today everybody says, “What do I need a *mesorah* for?! The whole thing of *rebbeim* is out the window. What, to have a *Rebbi*?!”

A REBBI IS A PIPELINE FOR SUCCESS

Rabosai, a *mentch* has to know that this is what the Torah is teaching us. Hashem tells Moshe Rabeinu, He (Hashem) has to appoint Yehoshua, but it has to go through you (Moshe). Yehoshua can’t become a Yehoshua unless you are *maavir* to him and you give him over the *mesorah*.

I remember, when I was a *talmid* by my *rebbei*, I used to walk around with a pad in my front pocket, like a reporter. And if my *rebbei* said anything - at the end of the *shiur* he would give statements - I would write it down. We didn’t have tape recorders and he didn’t allow them. The second the *shiur* was over, I closed my *shiur* notebook, and would pull out my pad. “What is he saying?” I used to write, “*Hayom...*” I remember looking back and reading, “Today was the *levayah* of R’ Baruch Sorotzkin (before I knew of R’ Baruch Sorotzkin), and I went to the *levayah*.” My *rebbei* spoke about it. I saw what he said on this and another *inyanim*. He spoke about the *tziyonim* and how they were doing a particular *gezeirah*. “Today he spoke about *kashrus*.” “Today he was talking about this.” Every day I used to write. And I used to have a *sefer* with him once a week and I would ask him questions. I remembered every word he said. I used to write it down in Yiddish. It took me a few hours. That was my project on *Motzei Shabbosos*, when I used to write it down. People said, “What are you doing?” I don’t know where I got it from. I had this *mishugaas*. At that time, I didn’t understand what I was doing exactly. I had this push, an urge. I wanted to have a *Rebbi*.

To say what the Brisker Rav said, or what the Chofetz Chaim said from a *mesora* is a great thing! But instead, we often hear: “I read it in a book! I bought a book in English on how to be *mechanech* children, how to do this, or how to upgrade your Judaism.” That people are big followers of! Any *sefer* that comes out today, people buy it. You know why? Because they don’t have a *Rebbi*. They don’t ask their *Rebbi*.

We should be *zoiche* to take this lesson to heart and invest our utmost efforts to have a *rebbei* and learn the real *mesorah* from him.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Although Hashem is the One who conveys *gedulah* and *chochmah* to a person, in the Torah the episode of Moshe’s placing his hands on Yehoshua demonstrated the lesson for all generations - that the *chochmas* haTorah is only given over to a *talmid* from his *rebbei*. We must understand that the entire essence of a *Yid* is founded on this *mesorah*. This itself requires the total submission and *dveikus* of a *talmid* to a *rebbei*. This submission and *dveikus* are epitomized not only by saying things in the name of one’s *rebbei*, but even by expressing *rebbei*’s mannerisms and speaking in his unique *shprach*. And when a *talmid* does subjugate himself to his *rebbei*, Hashem makes him into a *tzinor* to give him *da’as* and *tevunah*. This coming week, I keep this important lesson in mind when I interact with my *rebbei*.

⁸ אל יחזור הבן אצל אביו - בירושל" מפרש שאחותו אסכרא וכשנזכר ר' שמעון על שהתנה [להשיבו אל] אביו חזר ונתפלל עליו ונתרם