



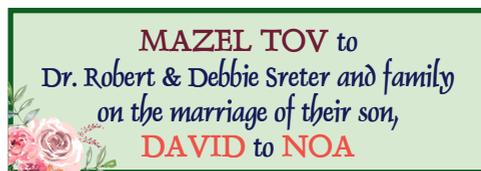
Hailing Humility

In our *parashah*, we find that Moshe Rabbeinu changes the name of his chief disciple Hoshea bin Nun to Yehoshua (*Bamidbar 13:16*). Rashi notes that Moshe accompanied the change with a *tefilah*, “May Hashem save you from the negative influence of the spies.” (*Rashi, ibid*) Targum Yonatan, however, understands that it was Yehoshua’s extreme humility that motivated Moshe to change his name. Let us see how we can synthesize these two approaches and better appreciate why Yehoshua needed this additional letter “*yud*” added to his name.

The Tosher Rebbe in *Avodat Avodah* writes that we are mistaken if we think that *Eretz Yisrael* would be conquered on a purely physical level. He explains that the seven nations found in the land represented a corrupt manifestation of the seven primary *middot* and *Am Yisrael* was meant to vanquish these forces of evil. The *meraglim*, however, did not recognize their inherent greatness and power and felt that it was beyond the people’s capacity to accomplish this mission. Hence, when *Am Yisrael* are waiting for their report, the *meraglim* describe the inhabitants of the land as “*anshei middot*,” people who possess tremendous negative

energy and are impossible to conquer. Here the *meraglim* inappropriately demonstrated false modesty. Yet, Moshe Rabbeinu knew that Yehoshua possessed a unique measure of humility and worried that he would be easily influenced by the false modesty of the other spies and pulled into their self-defeating belief. Moshe therefore changes his name with a prayer for Yehoshua’s inner strength and truth.

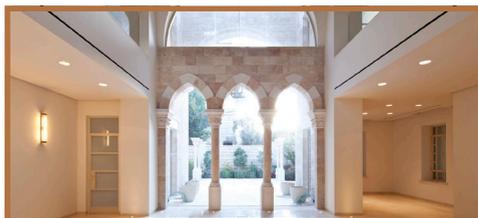
Chatam Sofer uses a kabbalistic oriented approach to combine the two interpretations. When written in the proper order, Hashem’s four-letter name, *yud* and *hei*, *vav* and *hei*, reflects the attribute of mercy. When written backwards, though, *hei*, *vav* and *hei* and *yud*, it reflects judgement. The name Hoshea, expresses judgement as the *hei* and *vav* start it off (the subsequent letters are implied). Dovid Hamelech speaks of “*zivchei Elokim ruach nishbarah*” (*Tehilim 51:19*), the way to break the force of *Elokim*, judgement, is through a broken spirit, humility. Therefore, when Moshe Rabbeinu saw this *middah* in Hoshea, he realized that by adding a “*yud*” to the beginning of his name he could infuse Yehoshua with the spirit of mercy as the order of the letters -*yud*, *hei*, *vav*, (and final *hei* implied)



– would now express Divine grace.

A beautiful insight is shared in *Shivilei Pinchas* by Rav Pinchas Friedman. When one *initiates* giving charity, he accesses the element of mercy, which otherwise would not be available when one would simply respond to a request for help. How so? The small coin resembles the letter ‘*jud*’, the hand with five fingers that holds the coin is the letter ‘*hei*’, the extension of an arm resembles the letter ‘*vav*’, and the recipient’s hand is the final ‘*hei*.’ However, when a person opens his hand to ask for a handout, the order is reversed, drawing out more of an element of judgement.

We find a different approach from Rav Reiss in *Merosh Tzurim*. Moshe Rabbeinu wished to bless his student to prevent him from being influenced by the other spies. Before receiving a brachah, one must make himself a vessel to sustain the brachah. We see this in the incident of Elisha with the wife of *Ovadia HaNavi* when he told her to collect empty vessels before pouring oil to fill them (*Melachim II 4:3*). Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu identified the special quality of humility in Yehoshua, the perfect conduit to allow brachah to become available. Indeed, Ramban notes in his famous letter, the *middah* of humility is the best protection against sin. With Hashem’s help, Yehoshua incorporated his teacher’s powerful blessing, resisted the negative pressure of the spies and effected salvation for the Jewish people. ■



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