



REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

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Leadership Lessons

Moshe Rabbeinu is nearing the end of his life and with it, his mission as the leader of *Am Yisrael*. He asks Hashem to name his successor, to which Hashem replies, “*Kach lecha et Yehoshua Bin Nun ish asher ruach bo, ves-amchta et yadcha alav...Venatata mei-hodcha alav lema’an yishmi’u kol adat Benei Yisrael*—Take for yourself Joshua the son of Nun, a man of spirit, and you shall lay your hand upon him...You shall bestow **some of your majesty** upon him so that all the congregation of the children of Israel will take heed.” (*Bamidbar* 27:18-20)

Rashi teaches, “**some of your majesty**. But not all of your majesty. Thus, we learn that the face of Moshe was [radiant] like the sun, whereas the face of Joshua was like the moon.” “**The elders of that generation said: The face of Moshe [was as bright] as the face of the sun; the face of Joshua [was] like the**

face of the moon. Woe for this embarrassment, woe for this disgrace, [that we did not merit another leader of the stature of Moshe.] (*Bava Batra* 75a)

How are we to characterize this shame and humiliation that the elders bemoaned?

The simple, natural understanding is that of *yeridat hadorot*. The new generation looked to Yehoshua as a great leader and believed in his greatness. The elders, however, experienced Moshe Rabbeinu’s guidance and instruction and felt that Yehoshua paled in comparison, similar to the moon’s light as a mere reflection of the sun’s. Thus, Yehoshua felt a shame and embarrassment vis a vis the senior members of the people.

We find a similar predicament in the time of Ezra Hasofer, when the Jewish people returned to Eretz Yisrael to build the second Beit Hamikdash in Jerusalem. The young people raised their voices with joy and praise to Hashem for allowing them to lay the foundation for the Temple, while the elders wept with anguish and heartache. (*Ezra* 3:11-12) Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* explains that not only were they lamenting the glory and splendor of first Beit Hamikdash, but they were also grieved that the people had no idea how inadequate the new Temple was in comparison to the previous one. They cried because the people did not even know what they were missing! Likewise, the gap between Moshe Rabbeinu and Yehoshua was so great, itself, a shame and humiliation.

Rav Segal, the Manchester Rav zt”l offers another powerful interpretation with a

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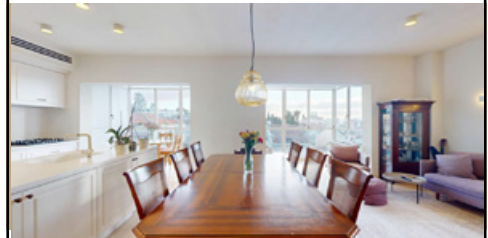


different perspective. He says that the elders were not in any way critiquing Yehoshua, after all, he was the successor chosen by Hashem! Rather, their comment came from self judgement. They looked at Yehoshua and saw him as a reflection of Moshe Rabbeinu; they understood that he was the chosen to lead the people because of his willingness to be a *mesharet*, to serve Moshe Rabbeinu with selfless devotion. The elders realized that had they invested more effort to serve Moshe Rabbeinu they too could have reached such great heights as Yehoshua did! Woe to the humiliation they felt having missed a golden opportunity that was within their reach!

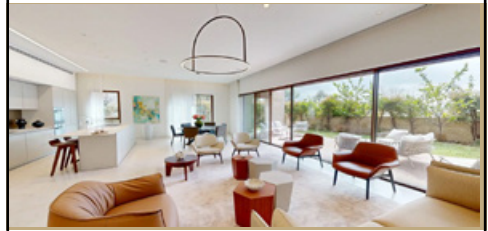
Throughout our lives, each of us is presented with numerous fortuitous moments that can potentially help us grow and propel us to become greater versions of ourselves. How unfortunate it would be to look back with regret at not having taken advantage of such special opportunities. Let us strive to live with intention, asking Hashem for His continued guidance and direction toward spiritual growth and genuine connection. ■



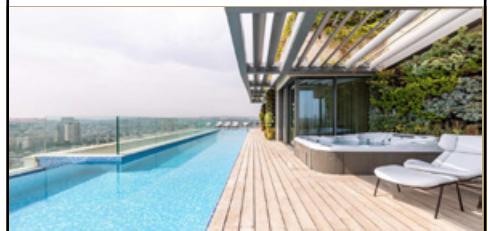
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