

# חמודי שי על התורה והמועדים

## Chamudei Shai on the Torah and Holidays

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### Parashas Haazinu

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#### From Hoshea to Yehoshua: The making of Moshe's successor

וַיְבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם  
הוּא וְהוֹשֶׁעַ בֶּרֶנוּן

*"Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Hoshea son of Nun" (Devarim 32:44).*

At the conclusion of the Shirah, the Torah refers to Yehoshua by his original name, Hoshea. This is perplexing, because Moshe had changed his name many years earlier, before the mission of the *meraglim*: וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֶׁעַ בֶּרֶנוּן וַיְהוֹשֶׁעַ: "Moshe called Hoshea son of Nun, Yehoshua" (Bamidbar 13:16). Chazal on that verse explain Moshe's intention as a prayer: הֲיֵה יוֹשִׁיעַךְ מֵעֲצַת מְרַגְלִים, "May Hashem save you from the counsel of the spies" (Rashi, Bamidbar 13:16, citing *Sotah* 34b).

Rashi addresses the Torah's return to the name Hoshea: ולמה קוראהו כאן הושע? לומר שלא זחה דעתו עליו, שאף על פי שניתנה לו גדולה השפיל עצמו כאשר מתחלתו. Why is he called Hoshea here? To teach that his new greatness did not cause him to become conceited; although greatness had been given to him, he humbled himself, as he had been at the outset (Rashi, Devarim 32:44). His greatness begins with the

humility of Hoshea. To stand in Moshe's place, he must retain the humility that he had before greatness was bestowed upon him.

The *Kli Yakar* gives special significance to the Torah's return to the name Hoshea. He explains that as long as even one member of the generation of the meraglim remained alive, Moshe's prayer for protection was still needed, and he was therefore called Yehoshua even after the episode of the meraglim. Once that generation had entirely passed away, לא היה מקום לתפלה זו וחזר וקראו הושע, there was no longer a need for that particular prayer, and the Torah returned to calling him Hoshea (*Kli Yakar*, Devarim 32:44).

This explanation raises an immediate question. In the next parasha, at the end of the Torah after Moshe's death, we read:

**וַיְהִי־שֶׁשׁ בְּרִנּוֹן מָלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה בְּיָסְמוֹ  
מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו**

"Yehoshua son of Nun was filled with a spirit of wisdom, because Moshe had laid his hands upon him." (Devarim 34:9)

If the purpose of the name Yehoshua no longer applied, why does the Torah return to that name and not use "Hoshea"? In fact, he remains Yehoshua, throughout the *Sefer Yehoshua*, the sefer that bears his name! Perhaps one may suggest that the sequence, יהושע, יהושע may therefore reflect more than a change in word usage. It may describe the stages through which Moshe's talmid became his successor.

### **Greatness begins with humility**

The Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh finds significance in the missing letter. He explains that the *yud* added to Hoshea's

name represents יקר וגדולה, honor and greatness. When the Torah places Yehoshua alongside Moshe, הוא וְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן, that *yud* is absent. The Ohr HaChaim cites the words of Yeshaya Hanavi: "הִתְפַּאֵר הַגִּרְזָן עַל הַחוּצָב בּוֹ", "Can the axe glorify itself over the one who hews with it?" (*Ohr HaChaim*, Devarim 32:44). How could Yehoshua display his greatness in the presence of Moshe, his rebbe, from whom that very greatness had come?

Rashi and the Ohr HaChaim thus illuminate two aspects of this same moment. Yehoshua is about to assume the greatest responsibility of his life, yet the Torah first emphasizes that he remains as humble as he was at the beginning. At the same time, the missing *yud*, the symbol of יקר וגדולה recedes while he stands beside Moshe. His ascent to leadership begins not with self-assertion, but with the humility of Hoshea.

### **The final Yehoshua and Moshe's two hands**

Once Moshe completes the transfer of leadership, the *yud* returns:

**וַיְהִי־שֶׁשׁ בְּרִנּוֹן מָלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה בְּיָסְמוֹ  
מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו**

The Torah does not merely tell us that Yehoshua has been appointed. It immediately connects his רוּחַ חָכְמָה with Moshe's semichah. The original prayer associated with the meraglim had already served its purpose, as the *Kli Yakar* explains. The restored name Yehoshua now appears in a new context, reflecting the wisdom and spiritual capacity he receives in order to succeed Moshe.

The Maharsha gives particular depth to this transmission to Yehoshua. Hashem had commanded Moshe, וְסִמַּחְתָּ אֶת־יָדְךָ,

עָלֶיךָ, "you shall place your hand upon him" (Bamidbar 27:18), in the singular. Moshe, however, fulfilled the command with both hands: וַיִּסָּמֶךְ אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו (Bamidbar 27:23). The Maharsha explains that Moshe gave Yehoshua not only the authority of leadership he had been commanded to confer, but also, through the additional hand, חכמה ותורה, wisdom and Torah. He connects this directly with the description, וַיְהִי־שֶׁעַ בְּרִנּוֹן מְלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה כִּי־סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו (Maharsha, *Chiddushei Aggados, Sanhedrin* 105b).

The *Sifrei Zuta* expresses this dimension of the semichah with the words שִׁיתְבָּרַךְ תִּלְמִדּוֹ עַל יָדְךָ, that Yehoshua's Torah learning should be blessed through Moshe (*Sifrei Zuta*, Bamidbar 27:18). The first Yehoshua was shaped through Moshe's tefillah, יְיָהּ, a prayer that his talmid remain protected from the counsel of the meraglim. The final Yehoshua stands after Moshe's semichah, מְלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה, prepared to carry the Torah of his rebbe into the next generation. The name remains Yehoshua, but it now reflects Moshe's semicha and transmission of wisdom, Torah, and leadership to the one who will lead Klal Yisrael.

### From disciple to pillar of Torah

The *Sfas Emes* places this transition within the larger framework of Torah transmission. The Shirah of Haazinu is transmitted through Moshe and Yehoshua together: ולכן נאמרה שירת האזינו ע"י משה ויהושע שהוא חיבור תורה "the Shirah of Haazinu was given through Moshe because they represent the joining of Torah Shebichsav and Torah Sheba'al Peh" (*Sfas Emes*, Haazinu 5661 [א"ת]).

The Ralbag adds an important qualification. Yehoshua's new level did not suddenly appear when he was appointed. His many years as משרת משה had prepared him continuously, כדי שילמד ממנו תמיד וישלים עצמו במה שלמד, "so that he could constantly learn from Moshe and perfect himself through the secrets of the Torah and wisdom that he learned from him" (Ralbag, Devarim 32:44). The final Yehoshua therefore grows out of the original Hoshea. His decades of service made him capable of receiving what Moshe would ultimately transmit.

### The yud and the hands of Moshe

After the Torah's temporary return to יהושע, the next time the Torah calls him יהושע comes in the pasuk that attributes his רוּחַ חָכְמָה to Moshe's hands. This juxtaposition calls for explanation. The yud that Moshe had originally added to Hoshea alludes to the Divine Name: יְיָהּ. According to the *Kli Yakar*, when that particular danger and generation had passed, this particular prayer had fulfilled its purpose, and the Torah again called him יהושע. Yet when the yud returns, it does so in connection with Moshe's hands and with a new spiritual endowment.

This connection of the spiritual role of Moshe's hands is already evident much earlier in Yehoshua's life. In the war against Amalek, the Torah deliberately separates the roles of Moshe and Yehoshua. Yehoshua goes out to conduct the battle below, while Moshe, Aharon, and Chur ascend to the top of the hill. From there, וַיִּהְיֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה וַיַּרְא וַיִּהְיֶה יָדָיו אֶמּוּנָה עַד־בָּא וַיִּגְבֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל (Shemos 17:9-12). The Ramban explains that Moshe ascended the hill

specifically so that he could see Klal Yisrael fighting and direct his attention toward them, while they could look up and see him **פּוֹרֵשׁ כַּפָּיו הַשְּׁמִימָה**, spreading his hands heavenward in prayer (Ramban, Shemos 17:9). The *Megaleh Amukos* reveals a deeper intent in this division: **מֹשֶׁה הוֹצִיךָ לַהֲלָחֵם עִם שָׂרֵי עַמְלֵק לְמַעַל**, וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַחֲלִישׁ אֶת עַמְלֵק לְמַטָּה. Moshe fought the spiritual power of Amalek above, while Yehoshua weakened Amalek below.

The parasha concludes: **כִּי־יָד עַל־כֶּסֶּל** “for a hand is upon the throne of Hashem; Hashem is at war with Amalek from generation to generation.” Rashi understands the **יד** in this pasuk as the hand of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, raised in an oath to wage war against Amalek. Thus, the Torah itself places **יד** and the Divine Name **יְיָ** together in a single expression (Rashi, Shemos 17:16). *Kli Yakar* makes this especially relevant to Yehoshua’s name. He explains that when the meraglim later frightened Klal Yisrael by invoking Amalek, Moshe added **יְיָ** to Hoshea’s name so that Yehoshua would remember and rely upon the Divine oath against Amalek expressed in **כֶּסֶּל עַל יָד** **יְיָ**. In his words, **עַל שְׁמוֹ כִּדִּי שִׁיחִיָּה נִזְכָּר לְשִׁבוּעָה שֶׁהִיטָה מֹשֶׁה לְיְהוֹשֻׁעַ** “Moshe added **יְיָ** to Yehoshua’s name so that he would remember the oath made with the Name **יְיָ**” (*Kli Yakar*, Bamidbar 13:16).

The symmetry is notable. At the beginning of Yehoshua’s emergence, he conducts the battle against Amalek below while Moshe stands upon the hill above, his hands spread heavenward in prayer. At the end of Moshe’s life, those same hands are placed directly upon Yehoshua

himself, and the Torah presents him with the restored name **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**.

### **Moshe’s hands as instruments of Divine agency in appointing Yehoshua**

The significance of Moshe’s hands becomes clearer when we consider how the Torah uses the hand as an instrument of Divine agency. Hashem acts with a **יָד**, חֲזָקָה, while Moshe repeatedly serves as the human instrument through whom Hashem’s Torah and command are conveyed **בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה**. This language appears with particular force in Yehoshua’s appointment. Hashem commands Moshe, **וְסַמַּכְתָּ אֶת־יָדְךָ עָלָיו**, and then instructs him, **וְנָתַתָּה מִהוֹדְךָ עָלָיו** (Bamidbar 27:18-20). The *semichah* is thus joined directly to the transfer of authority. The conclusion of the appointment is striking: **וַיִּסְמַךְ אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו וַיִּצְוֵהוּ בְּאֶשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה'** **יְיָ** **בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה** (Bamidbar 27:23). Moshe, who functions **בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה** as the authorized servant through whom Hashem’s word is conveyed, places his own **יָדָיו** hands upon Yehoshua and thereby establishes him as his successor.

### **Hashem’s Name transmitted through human hands**

The Torah provides a similar model that helps illuminate this process. In Birkas Kohanim, after commanding the Kohanim to bless Klal Yisrael, the Torah concludes, **וְשָׁמוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָנִי אֲבָרְכֶם** (Bamidbar 6:27). The Kohanim place Hashem’s Name upon Bnei Yisrael, yet Hashem declares that He Himself is the one Who blesses them. The blessing originates with Hashem; the Kohanim

serve only as the human conduit for His blessing.

Rabbeinu Bachya describes the role of the Kohanim's hands explicitly. In *Kad HaKemach* he writes that during *nesiyas kapayim*, כי הכהן בשעה שנושא את כפיו שכינה, and again, השכינה שורה על ידיו שורה בין שתי ידיו כבין שני הכרובים. The Shechinah rests upon the hands of the Kohen as he blesses the people (Rabbeinu Bachya, *Kad HaKemach*, ערך יראה). The hands are the conduit, while Hashem remains the source of the *berachah*.

Moshe likewise acts here not from his own power but in fulfillment of Hashem's command to place his hand upon Yehoshua. His hands are the conduit through which the Divine blessing, Torah and authority entrusted to him are transmitted.

A further parallel may be suggested from the pesukim here. When Hashem commands Moshe to appoint Yehoshua, He says, וְנָתַתָּה מֵהוֹדְךָ עָלָיו, "You shall place some of your majesty upon him" (Bamidbar 27:20). Rashi explains that this *hod* refers to קירון עור פנים, the radiance of Moshe's face, which reflected the Divine radiance he had received. Thus, here too, Moshe's hands serve not as an independent source of power, but as the instrument through which a Divine endowment resting upon Moshe is transmitted to Yehoshua.

### **The talmid becomes the successor**

The sequence of names may thus mark the stages by which a talmid becomes a successor. He begins as Hoshea. Moshe

then makes him Yehoshua, adding the *yud* of the Divine Name as a tefillah for protection. Yet at the moment of succession, the Torah again calls him Hoshea, teaching that even when greatness is bestowed upon him, שלא זחה דעתו עליו, he remains as humble as at the beginning. Only after this return to the humility of Hoshea is he presented in his final role as Yehoshua.

Yet becoming Moshe's successor does not mean leaving Moshe behind; it means internalizing Moshe's strength. At the beginning of Yehoshua's public mission, he fought Amalek below while Moshe stood upon the hill above, his hands spread toward Heaven. At the end of Moshe's life, those hands are placed directly upon Yehoshua. Through Moshe's *semichah*, שיתברך תלמדו על דך, the Torah, wisdom, and authority of the rebbe are entrusted to the talmid. The Torah then calls him once again ויהושע בֶּרֶנָן.

The first Yehoshua was Moshe's protected talmid. The final Yehoshua is Moshe's spiritual successor and the authorized bearer of his mesorah. The first *yud* expressed Moshe's prayer that Hashem preserve Yehoshua amid the generation of the *meraglim*. The restored *yud* may now express the continuing Divine assistance that accompanies Yehoshua as he assumes responsibility for Klal Yisrael.

The *Sfas Emes* gives this transition its broader context. Moshe and Yehoshua together represent חיבור תורה שבכתב ושבע"פ. It is not just a matter of one leader taking the place of another. The transfer from Moshe to Yehoshua is itself part of the

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PEARLS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE GAON FROM PLOTZK

continuing of the wellsprings of Torah and wisdom that Moshe received at Sinai and transmitted to Yehoshua who carries them forward into the life of Klal Yisrael. The talmid becomes the successor through whom that mesorah continues.

## **The integration of the Torah's inner (esoteric) dimension with its plain meaning**

### הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי כִּי

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth" (Devarim 32:1).

Moshe Rabbeinu begins with a call that brings together two worlds: heaven and earth. To understand the deeper significance of this encounter, Rabbeinu, the Maharal Tzintz, teaches us that we must first consider the essential nature of the holy Torah and the process by which it descended into this world.

Rabbeinu explains that it is well known that the Torah, in its source and essential nature, is entirely spiritual, and that it is merely clothed in physical narratives. It was for this reason that the *Malachei Hashares* desired the Torah and sought to have it remain in heaven, because of its spirituality. However, it was the will of the Creator, may He be blessed, that the Torah descend into this lowly world. For this purpose, the Torah is "clothed" in physical narratives, human actions, and practical mitzvos performed with physical objects. In this world, where the human intellect is incapable of apprehending abstract spirituality as it truly is, the plain garment is necessary in order to give those who dwell below access to the Torah's light.

And here we see the extraordinary power of Moshe Rabbeinu's unique prophecy, which was set apart from that of all the other nevi'im (prophets). Although the other nevi'im attained exceedingly lofty levels of perception, they did not reach the level at which they could clothe the sublime secrets in a simple, orderly, and clear form. Their perception of the esoteric dimension was not sufficiently complete to be expressed in a direct and fitting garment. Consequently, it is often difficult to connect the pesukim in Neviim according to their plain meaning.

By contrast, the Torah given through Moshe Rabbeinu, whose perception was perfect, is itself a work of perfect harmony. Its higher spiritual esoteric dimension is clothed in an exceptionally beautiful, precise, and orderly garment. The Torah's plain meaning stands on its own as a narrative understandable to every person and as a clear system of laws. At the same time, it contains within itself the most profound secrets, without diminishing the clarity of its plain meaning.

In this light, we can understand the pasuk:

### הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי כִּי

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth."

- **הַשָּׁמַיִם**, "the heavens," represent the supernal beings, the *malachim* and pure *neshamos*, who understand the Torah in terms of its spirituality and inner dimension. Moshe addresses them with the term **דְּבֹר**, "speech," which denotes forceful and profound speech, because the secret dimension, which constitutes the essence of the Torah's inner meaning, demands powerful spiritual perception, unencumbered by any attachment to physicality.
- **הָאָרֶץ**, "the earth," represents the lower beings, the human beings who inhabit the physical world. Moshe addresses them with the term **אִמְרָה**, "saying," which denotes gentle, pleasant, and readily comprehensible speech. Those below hear the Torah through the garment of its plain meaning, which makes it accessible to each person according to his individual capacity for understanding.

We thus learn that there is no contradiction or distance between the different dimensions of the Torah. Its plain meaning and its secret dimension are both true and in harmony. Precisely because of the perfect garment in which Moshe Rabbeinu clothed the Torah, both the supernal beings and the lower beings can draw nourishment from the same Divine Torah, each according to his level and the



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