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PARASHAT HASHAVUA

PARASHAT SHELACH

The Differences Between Kalev and Yehoshua
in the Story of the Spies

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Introduction

The sin of the spies, as we know, left a profound and tragic impression on the generation that left Egypt. The results of the sin affected Moshe and Aharon, too, even though they themselves had not committed any transgression: the decree of wandering in the wilderness for forty years forced them to become the last survivors of those who had left Egypt, greatly advanced in age, and – to a large extent – distant and disconnected from the younger generation. The oldest of the men of this new generation would have been less than sixty years old during the fortieth year of wandering, while Moshe was a hundred and twenty years old, and Aharon – a hundred and twenty-three.

The only two people who were spared any suffering from God's decree – and whose status was even strengthened, to some extent – were Yehoshua and Kalev. This was because they were not party to the counsel of the spies; rather, they courageously stood firm in their report, while their colleagues – along with most of the nation – launched a rebellion against Moshe and against God.

In this *shiur* we will be examining the relationship between Yehoshua and Kalev. In our minds they are generally bound together as the pair that acted jointly against the other spies and the nation, but in truth the situation was more complex than this. We shall examine how the Torah describes the stand adopted by each of them separately, and their respective results.

A. Kalev vs. Yehoshua in the Story of the Sin

After the spies return from Canaan, they describe it to the nation. At the conclusion of their description they emphasize the might of the nations dwelling there and hint that *Am Yisrael* will have no hope of achieving victory over them:

"However, the people that dwells in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very great, and we also saw the children of Anak there. Amalek lives in the land of the Negev, and the Chitti and the Yevusi and the Emori dwell in the mountain, and the Canaani dwell by the sea and alongside the Yarden (13:28-29)."

Kalev's immediate reaction is:

"Kalev silenced the people before Moshe and said, 'Let us go up and possess it, for we are well able to prevail over it'" (verse 30).

It should be noted that the only person here who stands up against the spies is Kalev. No reaction is recorded as emanating from Yehoshua, nor do we hear anything from Moshe

and Aharon.¹

Further on, the spies continue to incite; they speak badly about the land² and succeed in persuading the people:

"And all of Bnei Yisrael complained against Moshe and against Aharon, and the whole congregation said to them: If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! And why does God bring us to this land, to fall by the sword? Our women and children will be for prey! Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt? And they said to one another: Let us appoint a chief and return to Egypt" (14:2-4)

An analysis of this complaint shows that it is comprised of two elements. The first starts with the words, "And all of Bnei Yisrael complained...", and concerns the plan to enter the land. The substance of the complaint is that *Am Yisrael* is bound to lose the war of conquest. The second component is indicated by the introductory words, "And they said to one another..." Here a different element is introduced: "Let us appoint a chief and return to Egypt." The people plan to return to Egypt, and for this purpose they seek a new leadership: "Let us appoint a chief," since Moshe and Aharon will certainly not cooperate with this plan.

It is only at this stage that Moshe and Aharon react:

"Moshe and Aharon fell upon their faces before all of the assembly of the congregation of Bnei Yisrael..." (verse 5)

In other words, it is only when the complaint becomes a rebellion against the leadership that Moshe and Aharon respond, and even at this stage their response is not what we would expect from the nation's leaders. Instead of acting firmly and decisively, they express shock and a sense of failure by falling upon their faces before the people. Moshe does not act with the firmness that characterized earlier episodes of popular unrest, nor does he pray on behalf of the nation. The falling is not one of "falling before God" – in prayer – but rather "before the nation," as a sort of plea that they desist.³

Now, as the crisis reaches its climax, Yehoshua steps in:

"And Yehoshua bin-Nun and Kalev ben-Yefuneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their garments. And they said to all of the congregation of Bnei Yisrael, saying: The land which we passed through to spy it tout is an exceedingly good land. If God favors us then He will bring us to this land and give it to us; a land that

¹ We certainly cannot suggest that Yehoshua took the side of the spies, since further on (14:6-9) he speaks out against them explicitly, but at this stage he offers no response. *Chazal* offer a number of interesting *midrashim*, some of which we shall cite below.

² According to verse 32.

³ This is what the plain reading suggests. While the verse does not tell us whether Moshe and Aharon spoke to the nation and what they said, it seems that the significance of the falling is supplication. (In other instances in *Tanakh*, "falling" before someone takes place when the person is beseeching and pleading, such as, for example, in the story of Yaakov and Esav; see also *Esther* 7:7-8 [editor's note]. In *Devarim* 1, when Moshe recalls the story of the spies, he mentions what he said at the time; we shall not elaborate here.

flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against God, and have no fear of the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their guard has departed from them and God is with us; do not fear them. But all the congregation said to stone them with stones" (6-10).

Here Kalev and Yehoshua present a united front with the aim of countering the counsel of the spies and the popular rebellion, with Yehoshua even appearing before Kalev.⁴ They argue passionately in defense of the land and in favor of faith in God. They have the right and the ability to argue for the land since, at the time of their appointment to spy out the land, they were told to bring back an evaluation. Moshe and Aharon, in contrast, take no part in the argument, since they have not seen the land.

Kalev and Yehoshua display impressive leadership and courage: it could not have been easy to stand up against the other spies and the rest of the nation, who sought to stone them. This situation accentuates the absence of Yehoshua at the first stage, and raises the question of why he did not join his voice to that of Kalev already then, leaving him to face the masses alone. As noted, we may explain the silence of Moshe and Aharon at the first stage on the basis of their not having seen the land. So long as the argument concerned the nature of the land and the chances of success in conquering it, they believed that the nation would listen only to someone who had been to the land and seen it. In addition, they may possibly have hoped that the pessimistic mood would pass. But Yehoshua had been in the land and seen it; his words could have had an effect at an earlier stage of the spies' report. Why, then, did he remain silent?

B. Kalev vs. Yehoshua in the Story of the Punishment

We shall leave our above question unsolved, for now, and turn our attention to Yehoshua and Kalev as they feature in the story of the punishment.

Several of the commentators note that the course of the punishment appears in two parallel but not identical cycles. In the first cycle (14:11-25), God addresses Moshe and tells him that He intends to annihilate Bnei Yisrael, but because of Moshe's prayer He lessens their punishment. In the second cycle (14:26-38), the punishment is given immediately, measure for measure, based on a calculation of "each day – a year; each day – a year." Bnei Yisrael will wander in the wilderness for forty years. In this second cycle, an immediate punishment is also meted out to the spies themselves, and they die in a plague.

In addition to these differences between the two cycles, there is another one, pertaining to the status of Kalev and Yehoshua.

In the first cycle, we are told:

"For all of these people who have seen My glory and My wonders which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and who have tried Me these ten times, and have not listened to My voice – they will not see the land which I promised to their fathers, nor shall those who have provoked Me see it. But My servant Kalev, since a different spirit was with him, and he followed Me fully – therefore I shall bring him to the land into which he went, and his seed will possess it." (14:22-24)

Kalev alone is spared the punishment of not entering the land; he alone is promised that he will possess the land. Were the story to end here, we could regard that as confirmation of our feeling that Yehoshua indeed fell short of God's

expectations when he remained silent during the buildup of the crisis.

However, in the second cycle there is a change in relation to Yehoshua:

"Say to them: As I live, says God, as you have spoken in My ears, so I shall do to you. Your carcasses will fall in this wilderness, and all those of you who were counted, by your numbers, from twenty years old and upward, who have complained against Me – you will not come to the land concerning which I swore to make you dwell there, **except for Kalev ben-Yefuneh and Yehoshua bin-Nun...** and the men whom Moshe sent to spy out the land, and then returned and complained about it to the entire congregation, speaking evil of the land – those men, who spoke evil of the land, will die in a plague before God. **But Yehoshua bin-Nun and Kalev ben-Yefuneh lived, of those men who had gone to spy out the land.**" (28-38)

Here, Yehoshua and Kalev are inseparably bound up: both are removed from the decree of not entering the land, and both together are saved from the plague that takes the lives of the other spies. It seems, therefore, that Yehoshua's stand and his words at the later stage of the rebellion were enough to save him.

What is the meaning of the difference between the two cycles? Why does God first say that only Kalev will be saved?

Before addressing this problem, let us examine two other places where mention is made of the actions of Yehoshua and Kalev.

Description of the Punishment and the Status of Kalev and Yehoshua in *Sefer Bamidbar*

When Moshe recounts the story of the spies in *Sefer Devarim*, the difference between Kalev and Yehoshua is preserved:

"And God heard the voice of your words and He was angry, and He swore, saying: None of those men, this evil generation, will see the good land which I promised to give to their forefathers. Except for Kalev ben-Yefuneh – he will see it, and to him I shall give the land where he trod, and to his descendants, because he followed God wholly. And God was also very angry with me because of you, saying: you, too, will not go in there. But Yehoshua bin-Nun, who stands before you – he will go in there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it." (*Devarim* 1:34-35)

In these verses there is a clear distinction between Kalev and Yehoshua: Kalev alone is not included in the decree of death in the wilderness, and only he is promised the inheritance of the land – in keeping with the first cycle of punishment in our *parasha*. Yehoshua is mentioned here not as someone who is exempt from any sort of punishment for the sin of the spies, but rather as someone who has been spared from this punishment because he is Moshe's replacement.

However, this is difficult to understand. If Yehoshua did indeed play some role in the sin of the spies, then surely he is not worthy of being the leader of the nation. On the other hand, if Yehoshua did not sin, then why does the text not state this explicitly? Moreover, our *parasha* tells us that Yehoshua stood at Kalev's side – at least at the second stage of the rebellion. Why does Moshe fail to mention this in his speech?

⁴ See Rashi *Bamidbar* 12:1, "And Miriam and Aharon spoke..." [editor's note].

Omission of Yehoshua's Actions in *Sefer Yehoshua*

The omission of Yehoshua's part in the opposition to the spies is taken even further to the extreme in the encounter between Yehoshua and Kalev that is described in *Sefer Yehoshua*:

"The children of Yehuda approached Yehoshua in Gilgal and Kalev ben-Yefuneh, the Kenizi, said to him: You know the matter of which God spoke to Moshe, the man of God, concerning me and concerning you, at Kadesh-Barne'a. I was forty years old when Moshe, God's servant, sent me from Kadesh-Barne'a to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as was in my heart. But my brethren who went up with me caused the heart of the people to melt, but I followed the Lord my God wholly. And Moshe swore on that day, saying: The land where your foot trod – it shall be an inheritance for you, and for your descendants, forever, because you followed the Lord my God." (*Yehoshua* 14:6-9)

In Kalev's words here there is no mention at all of Yehoshua's role at the time. Indeed, if this unit were to stand alone, we could conclude that Kalev alone stood against all of the other spies – as indeed seems to be indicated in *Sefer Devarim*, and from certain parts of the story in *Sefer Bamidbar*.⁵

C. Yehoshua and Kalev: Two Prototypes of Leadership Explanation for Yehoshua's Behavior

Despite the difficulties that arise from the account as retold by Moshe in *Sefer Devarim*, it seems that it is specifically this text that holds the key to answering the various questions that we have raised.

Yehoshua merits to enter the land because he is Moshe's faithful servant – and, ultimately, his successor as leader of the nation. Yehoshua's authority comes from Moshe. His manner and personality are also products of his long and devoted service to him. Therefore, we cannot expect Yehoshua to initiate or head anything independently while Moshe is still in the picture, in keeping with the dictum that "a disciple is not entitled to teach halakha in front of his teacher." For this reason, when the spies harp on the difficulties that they anticipate in waging war against the nations of the land, Yehoshua expects Moshe, his master and teacher, to respond; therefore, he himself remains silent – even though he is angered by the words of the other spies. Kalev, on the other hand, is not dependent on Moshe, and he therefore responds to the report of the spies in the manner of a leader who expresses his opinion in his own right. Only after Moshe and Aharon fall upon their faces, and Yehoshua understands that Moshe sees the reaction of the nation in a most severe light, and out of a desire to protect him from rebellion, does Yehoshua voice his support of Kalev's position.

Kalev features in the story of the spies as an independent leader, whose faith in God, in the nation of Israel and in the land of Israel is beyond any doubt or question: "Let us go up and possess it, for we are well able to prevail over it." Yehoshua, in contrast, is not a leader by his own merits alone, but rather by virtue of his master. The fact that he is Moshe's loyal servant is the source of his greatness and power – but at the same time, the source of his weakness. His actions in the episode of the spies are more a reflection of his loyalty than an

⁵ Even if we say that since the claim that the children of Yehuda wish to bring concerns Kalev, and therefore they focus on him and his role, the absolute absence of any mention of Yehoshua as not participating in the sin of the spies seems exaggerated, even from the perspective of rhetoric.

expression of independent leadership.

The description in *Sefer Devarim*, then, shows up the deeper level of what is going on: Yehoshua indeed merits to enter the land because he is Moshe's loyal servant (and eventually also his successor), and not because he joined Kalev. This is because Yehoshua's actions in the rebellion were the result of his being Moshe's servant, rather than the adoption of an independent stand by a leader. From this perspective, it is indeed only Kalev who demonstrates a "different spirit."

Yehoshua and Kalev vs. Moshe

Yehoshua's position in Moshe's shadow also finds expression in other instances in the Torah:

a. In the war against *Amalek* (*Shemot* 17:8-13) Yehoshua chooses men at Moshe's command, and he leads the war against Amalek with success. Nevertheless, the lyrical description in the Torah leaves no room for doubt: Yehoshua's fortune on the battlefield is directly related to the position of Moshe's arms as he sits on the mountain. He is victorious only because Moshe's arms remain "steady until the sun went down."⁶

b. In *Parashat Ki-Tisa* (*Shemot* 3:7-11), the Torah describes how Yehoshua sits constantly in Moshe's tent, so as to attend to him, never leaving. Even when Moshe leaves the tent in order to speak with God, Yehoshua "did not move from inside the tent."⁷

c. In the story of Eldad and Meidad (*Bamidbar* 11:25-29), Yehoshua suggests that the "rebellious" would-be prophets be imprisoned (verse 28); this is instructive with regard to Yehoshua's principal motivation. From Moshe's response – "Are you then zealous for me? If only all of God's nation could be prophets!" (verse 29) – we learn that Yehoshua was zealous for his master. Moshe, on the other hand, is only zealous for God; he therefore regards their prophecy in a positive light.

d. At the beginning of the *parasha* we find a list of the princes who were selected to go and spy the land (13:1-16). At the end of the list, the Torah tells us that "Moshe called Hoshea bin-Nun – Yehoshua." The significance of this addition is unclear: why does the Torah note this specifically here? It would seem that the answer to this question is anchored in our hypothesis as to Yehoshua's actions. A person's name expresses his essence, and the fact that Moshe names Hoshea "Yehoshua" means that he influences him in some way. This is a sort of early hint at what is going to happen in the wake of the sending of the spies: Yehoshua is destined to stand up to all of the other spies specifically because he is Moshe's servant, and he comes to his defense.

e. As we know, Yehoshua is appointed as leader by Moshe placing his hands upon him (*Bamidbar* 27:15-23). In this way, Yehoshua's leadership becomes a continuation of that of Moshe. This idea also arises from Moshe's words in *Sefer Devarim* (1:38): Moshe himself, it is decreed, will not enter the land, but

⁶ According to verse 12.

⁷ According to verse 11.

"Yehoshua bin-Nun who stands before you... encourage him, for he will cause Israel to possess it." In other words, Yehoshua will be Moshe's successor and replacement.

Indeed, Yehoshua's leadership is described, in *Sefer Yehoshua*, as a continuation of that of Moshe in many respects:

Firstly, the revelation of the angel at the beginning of Yehoshua's career (*Yehoshua* 1:1-9) parallels Moshe's experience at the burning bush (*Shemot* 3:1-4:17). Secondly, the miraculous instances of Divine assistance that pervade *Sefer Yehoshua* resemble the miracles performed for Moshe. For instance, the splitting of the Jordan (*Yehoshua* 3:9-17) echoes the splitting of the Reed Sea (*Shemot* 14:15-31). Likewise, the covenant forged at the Jordan (*Yehoshua* 4:2-9, 20-24) is a continuation and implementation of the covenant of the plains of Moav (*Devarim* 27:1-9, 29:9-30:20).

The purpose of Moshe's mission was to bring the nation of Israel to their land (see *Shemot* 3:16-17). While Moshe is ultimately prevented from concluding his mission, the last remaining stages are not left subject to a form of leadership that is different from his own. Yehoshua succeeds Moshe and follows in his path; he is chosen to complete Moshe's mission and to bring the nation into the land. Moshe is compared by *Chazal* to the light of the sun, and Yehoshua to the light of the moon – which illuminates by reflecting the light of the sun.⁸ The moon will continue to give off the light which it has received from the sun, and thereby Moshe's mission will be completed.

Kalev's reaction was admittedly preferable to that of Yehoshua in that he displayed leadership, but it is precisely for this reason that he cannot replace Moshe: one who does not need Moshe in order to respond and to display leadership, cannot be his replacement. From a different perspective, however, he is certainly worthy of rewards for his absolute and courageous opposition to the spies – a reward of which Yehoshua is not worthy, and this is the reason for their separation in the two cycles of punishment. Kalev's reaction expressed his desire to go back and enter the land where his feet had trodden, and his confidence in the nation of Israel, in whose name he had been sent. His reward, accordingly, will be to possess the land and to bequeath it to his descendants. From this perspective, there is no room for Yehoshua alongside Kalev. Still, Yehoshua was certainly not party to the incitement of the spies, and no-one could suggest that he betrayed God and his mission, heaven forefend; in this respect he and Kalev are equals.

D. Kalev and Yehoshua – Two Positions of "Trust" in God Trust in God and the Manner of Conduct

The source and nature of the respective reactions of Kalev and Yehoshua find expression in their argument with the spies:

Kalev:

"Kalev silenced the people before Moshe and said, 'Let us go up and possess it, for we are well able to prevail over it'" (13:30).

Yehoshua and Kalev together:

"The land which we passed through to spy it out is an exceedingly good land. If God favors us then He will bring us to this land and give it to us; a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against God, and have no fear of the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their guard has departed from them and God is with us; do no fear them." (14:7-9)

Kalev's speech is very short; it expresses unmediated faith that requires no external justification. There is no need to say anything beyond, "We are well able to prevail." He is saying, as it were, "Enough skepticism, enough fearfulness." His words contain no metaphysics or artistic metaphors. The difference between his speech (and even the cantillation with which they are read) and Yehoshua's words later on, is great. When Yehoshua and Kalev speak later on, their main theme is trust in God and His salvation. This motif appears three times: "If God favors us," "Only do not rebel against God," "God is with us; do not fear them." This message is quite understandable in its religious context: Yehoshua is telling the nation that it is not the nation's strength that will be decisive here, but rather their faith in God and His salvation. The projection of the question towards God is, very clearly, a continuation of the leadership style of Moshe, who had stated: "God will do battle for you, and you will remain silent." Moshe's view rests on full acceptance of the principle miraculous Divine assistance, based only on faith in God; this view sees no need for rational, pragmatic leadership.

When Moshe retells the sin of the spies in his speech in *Sefer Devarim*, he recalls the words that he himself said at the time, which are missing from our *parasha*:

"I said to you: do not dread, nor be afraid of them. The Lord your God, who goes before you – He will do battle for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt, before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God has borne you – as a man bears his son, in all the way which you went, until you came to this place. But in this matter you did not believe in the Lord your God, Who went on the way before you to search out for you a place for you to encamp, in fire at night, to show you the way in which you should go, and in cloud by day." (*Devarim* 1:29-33)

The principles of faith and trust, and the idea of miraculous intervention, are even more prominent here: the sin of the spies is depicted as a sin of lack of faith and ingratitude after all of God's miracles on the nation's behalf. "God bears you as a father bears his child: why, then, do we have any need for strength of our own?" Moshe recalls the miracles that God has performed for Israel and emphasizes the greatness of His salvation. The conclusion to which his argument leads is that the claim of military weakness has no relevance.⁹

Kalev has no problem with this perception of trust in God. While Yehoshua's name is mentioned here first,¹⁰ the message is conveyed by Yehoshua and Kalev together. However, Kalev has no need for this message. He believes quite simply that if God has sent the nation to enter the land, then the nation is capable of doing this – and not only through external deliverance: "We are well able to prevail" – we ourselves; not only by means of a miracle.¹¹ His faith is immanent and unmediated, faith that, "If we are here, and God has chosen us and sent us – then apparently we have the power." In other words, Kalev has faith in the inherent power of the nation, rather than in God's power to save them from "outside," as it were. "We are well able to prevail" – we ourselves; the power is ours and inside us. It is not miracles that we expect.

⁹ There is one element that is omitted from Moshe's speech which does appear in the words of Yehoshua and Kalev: "The land which we passed through to spy it out is an exceedingly good land." As noted above, since the spies were entrusted with the mandate to assess and evaluate the land, Moshe's words in this regard will carry no weight. His message therefore centers around the mistaken conception of faith that gives rise to sin.

¹⁰ See note no. 4

¹¹ We elaborate on this special attribute of faith below.

⁸ See *Bava Batra* 75.

There is a direct link between the manner of leadership and the concept of faith that are reflected in the respective words of Yehoshua and Kalev. Just as Kalev's faith needs no affirmation or support, so likewise his manner of leadership. He seeks no justification for his actions; he acts immediately, on the basis of his own inner, spiritual truth. Yehoshua's faith, in contrast, is directed towards God's salvation and His intervention and assistance. His style of leadership likewise seeks external validation – and therefore Yehoshua will not act without Moshe.

Model for the Future

The significance of the choice of Yehoshua as Moshe's successor is the selection of a style of leadership whose main power is its faithfulness to the original, and whose main foundation is faith in God and His salvation. From this point of view, the first stage of the entry into the land, led by Yehoshua, represents a continuation of Moshe's leadership in the wilderness.

However, there is no continuation of Yehoshua's leadership, as the Midrash forcefully points out:

"Rabba said: Yehoshua tried to start speaking, but they said to him: 'Will a severed head then speak?' In other words, since he had no son, they called him a 'severed head.' How do we know that he had no son? Because we read in I *Divrei Ha-yamim* 7:28,¹² 'Nun his son, Yehoshua his son' – but there is no continuation after Yehoshua. They said to him: What can you possibly say? You have no reason to fear whether you live or die; you have neither sons nor daughters, but they (the people) are fearful for their wives and children.' And they immediately silenced him." (*Pesikta Zuteta [Lekah Tov] Bamidbar, Parashat Shelach*, 106b)

Rabba explains that Yehoshua had indeed tried to make himself heard even at the first stage, but the people silenced him, such that we hear only Kalev's words. Was it only Kalev's cunning that helped him (as we shall see below), or is there a difference between Yehoshua and Kalev in terms of the content of their speeches, too? And in any case – from where does Rabba deduce that Yehoshua tried to start speaking, and that they would not listen to him?

Often, *midreshei Chazal* are meant not to describe what happened, but rather what should have happened. Rabba is wondering: What Yehoshua said at the end, he could have said earlier on. Why did he not offer his view?

The people insult Yehoshua; they call him a "severed head" – i.e., a leader with no successor. In actual fact, the people are right. It is no coincidence that Yehoshua has no sons. He is not the head of a dynasty, but rather the end of a dynasty founded by Moshe. He is the conclusion of Moshe's spiritual dynasty.

Interestingly, Chabad use this same argument to explain the childlessness of the late Rebbe, z"l: if a person has no children, it is because in truth, he has no continuation. Admittedly, the Chabad followers award this fact a "messianic" interpretation, while Bnei Yisrael – in our *parasha* – were referring to leadership: What are you telling us, Yehoshua? That God is with us, that He will perform miracles? That is irresponsible leadership. Only a leader who has no children would be prepared to take such a chance... And even if you are correct at this time, what will happen after you and we are dead? Can our descendants continue to exist with no rational,

pragmatic leadership, on the basis of trust in God's salvation and nothing more? You – who have no children – are not concerned; the horizon of your leadership is temporary. But we ask: what spiritual mode of leadership should be adopted in the long term?

I would cautiously seek to suggest that the nation's argument contains more than a kernel of truth, and Yehoshua's silence leaves room and sets the stage for Kalev's position. Only leadership of Kalev's type will endure over the generations.

E. Kalev and Yehoshua and Representatives of the Kingdoms of Yehuda and Yosef

We shall address this final topic in brief.

The encounter between these two prototypes of leadership – Kalev and Yehoshua – may be viewed in a broader context: Yehoshua is a leader who is descended from Ephraim and Yosef, while Kalev is from the Tribe of Yehuda, the tribe from which David later emerged.¹³ As in other encounters between these two dynasties, the leadership of Ephraim and Yosef comes before that of David. This is true of *Sefer Bereishit*, and also for the future, when Mashiach ben Yosef will be revealed before Mashiach ben David. It is also true of the entry into the land, where the nation is first led by Yehoshua, of the House of Yosef, and only afterwards has David as its king, from the House of David. (The period in between these two leaders is a transitory stage with no leaders of note.)

I believe that there is a profound connection between the Yosef-like, temporary leadership and Yehoshua, and between the Yehuda-like, eternal kingship and Kalev. I leave this connection for the readers' further reflection.

F. The Perception of Trust in God

In this *shiur* we have presented two positions with regard to the proper trust in God. Let us now take a closer look at Kalev's position, with the help of one of Rav Nachman's stories – "A story of trust."¹⁴

Rav Nachman tells of a Jew blessed with the ability to fix things that are broken. The spiritual significance of this quality is that this person knows how to turn the deficiencies of our reality into blessings. This ability – to see a deficiency not as a barrier or obstacle, but rather as a blessed opportunity – allows this Jew to survive in an absurd reality where everything appears to be closed to him, and fate – from his perspective – appears to be seeking ways of making his life difficult.

The absurdity of the story is the result of the king's desire to find out whether there is anyone in his kingdom who is happier than the king himself. The king discovers that this Jew is happy every evening, and so he blocks all of his sources of income so as to discover whether the Jew's happiness is an inner quality or dependent on some external factor. Anyone else would fall into despair if he were to find that every day a different source of income dries up, but this Jew finds a way to cope each time anew, because every barrier or obstacle creates, to his view, a new opportunity.

This is the first sense in which this Jew is a "man of faith." He has complete faith that reality holds blessing for him – even when it does not appear that way. This faith allows him to open a new gateway to sustenance and happiness every day.

Another product of this world-view is liberty from

¹² In the genealogy of the tribe of Ephraim

¹³ This assertion is dependent on one's understanding of I *Divrei Ha-yamim* 2:9-46, where a number of people named "Kalev" appear.

¹⁴ Readers unfamiliar with the story can find it at the end of Rav Nachman's "*Sippurei Ma'asiot*" (in some editions).

worries: the knowledge that every day brings its own blessings frees the "man of faith" from the usual pressure and tension as to the future, stability, permanence, pension, etc. He is able to rejoice wholeheartedly every night because he has no worries about tomorrow morning. He is completely free of reality.

But these qualities do not help him when all of the gates are locked before him. The hero of our story becomes a soldier in the king's army, when no other source of income is left available to him, and when the king withholds his salary, he mortgages the sword that he received as a soldier, and exchanges it for a piece of wood. The king finds out and orders him to use his sword to execute a prisoner condemned to death. The king wants to see how the Jew will react to this situation, in which all of his special qualities seem useless.

At this stage the story takes a surprising turn. We expect that at this hopeless moment of crisis, the "man of faith" will pray to God to save him. Indeed, the man prays – but this is only what the outside observer sees. He asks God that if the man sentenced to die is actually innocent, the sword should turn to wood. He then pulls his sword from its sheath – and it is made of wood. The story ends with "great laughter"; this solution finds favor with the king, and he lets the Jew off the hook.

Rav Nachman chooses to conclude the story on a comic note: the prayer is not a prayer, and the miracle is not a miracle. It is only the man's own presence of mind and his sense of humor that save him from the king's decree. Why does Rav Nachman choose to end a story about faith by making it into a joke? What does he mean to teach us? Is he deriding prayer and miracles?

I believe that the comic element of the story is an expression of the highest level of faith: Rav Nachman's man of faith is full of an inner faith that flows from him and allows him to act freely, with no worries, in any situation. His self-confidence and the confidence in reality that allowed him to find a new source of income every day, with no worry, are the source of his strength. A true man of faith knows that the solutions to crisis and complication are to be found within reality itself, and that he has the power to find them. The courage to take a chance on a joke in the very delicate situation in which he finds himself demonstrates that this Jew has complete and absolute faith in God's presence in every one of his actions or utterances. If God has brought him to this – to a sword made of wood – then the solution must be found in this very situation. This immanent faith is what Kalev projects. There is no need for any actual miracle. What is needed is the faith that who we are, and where we are, are not coincidental; if God has brought us to this situation, then we certainly have the power to solve it and to emerge blessed.

The classic mode of faith, involving prayer and expectation of miracles, is a simple, basic level and not the ideal, because it perceives the present reality as somehow lacking and asserts that only through exceptional Divine intervention can we solve the problem. This is the way of Yehoshua, who says, "God is with us – do not fear them."

As in the Torah, so in religious life there is room for Yehoshua's way – but only for a limited time. The higher level of faith is one which finds God within man and within reality as it is. The blessing and salvation are already here – if a person will only believe this and have faith in the human strength and abilities with which he has been blessed. Man and/or the nation are not nullified in the face of God's direction of reality; rather, they are elevated by their faith, by exposing that which is concealed within themselves.