

# **Dvar Torah** by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at  
Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe  
*Graciously shared with PhiloTorah*

## **Sh'lach**

What is the goal of a name? We are all given a name, we all use one, and however, is there a deeper purpose for having a specific name?

"And Moshe called Hoshei'a the son of Nun; Yehoshua" (Bamidbar 13:16).

We read in our Parsha how the twelve representatives of Israel are going to scout out the land. Specifically at this time, Moshe renames his loyal student from Hoshei'a to Yehoshua. Rashi explains the need for adding a letter to his name at this particular moment since Moshe wanted to save him from evil advice from the other scouts whose intentions were already in question.

Moshe had given equal instructions to all the Israelite scouts, yet Moshe was still very concerned with the outcome, so much so that he changed Hoshei'a's name. Why?

Perhaps one can explain that after all the scouts received the same instructions to evaluate personally the Land, the agriculture, the strongholds and the spirit of the people, this may lead to a certain tendency to believe in his own capabilities and the power of his evaluations, that one can even predict the future. Therefore, Moshe is telling Yehoshua

that the Land of Israel and the History of the Israelites are unpredictable. By changing his name, Moshe is warning Yehoshua from attaining arrogance that allows one to make such predictions. Moshe seems only to pick Yehoshua to change name because he is destined to be the next leader and successor to Moshe. The weight of leadership might frighten and scare. The fear can cause one to seek out counsel even if its evil counsel. In this dialogue between Moshe and Yehoshua, the message is given that a leader may hear the problems we face, the dangers, risks, and the obstacles involved in coming to live in the Land of Israel and have an adverse effect on him. Hearing all these setbacks and worries can cause one to fall into the mistake of the spies.

Moshe is teaching Yehoshua not to diagnose these symptoms as an untreatable terminal illness. Do not let these obstacles or difficulties bring upon despair. Rather, Yehoshua receives an extra letter to his name to be different and to seek out in these issues and opportunities to strengthen those around him and not to weaken. This is the important idea that Yehoshua receives with his new name, as there is in the words of his partner, Kalev quoted in the Parsha (13:30) "We will surely go up and take hold of this Land, because it is indeed within our grasp." Kalev preaches this idea, that we will fulfill the Divine promise in history in our time. Moshe implies this concept to Yehoshua

in an important way. This way of thinking should become internal to you, incorporated in your name. We can succeed through our own actions and in our own time. Even now, when we see the numerous challenges facing us as a people, we should still look for the positive and rely on our belief that we hope all the G-d will continue to protect us from all our enemies. 🙏