

## Parshat Yitro Delegating Authority

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This week's Parsha begins with Moshe's father-in-law visiting the encampment of Bnei Yisrael in the Midbar. While visiting Bnei Yisrael, Yitro witnesses what he believes to be an untenable situation. The people are endlessly waiting on Moshe from morning until night in search of his guidance and advice. "When Moshe's father-in-law saw everything he was doing to the people, and he said, 'What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people tarry about you from morning until evening?'" Depending on how one interprets "And on the subsequent day... (ויהי ממחרת),"<sup>1</sup> this situation might have already persisted for quite some time before Yitro appears on the scene (see [Parshat Yitro](#)). Moshe and the people had become inured to the absurdity of the state of affairs because they had known no other way and had not experienced any other form of leadership. Everyone wanted a personal audience with Moshe and Moshe wanted to advise each individual, empathize with them and see them through their difficulties. Only an outsider like Yitro could see the folly of the situation and the unsustainability of the status quo.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Yitro, being a Kohen Midyan,<sup>3</sup> might have also observed and experienced a different model of authority elsewhere that he saw as a template for leadership. Moshe's lone authoritarian leadership might have been appropriate for a nation in its infancy, but as the nation matured (see [Parshat Shmot](#)), there was a need for a more sophisticated management organization.

Yitro's key insight was his suggestion that good leadership requires delegation of authority. This is important from multiple perspectives. Firstly, as a nation grows, its leadership needs to develop and scale along with it. That is because the burden borne by a single leader will exceed his capacity to deal with the multitude of issues and problems that arise; that is what Yitro tells Moshe, "The task is too great for you (כי כבד מִמְךָ) (הַדְּבָר)." <sup>4</sup> Moreover, the inability to properly address the needs of the nation in a timely

manner will lead to the disillusionment of the people towards the leadership and its concern for their welfare. This is captured in Yitro's claim, "you will surely wear yourself out, you, as well as the nation that are with you ( וְגַם אֲנִי וְגַם הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עִמָּךְ (אֲתָה גַם הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עִמָּךְ)." Lastly, and maybe most importantly, it develops a bench of talent who will grow to be the leadership of the next generation. In a sense, it ensures the perpetuity of the nation and its principles in that the future leadership will be entrusted to those that apprenticed under the previous generation of leaders. As a result, the nation will be blessed with experienced leaders and proper successors who will ensure that Moshe, or any future leader, does not leave a dangerous void or power vacuum after them and therefore, Yitro concludes that "you cannot do it alone ( לֹא תוּכַל ) (עֲשֵׂהוּ לְבַדְּךָ)." <sup>5</sup>

Yitro's solution is elegant and simple; Moshe needs to create a pyramid of authority.<sup>5</sup> In that way, there will always be someone in a position of leadership nearby who can be attentive to the issues of the individual. The posited solutions may also be more effective and personalized to the individual since the local leader likely has a more personal relationship with the constituent. If the issues exceed the capacity of the lower echelons of leadership, they will petition the higher authorities for assistance. Issues, that involve interfamilial, tribal or national concerns, would be addressed by the authority under whose jurisdiction the matter falls. In this way, the leaders would be responsive to the needs of the people (וּשְׁפֹטוּ אֶת הָעָם בְּכָל יְעָת) while situations of greater importance would still be given the proper attention (וְהָיָה כָּל הַדְּבָר הַגָּדֹל) (וְיָבִיאוּ אֵלֶיךָ).<sup>6</sup> This structure of decentralizing part of the responsibility away from Moshe (וְהִקְלָה) (וּמַעֲלִיךָ וּנְשֹׂאוּ אֲתָךְ) will ensure the long term viability of the nation and its leadership.<sup>7</sup> Moshe sees the wisdom in Yitro's advice and quickly implements his suggestions.<sup>8</sup>

The matter seems to have been addressed quickly and efficiently by Moshe and therefore it is surprising to find that the solution proves ineffective. A little over six months later, in Parshat Bahalotcha, in the context of the

<sup>1</sup> ויהי ממחרת וישב משה לשפט את העם ועמד העם על משה מן הבקר עד הערב (שמות י"ג)

<sup>2</sup> עיין שיחות מוסר ר' חיים שמואלביץ "מדת ההסתגלות" א' ח"י שרה תשל"ג סוף אות א

<sup>3</sup> ולכתו מדן שבע בנות ותבאנה ותדלנה ותמלאנה את הרהיטים להשקות צאן אביהן: (שמות ב"ט) ומשה היה רעה את צאן יתרו חתנו כהן מדן וינהג את הצאן אחר המדבר ויבא אליהם האלקים חרבה: (שמות ג"א)

<sup>4</sup> ובל תבל גם אתה גם העם הזה אשר עמך כי כבד ממך הדבר לא תוכל עשהו לבדך: (שמות י"ח)

<sup>5</sup> ואתה תחזה מכל העם אנשי חיל יראי אלקים אנשי אמת שכאי בצע ושמת עליהם שרי אלפים שרי מאות שרי חמשים ושרי עשרות: (שמות י"ח, כא)

<sup>6</sup> ושפטו את העם בכל עת והיה כל הדבר הגדל יביאו אליך וכל הדבר הקטן ישפטו הם והקל מעליך ונשאו אתך: (שמות י"ח, כב)

<sup>7</sup> אם את הדבר הזה תעשה וצוץ אלקים ויגלת עמד וגם כל העם הזה על מקמו יבא בשלום (שמות י"ח, כג)

<sup>8</sup> וישמע משה לקול חתנו ויעש כל אשר אמר: (שמות י"ח, כד)

people's complaints about the Maan and their expressed desire for meat, Moshe reaches a breaking point and makes the following statement to God, "I alone cannot carry all this entire nation, for it is too much for me (לא אוכל לא אוכל)."<sup>9</sup> It is nearly word for word, the exact problem identified and predicted by Moshe's father-in-law Yitro. The solution also seems all too familiar. "Then God said to Moshe, 'Gather for Me seventy of Israel's elders of whom you have experience as elders and officers of the people, and bring them to the Ohel Mo'ed and let them take their place there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will draw upon the spirit that is on you and put it upon them; they shall share the burden of the people with you, and you shall not bear it alone (וְנָשְׂאוּ אִתְּךָ (בְּמִשְׁאֵל הָעָם וְלֹא תִשָּׂא אֶתְּךָ לְבַדְּךָ)."<sup>10</sup> God's proposal is nearly identical to Yitro's proposition and utilizes the same wording to express the relief that Moshe will realize through it. It begs the question, what happened to Yitro's solution and why is Moshe facing a problem that seemingly was already addressed?

In Sefer Devarim, Moshe describes the different leadership positions, their roles and their rules, which will exist once Bnei Yisrael settles in the Land of Israel. Starting in Parshat Shoftim, there are the judges and officers (שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים); the Torah says, "You shall appoint judges (magistrates) and officers for your tribes, in all the cities that God your Lord is giving you, and they shall govern the people with righteous justice."<sup>11</sup> In the subsequent Perek it says that, "if a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over blood, over a verdict or over a Nega - matters of dispute in your cities or courts - you shall promptly ascend to the place that God your Lord will have chosen, and appear before the Levitical priests, or the ruler (שוֹפֵט) in charge at that time, and you shall inquire as to

your problem. They will instruct you as to the verdict in the case, and you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place that God chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you."<sup>12</sup>

In the next Perek,<sup>13</sup> Moshe tells the people that God will appoint for you a prophet similar to me. He will act as an intermediary between God and the people which is what you requested God do for you at Har Sinai.<sup>14</sup> He will bring you the word of God and you are enjoined to listen to him. The Ramban sees the Navi as being the manifestation of the distinction drawn between Bnei Yisrael and the other nations in the preceding verses.<sup>15</sup> As opposed to the other nations who engage in soothsaying, divining, sorcery and etc., you, Bnei Yisrael, "must be wholehearted with God your Lord (תָּמִים תְּהִיֶה עִם) (יְקַנְתֶּם אֶל־קִי)."<sup>16</sup> According to the Ramban being "wholehearted with God" means that "we must direct our hearts to Him alone, we must believe that He alone does everything and knows the truth regarding the future and from Him alone we should seek counsel about the future, through His prophets and righteous men..."<sup>17</sup>

Early on in Sefer Devarim, Moshe describes that as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf, the tribe of Levi was chosen to carry the Ark of the Covenant of God, to stand in service before God and to bless in His name..."<sup>18</sup> Later in Sefer Devarim, upon Moshe's completion of the writing of all of these laws (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת), "he gives it to the Priests, the sons of Levi, the bearers of the Ark of the Covenant of God and the elders of Israel."<sup>19</sup> He then exhorts them to teach the people this Torah (every seven years) when they come to visit God in the place that He has chosen.<sup>20</sup>

In summary, there are the judges and officers that adjudicate local matters and can appeal to

<sup>9</sup> לא אוכל אֶנְכִי לְבַדִּי לְשִׂאת אֶת כָּל הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי כִבֵּד מִמֶּנִּי: (במדבר יא, יד)  
<sup>10</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֻנָּה אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֶסְפֶּה לִּי שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָדַעְתָּ כִּי הֵם זִקְנֵי הָעָם וְשֹׁטְרָיו וְלִקְחָתָם אִתָּם אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהִתְיַצְבוּ שָׁם עִמָּךְ: וְיָרַדְתִּי וְדַבַּרְתִּי עִמָּךְ שָׁם וְנִצַּלְתִּי מִן הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וְשָׁמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנָשְׂאוּ אִתְּךָ בְּמִשְׁאֵל הָעָם וְלֹא תִשָּׂא אֶתְּךָ לְבַדְּךָ: (שם טז-יז)  
<sup>11</sup> שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֵּן לָךְ בְּכָל שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיךָ וְנָתַן לָךְ לְשִׁבְטֶיךָ וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת הָעָם מִשְׁפֵּט צֶדֶק: לֹא תִשָּׂא מִשְׁפֵּט לֹא תִכְיֹר פָּנִים וְלֹא תִקַּח שֹׂחַד כִּי הַשְׁחָד עֵינִי וְנִצַּלְתִּי מִן הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וְשָׁמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנָשְׂאוּ אִתְּךָ בְּמִשְׁאֵל הָעָם וְלֹא תִשָּׂא אֶתְּךָ לְבַדְּךָ: (דברים טז, יח-כ)  
<sup>12</sup> כִּי יִפְלֵא מִמֶּךָ דִּבְרַר לְמִשְׁפָּט בֵּין דָּם לְדָם בֵּין דִּין לְדִין וּבֵין נֶגַע לְנֶגַע דְּבַר רִיבַת בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ וְקָמַת וְעָלִיתָ אֶל הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר יְבַחֵר יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיךָ בּוֹ: וְכַבַּת אֶל הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם וְאֵל הַשֹּׁפֵט אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם וְדִרְשָׁתָּ וְהִגִּידוּ לָךְ אֶת דְּבַר הַמִּשְׁפָּט: וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל פִּי הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִגִּידוּ לָךְ מִן הַמִּקְוֹם הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יְבַחֵר יְקַנְתֶּם וְשָׁמַתָּ לְעִשׂוֹת כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יֹרֶךְ: (דברים יז, ח-י)  
<sup>13</sup> דִּלְגַּנּוּ עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ וְגַם אֲחִ"כ עַל הַשֵּׂר צַבָּא כִּי אִפְשָׁר שֶׁהֵם עֹנֵפִים שֶׁל "הַשׁוֹפֵט אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם"  
<sup>14</sup> נִבְיָא מִקְרָבָךְ מֵאַחֶיךָ כְּמִנִּי יִקָּיֵם לָךְ יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵי וְתִשְׁמַעְנָם: כֹּל אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֲלַתְּ מֵעַם יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיךָ בַּחֲרֵב בְּיוֹם הַקְּהָל לְאֹמֶר לֹא אֶסְפֶּה לְשִׁמְעָא אֶת קוֹל יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיךָ וְאֵת הָאֵשׁ הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת לֹא אֶרְאֶה עוֹד וְלֹא אֶמּוֹת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְקַנְתֶּם אֱלֵי הִיטִיבוּ אֲשֶׁר דְּבַר: נִבְיָא אֶקָּיֵם לְהֵם מִקְרָב אֲחֵיהֶם פְּמוֹךְ וְנִתְּנִי דְּבַר בְּפִי וְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה:

<sup>15</sup> דברים יח, יט-יב  
<sup>16</sup> תָּמִים תְּהִיֶה עִם יְקַנְתֶּם אֶל־קִי: (דברים יח, יג)  
<sup>17</sup> וְטַעַם תָּמִים תְּהִיֶה עִם ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ - שִׁנְיִיחַד לְבַבְנוּ אֲלֵינוּ לְבַדּוֹ, וְנִאֲמִין שֶׁהוּא לְבַדּוֹ עוֹשֶׂה כָּל הוּא הַיּוֹדַע אֲמַתָּת כָּל עוֹתִיד, וְנִמְנָה לְבַדּוֹ נִדְרוֹשׁ הַעֲתִידוֹת, מִנְבִּיאִיו אוּ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי חֲסִידָיו רֹצֵנִי לְהוֹר אֲוִרִים וְתוֹמִיִם. וְלֹא נִדְרוֹשׁ מִהוֹבֵרֵי שְׁמִיִם וְלֹא מִזְלוֹתֵם, וְלֹא נִבְטַח שִׁיבֹאוּ דְבָרֵיהֶם עַל כָּל פָּנִים, אֲבָל אִם נִשְׁמַע דְּבַר מֵהֶם נִאֲמַר הַכֹּל בְּיַד־יְשׁוּעָה, כִּי הוּא אֱלֹקֵי הָאֱלֹקִים עֲלֵינוּ עַל הַכֹּל הַיּוֹכֵל כָּל מִשְׁנֵה מַעֲרֻכוֹת הַכּוֹכָבִים וְהַמְזֻלוֹת כְּרַצּוֹן מִפְּרֵ אֲוֹתוֹת בְּדִים וְקוֹסְמִים יְהוּאֵל. וְנִאֲמִין שֶׁכֵּל הַבְּאוֹת תְּהִיִּינָה כְּפִי הַתְּקַרֵּב הָאָדָם לְעַבְדוֹתָיו... (רמב"ן דברים יח, יג)  
<sup>18</sup> בַּעַת הַהוּא הַבְּדִיל יְקַנְתֶּם אֶת שִׁבְטֵי הַלְוִי לְשִׂאת אֶת אַרְוֹן בְּרִית יְקַנְתֶּם לְעַמְד לְפָנֵי יְקַנְתֶּם לְשִׂרְתוֹ וְלִבְרַךְ בְּשֵׁמוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: (דברים יח, יח)  
<sup>19</sup> וְיִכְתַּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְיִתְּנָה אֶל הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי לְוִי הַנְּשָׂאִים אֶת אַרְוֹן בְּרִית יְקַנְתֶּם וְאֵל כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (דברים יח, ט)  
<sup>20</sup> וַיְצַו מֹשֶׁה אוֹתָם לְאֹמֶר מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעֵי שָׁנִים בְּמַעְד שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה בְּחַג הַסְּפוֹת: בְּבוֹא כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְרֹאוֹת אֶת פְּנֵי יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיךָ בְּמִקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר יְבַחֵר תְּקַרְא אֶת הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת נִגְדָּה כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם: הַקְּהֵל אֶת הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂיִם וְהַטָּף וְהַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמַעוּ וְלִמְעַן יִלְמְדוּ וְיִרְאוּ אֶת יְקַנְתֶּם אֶלְקֵיכֶם וְשָׁמְרוּ לְעִשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: (דברים יח, יב)

the central authority when they are unable to resolve the cases themselves. In addition, there is the Navi, who communicates the will of God and to whom one goes in order to seek God's counsel. Lastly, there are the Levi'im who are the keepers and purveyors of the Torah.

When Yitro first criticizes Moshe with regards to the situation that he sees as untenable, Moshe tries to explain and justify to his father-in-law why it is that the situation has developed this way. "Moshe replied to his father-in-law, 'It is because the people come to me to inquire of God (לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים). When they have a dispute, it comes before me, and I decide between one person and another (וְנִשְׁפָּטֵי בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ), and I make known the laws and teachings of God (וְהוֹדַעְתִּי אֶת חֻקֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וְאֶת תּוֹרֹתָיו)."21 Moshe tells his father-in-law that he is actually wearing three hats.<sup>22</sup> He is at once the conduit between God and the people (נביא),<sup>23</sup> the adjudicator of all civil cases (שופט) and the teacher of the Torah (לוי).

The three areas of leadership that Moshe mentions as being within the purview of his responsibility parallel the three leadership figures discussed in Sefer Devarim.<sup>24</sup> When the people come to "inquire of God (לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים)," the Ramban sees them approaching Moshe "to pray on behalf of their sick, to help them identify or find their lost objects and to seek God's counsel."<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the Seforno explains that these were the leaders seeking Moshe's guidance as to how to conduct themselves and the people according to the will of God.<sup>26</sup> These descriptions correspond to the job of the Navi in Sefer Devarim. In addition, Moshe adjudicates the issues that arise between parties, similar to the judge in Sefer Devarim.<sup>27</sup> Lastly, Moshe also teaches the people the Torah, the laws of God and His instructions (וְהוֹדַעְתִּי אֶת חֻקֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וְאֶת תּוֹרֹתָיו),<sup>28</sup> akin to the task of the Levi'im in Sefer Devarim.

Now, looking more carefully at the advice Yitro proffers to Moshe, one can discern that he addresses the three areas of Moshe's responsibility. Firstly, with regards to Moshe being the conduit between God and the people, Yitro advises that "you shall represent the people before God and you will bring their matters before God."<sup>29</sup> Secondly, concerning the teaching of the people Torah, Yitro opines, "and (you shall) enjoin upon them the laws and the teachings (אֶת הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת הַתּוֹרָה), and make known to them (וְהוֹדַעְתָּ לָהֶם) the way they are to go and the practices they are to follow."<sup>30</sup> In the first two instances of Moshe's leadership, Yitro argues for the status quo to remain intact. Yitro's innovation is only the final area of Moshe's leadership, in the area of torts and civil law. There, Yitro encourages Moshe to create a judicial system that will unburden him of the endless caseload coming before him (וְכָל הַדְּבָרִי) (וְהָקֵטֵן יִשְׁפָּטוּהֶם וְהִקְלֵ מֵעֲלֶיךָ וְנִשְׂאוּ אֶתְךָ).<sup>31</sup> In addition, similar to the judges in Sefer Devarim, Moshe will remain as the ultimate appellate judge (וְהָיָה כָּל הַדְּבָרִי הַגָּדֹל יָבִיאוּ אֵלֶיךָ).

Yitro understood that no one could replace Moshe and no one would accept a stand-in for Moshe when it came to communicating with God. It was not simply a matter of finding a qualified individual; it would require a person who communicated with God (נביא) to even possibly replace Moshe in his role as the conduit between the people and God. In addition, Moshe saw his primary job as communicating the Torah to the people of Israel, especially since he was the one that received it directly from God. Therefore, in those two areas Yitro does not try to revolutionize or change the situation. On the other hand, with regards to adjudication, Yitro sees an area ripe for reform. Moshe could appoint individuals to be proxy judges on his behalf. That, along with the proviso that any difficult matter could be appealed to Moshe, would be acceptable to the people given the stated advantages of having more judges, quicker responses to cases on the

<sup>21</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחַתָּנוֹ כִּי יָבֵא אֵלַי הָעָם לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים: כִּי יִהְיֶה לָהֶם דְּבָר בָּא אֵלַי וְנִשְׁפָּטֵי בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ וְהוֹדַעְתִּי אֶת חֻקֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וְאֶת תּוֹרֹתָיו: (שמות יח, טו-טז)

<sup>22</sup> הַשֵּׁב מִשָּׁה לְחַתָּנוֹ צְרִיכִים הֵם שִׁיעֲמָדוּ עָלָי זְמַן גָּדוֹל מִן הַיּוֹם, כִּי לְדַבְרִים רַבִּים בָּאִים לִפְנֵי... (רמב"ן שמות יח, טו) \\\ הַשֵּׁב מִשָּׁה שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים, כִּי דְרָכֵי ה' נִחְלָקִים לְשִׁלְשָׁה (הַכְּתָב וְהַקְבֵּלָה שֵׁם)

<sup>23</sup> כִּי יָבֵא אֵלַי הָעָם לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים - כְּלוֹמַר אֲנִי לְבַדִּי צָרִיךְ לִשְׁאֵל (אל) אֱלֹקִים וְאִין בְּהֵם רָגִיל לְדַבֵּר אֶל אֱלֹקִים כִּי אִם אֲנִי לְבַדִּי: (רשב"ם שמות יח, טו)

<sup>24</sup> הַכְּתָב וְהַקְבֵּלָה (שמות יח, טו) מִחֻלָּק אֶת זֶה קִצַּת אַחֲרָת: "כִּי דְרָכֵי ה' נִחְלָקִים לְשִׁלְשָׁה, א' הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמְצוּהָ (וְהוֹדַעְתִּי), ב' בֵּין אָדָם לְחֵבֵרוֹ (וְנִשְׁפָּטֵי), ג' דְרָכֵי עֲבוּדַת ה' וְהַמּוֹסָר שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹמוֹת הָעֲבוּדָה (לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים)... אֲבָל בְּדֶרֶךְ כָּלֵל הֵם מְבִיעִים אוֹתוֹ רַעֲיוֹן.

<sup>25</sup> כִּי יָבֵא אֵלַי הָעָם לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים לְהַתְפַּלֵּל עַל חוּלֵיהֶם וְלְהוֹדִיעַם מֵה שִׁיאֲבֹד לָהֶם, כִּי זֶה יִקְרָא "דְרִישַׁת אֱלֹקִים", וְכֵן יַעֲשׂוּ עִם הַנְּבִיאִים כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר (ש"א ט ט) לְפָנַי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה אָמַר הָאִישׁ בְּלִכְתּוֹ לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים לְכוּ וּמְלָכָה עַד הָרֹאשׁ, וְכֵן וְדִרְשַׁת אֶת ה' מֵאוֹתוֹ לְאִמְרָה הָאֲחִיָּה מִחֲלֵי זֶה (מ"ב ח נ), שִׁיתְפַּלְל עֲלֵינוּ וְיוֹדִיעֵנוּ אִם נִשְׁמָעָה

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תְּפַלְתּוֹ, וְכֵן וְתִלַּךְ לְדַרְשׁ אֶת ה' (בראשית כה כב), כְּמוֹ שִׁפְרִישְׁתִּי שֵׁם (רמב"ן שמות יח, טו)

<sup>26</sup> הַנְּשִׂאִים וְרֹאשֵׁי הַדּוֹר הַבָּאִים עַל עֲסָקֵי הַרְבִּים וְסוֹדֵרֵם בָּאִים אֵלַי בְּהִכְרַח לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים, כִּי עַל פִּי ה' יִחַנוּ (במדבר ט, כ): (ספורנו יח, טו)

<sup>27</sup> וְעוֹד שֶׁאֵין שׁוֹפֵט אוֹתָם, כִּי יִהְיֶה לָהֶם דְּבָר בָּא אֵלַי וְנִשְׁפָּטֵי (רמב"ן יח, טו)

<sup>28</sup> עוֹד אֲנִי מְלַמֵּד אוֹתָם תּוֹרָה, וְהוֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם אֶת חֻקֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וְאֶת תּוֹרֹתָיו: (רמב"ן יח, טו)

<sup>29</sup> עֲתָה שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי אֵינְעֶךָ וְיִהְיֶה אֲלֵיךָ עֲמָךְ הִיָּה אֶתְךָ לְעַם מוֹל הָאֱלֹקִים וְהִבֵּאת אֶתְךָ אֶת הַדְּבָרִים אֵל הָאֱלֹקִים: (שמות יח, טו)

<sup>30</sup> וְהִזְהַרְתָּה אֶתְהֶם אֶת הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת הַתּוֹרָה וְהוֹדַעְתָּ לָהֶם אֶת הַדְּבָרִי יִלְכוּ בָּה וְאֶת הַמְעֵשָׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ: (שם כ)

<sup>31</sup> וְאֶתְהָ תַחֲזֶה מִכָּל הָעָם אֲנִשִּׁי חֵיל יִרְאֵי אֱלֹקִים אֲנִשִּׁי אֲמַת שְׂנֵאֵי בְצַע וְשִׁמְתָה עֲלֵהֶם שָׂרֵי אֱלֹפִים שָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שָׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרִים: וְנִשְׁפָּטוּ אֶת הָעָם בְּכָל עֵת וְהָיָה כָּל הַדְּבָרִי הַגָּדֹל יָבִיאוּ אֵלַי וְכָל הַדְּבָרִי הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפָּטוּהֶם וְהִקְלֵ מֵעֲלֶיךָ וְנִשְׂאוּ אֶתְךָ: (שמות יח, כא-כב)

docket and more personalized verdicts. The reduction of Moshe's caseload would also free Moshe to be more available and accessible in the other two areas of his leadership role – to seek God's counsel and to teach the Torah.

This can also help one understand Moshe's complaint in Parshat Behalotcha despite the fact that the issue was seemingly already addressed in Parshat Yitro. From God's suggested solution, one can intuit what was plaguing Moshe. God tells Moshe that the seventy elders that he chooses will come "to the Ohel Mo'ed and let them take their place there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will draw upon the spirit that is on you and put it upon them." The seventy elders were not being appointed as proxies for Moshe, but rather they were being given part of Moshe's Godly spirit which would then empower them to be able to address the people's need to seek God's counsel (לְדַרְשׁ אֱלֹקִים). There were in fact being converted into Nevi'im.<sup>32</sup> Moshe's complaint

here is that his other role of being a Navi and a conduit between the people and God was becoming untenable. God relieves Moshe of this burden by disseminating some of Moshe's "spirit" to the seventy elders in order that they can also function in the role of prophetic leadership similar to Moshe and respond to the religious needs of the people.

Interestingly, of the three areas of Moshe's leadership, the one that he maintains in the end is that of the humble teacher and purveyor of the Torah. This is what the Midrash Halacha means when it says that when a person gives his life for a particular cause, it is called by his name.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, we read on Shabbat HaGadol from the Navi Melachi, "be mindful of the Teaching of My servant Moshe, whom I charged at Chorev with laws and rules for all of Israel. (זְכֹרוּ תוֹרַת) מֹשֶׁה עַבְדִּי אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אוֹתוֹ בְּחָרֵב עַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים;" the Torah is known as Torat Moshe.

Shabbat Shalom

<sup>32</sup> וַיִּשְׂאָרוּ שְׁנֵי-אֲנָשִׁים בְּמַחְנֵה שֵׁם הָאֶתְדוּ אֶלְדָּד וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי מִיָּד וַתִּנַּח עֲלֵהֶם הָרוּחַ וְהָמָה בְּפִתְבִּיטִים וְלֹא יָצְאוּ הָאֵהָלָה וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ בְּמַחְנֵה: (במדבר יא, כו) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה הַמְקַנָּא אֶתְּהָ לִּי וּמִי יִתֵּן כָּל-עַם יִקְוֶה בְּיָאִים כִּי-יִתֵּן יִקְוֶה אֶת-רוּחוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם: (במדבר יא, כט)

<sup>33</sup> וכן אתה מוצא שכל דבר שאדם נותן נפשו עליו נקרא על שמו. בשלשה דברים נתן נפשו משה עליהם ונקראו על שמו. נתן נפשו על התורה ונקראת על שמו שנ' זכרו

תורת משה עבדי (מלאכי ג כב) והלא תורת אלקים היא שנ' תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש (תהלים יט, ח) הא מה ת"ל תורת משה עבדי לפי שנתן נפשו עליה נקראת על שמו והיכן מצינו במשה שמסר נפשו על התורה שנ' ויהי שם עם ה' (שמות לד, כח) ואומר ואשב בהר וגו' (דברים ט, ט) הא לפי שנתן נפשו על התורה נקראת על שמו. (מכילתא בשלח מסכתא שירה א)