

Infinite Light-givers (Behaalotcha)

*“We must view young people not as empty bottles to be filled, but as candles to be lit.” -
Robert H. Shaffer*

It is perhaps one of the least noted but most dramatic scenes in the life of Moses. The people of Israel protest and rebel yet again. Their foray into the desert is filled with anger and disappointment. Moses feels that he can no longer lead the tribes of Israel. In an all too human show of despair Moses asks God to strike him dead. He can no longer bear the intense burden of leadership.

God hears Moses' plea and arrives at a solution to allow Moses to share some of the rigors of both prophecy and leadership. Seventy elders are gathered and some of the divine spirit that Moses carried is given to each of the elders, giving them their own prophetic capabilities.

One might assume that Moses would be somewhat diminished by sharing his powers, that his light would not shine as brightly. Ibn Ezra on Numbers 11:17 argues the reverse. He explains that the prophetic spirit is akin to wisdom or to the light of a candle. It is not lessened by sharing. It spreads and the sharer retains all his prophetic power, all of his wisdom, all of his light.

May we have good things to share and may we share those good things widely.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

Dedication

*To the reopening of the Gofra Beach sulfur springs, by the Sea of Galilee.
<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-897186>*