

Moshe said to him, "Are you being zealous for my sake ? Would that the entire people of Hashem would be prophets." (11:29)

When Moshe delegated authority to the seventy Elders, he was teaching a significant lesson regarding the dissemination of *Torah* throughout *Klal Yisrael*. Moshe brought the Elders to his own tent. This was the tent from which he taught *Torah*, from which the "bottom line" in *halachah* was decided and disseminated for one purpose - to instruct the elders in their goal as teachers of *Klal Yisrael*. They were given the lofty responsibility of transmitting *Torah* throughout *Klal Yisrael*. Indeed, *Chazal* say that the day of the appointment of the *Zekeinim*, Elders, was as beloved to Hashem as the day He gave the *Torah*. *Horav Y.A. Hershovitz, zl*, explains that as long as the *Zekeinim* had not been nominated to accept the *Torah Shebaal Peh*, Oral Law, from Moshe to teach and circulate it throughout the nation, the Written Law had no purpose. Without teachers, the *Torah* would be forgotten! Only through the Elders of that generation -- and every generation thereafter -- does the *Torah* have a *kiyum*, is upheld and adhered to.

For this reason, Moshe's response to Yehoshua is written in the middle of the *Torah's* recording of the induction of the *Zekeinim*. Moshe tells Yehoshua that the function of the *Torah* teachers is to assure that each individual Jew achieves the zenith of spirituality, so that he no longer needs his *rebbe*, teacher, to instruct him. He has become capable of his own instruction; he is prepared to teach others. This has been the function of our *Zekeinim* throughout the generations. They have been the vehicle through which the *Torah* has been transmitted, preparing each generation to transmit our heritage to the next.

A hidden danger, however, lurks in this process. The Elders might get "carried away," thinking that they are equal to Moshe. They might teach laws that they did not hear from Moshe. If they sense that Hashem has inspired them with Moshe's spirit of *kedushah*, they might no longer need Moshe. They could do it on their own. No longer would we have one *Torah* with one standard, there would be many *Toros* - each one using his own perspective to develop his own position in *Torah* law. This tragedy must be prevented.

Thus, Hashem *Yisborach* proclaimed to *Klal Yisrael*, "*Not so is my servant Moshe; in My entire house he is to be the trusted one*,"(12:7). Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the quintessential teacher and *Navi*, is different. As virtuous as any *Navi*, Moshe is far greater. "*B'chol beisi nee'man hu*," "In My entire house he is the trusted one." Aharon and Miriam, in whose merit we enjoyed the *Ananei Ha'kavod* -- "Clouds of Glory" -- and the well of Miriam, preceded Moshe in prophecy. Yet, neither was as great as he. When they thought they were equal to him, that they could question his behavior, Hashem immediately reprovved them. Moshe is different; he is in a category of his own. Miriam was punished. She conceded her error and lamented her transgression. All of *Klal Yisrael* waited for her to recover, so that forever after it would be acknowledged that Moshe *Rabbeinu* is different. No *Navi*, no sage, regardless of his virtue, holiness and brilliance, can ever compare

himself to Moshe. No *halachah* that has not been transmitted directly from Moshe -- or derived through the hermeneutic rules that were given to Moshe on *Har Sinai* -- is acceptable. There is one *Toras Moshe* - the one that Hashem *Yisborach* gave to Moshe *Rabbeinu* on *Har Sinai*. It is as immutable and eternal as Hashem, Himself.