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The Generation Gap

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1.

A CONTRADICTION

On the verse,¹ “Moshe summoned Yehoshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel: ‘Be strong and courageous, for you shall come {תבוא}² with this people to the land that Hashem swore to their forefathers to give them, and you shall apportion it to them,’” Rashi quotes the clause, “for you shall come {תבוא} with this people” and explains {quoting *Targum*}:

For you shall enter {the land} with this people.³ Moshe said to Yehoshua, “The elders of the generation will be with you; everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel.” However, the Holy One, blessed is He, said to Yehoshua, “for you shall bring {תביא}⁴ the Jewish people to the land which I swore unto them”⁵ — you shall bring them {even if} against their will....

(This will be elucidated below in section 4.)

What difficulty in this verse prompted Rashi to quote the *Targum*’s lengthy explanation in its entirety?

The commentators⁶ say that Rashi’s remarks are meant to resolve the contradiction between two verses, as the *Gemara* asks:⁷ “It says, ‘for you shall **come**’ {תבוא}, and it says, ‘for you shall **bring**’ {תביא}!” Rashi resolves this apparent contradiction (similar to the *Gemara*’s resolution)⁸ by saying that here, it (“you shall come”) refers to what **Moshe** told Yehoshua (“the elders of the generation will be with you...”), and there {“you shall bring”}, it refers to what **Hashem** told Yehoshua (“you shall bring them {even if} against their will...”).

¹ *Devarim* 31:7.

² {This version of the root word “בוא,” to come, connotes that Yehoshua will come **with** the people.}

³ Rashi cites this clause from the *Targum*.

⁴ {This version of the root word “בוא,” to come, connotes that Yehoshua will **bring** the people.}

⁵ *Devarim* 31:23.

⁶ See *Mizrachi*; *Devek Tov*; and *Sifsei Chachamim* on this Rashi.

⁷ *Sanhedrin* 8a.

⁸ {However, the *Gemara*’s wording is slightly different, as will be pointed out in section 3.}

However, understood simply, it is difficult to understand **Rashi's** interpretation this way, because:

- a) On this basis, Rashi should have **begun** his explanation {by introducing the paradox}, “below, it says, ‘for you shall bring...,’” as is Rashi’s practice in other instances.⁹
- b) Rashi should have only quoted in his caption, “shall come” {תבוא} (or “shall come with this people”). Why does he quote the entire clause, “for you shall come {תבוא} with this people?”
- c) **The principle problem: Prior** to learning the later verse, “for you shall bring {תביא}...,” our verse presents no difficulty. Rashi should have offered his comment (not on our verse, but rather) on the later verse, “for you shall bring {תביא}...” when the contradiction arises!

2.

A CONTRADICTION

The explanation: By also quoting in his caption the word “**for** you shall come {תבוא} with this people,” Rashi emphasizes that the clause, “you shall come {תבוא} with this people” provides the reason for the directive given in a previous clause in this verse — “be strong and courageous.”

A difficulty then arises: How does the clause “for you shall come {תבוא} with this people” (meaning, Yehoshua will enter the land of Israel **together with all of the Jewish people**) serve as the rationale for {the encouragement} “be strong and courageous?”¹⁰

⁹ See for example, Rashi on *Nitzavim* 29:20.

¹⁰ {Since Yehoshua is going in together with all the Jews, why does Yehoshua need special encouragement (more than the other Jews)}?

[One could answer, albeit with difficulty: This clause follows {the narrative of} Moshe strengthening **all** of the Jewish people so that upon entering the land of Israel, they should not fear “these nations”¹¹ — “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid and do not be broken before them.”¹² Similarly, when informing Yehoshua that he would enter into the land of Israel (just as the rest of the Jewish people), Moshe fortified him so that he would not fear these nations.

This explanation, however, is extremely strained: The verse implies that Moshe offered special encouragement that was specific to **Yehoshua alone.**]

This difficulty could have led to an assumption (albeit with difficulty) that here, the word “to come” {“תבוא”} means “to bring” {“תביא”} — you shall **bring them** into the land of Israel; therefore, Yehoshua needed to be galvanized.

This is similar to what the Torah said earlier, in *parshas Devarim*, “**strengthen** him,¹³ for he shall cause the Jewish people to **inherit** it {i.e., the land of Israel}.”¹⁴

In order to negate this interpretation, Rashi quotes the *Targum*, explaining that the **simple** meaning of, “for you shall come with this people” is “you shall **enter with** this people” — you will **enter the land with** the Jewish people — Rashi understands “you shall come” {“תבוא”} literally.

If so, the difficulty remains: How does “for you shall come with this people” serve as a rationale for being “strong and courageous”? {To answer this question,} Rashi continues, “Moshe said to Yehoshua, ‘The elders of the generation will be with you...’”: The verse says, “for you shall come **with this people**” — **this people** (who stood before Moshe) **who were led** by

¹¹ {*Devarim* 31:3.}

¹² *Devarim* 31:6.

¹³ {Yehoshua.}

¹⁴ *Devarim* 1:38.

“the heads of your tribes, your elders”¹⁵ — so certainly the elders will “be with you.” Therefore, there is no reason to fear when “you shall apportion it {i.e., the land} to them,” for they will assist you.

In other words: The reason **why** Yehoshua needed to be strengthened was because “you shall apportion it to them.” The clause, “for you shall come with this people,” is a **part** of the encouragement (“the elders of the generation will be with you”).¹⁶

3.

WHO IS IN CHARGE?

We must clarify Rashi’s subsequent explanation, which continues, “The elders of the generation will be with you; **everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel**”:

Since Rashi is not content to explain {only} that “the elders of the generation will be with you,” but adds, “**everything** must be done according to their opinion and counsel,” we understand that the elders will not only assist Yehoshua; rather, **everything** will be done according to **their** opinion and counsel. Meaning, not only will Yehoshua not have the sole opinion; on the contrary, the elders will decide **autocratically**.¹⁷

This is perplexing:

a) What is Rashi’s source for this in *pshat*?¹⁸

¹⁵ *Devarim* 29:9.

¹⁶ {Earlier, we suggested that the verse was saying “for you will bring.” Accordingly, the meaning of the verse would be, “be strong and courageous,” and why do you need encouragement? “because you will bring.” However, according to our current understanding, the reason why Yehoshua needs encouragement was because “you will apportion it to them,” and the clause “because you will come with these people” is not the reason why he needs encouragement but constitutes the encouragement itself, viz., that the elders will help him.}

¹⁷ {In the Yiddish original, “*villen haben die ganze dayah.*”}

¹⁸ {The plain meaning of Scripture. Rashi says in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8 (et al.): “I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Scripture.” Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

- b) Furthermore: The *Gemara* says,¹⁹ “you, and the elders of the generation with them.” Meaning, Yehoshua will lead **with** the elders. Rashi, however, **modifies** this wording, and says (**not** that Yehoshua and the elders will be on an equal footing, but rather), “**everything** must be done according to their opinion and counsel”!
- c) How can we suggest that Moshe gave the elders **complete** autonomy, when Moshe himself asked Hashem (in *parshas Pinchas*),²⁰ “May Hashem... appoint a man over the assembly” — Moshe ordained Yehoshua, {imbuing him} “generously, even more than he had been commanded... with both²¹ of his hands”²² as the next Jewish leader. Furthermore, **this verse itself** says, “**you** shall apportion it to them” — Yehoshua was to be the one to apportion the land of Israel to the Jewish people. In light of this, how can Rashi understand Moshe’s address to imply that “**everything** must be done according to *their* opinion and counsel?”

4.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CONCLUSION OF RASHI’S EXPLANATION

Rashi continues:

However, the Holy One, blessed is He, said to Yehoshua, “*For you shall bring {תביא} the children of Israel people to the land which I swore unto them*²³ — you shall bring them {even if it is} against their will. Everything depends on you {alone; if necessary}, take a stick and hit them over their heads! There can be only one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation.”

¹⁹ *Sanhedrin* 8a.

²⁰ *Bamidbar* 27:16.

²¹ {This explanation refers to *Bamidbar* 27:23, in which Moshe confers leadership on Yehoshua by laying **both** of his hands on Yehoshua.}

²² Rashi’s commentary on *Bamidbar* 27:23.

²³ *Devarim* 31:23.

We need to clarify:

- a) As mentioned above (in section 1), Rashi only explains a difficulty in the verse **under discussion** {and not difficulties that arise when considering later verses}. What difficulty in *this* verse prompted Rashi to quote, “however, the Holy One, blessed is He, said...” (an explanation of a later verse, “for you shall bring {תביא}”)?
- b) From Rashi’s lengthy remarks — “you shall bring them {even if it is} against their will. Everything depends on you {alone; if necessary}, take a stick and hit them over their heads” — it is clear that not only did Hashem preclude that “everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel” (meaning, He precluded the elders from having complete autonomy); not only will the elders not be on an equal footing with Yehoshua or, at the very least, be his counselors; but moreover, the elders will not have any say **at all**. Yehoshua should ignore them entirely and not consult them (“**take a stick and hit them over their heads**”).

We must clarify: True, since “there can be but one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation,” Yehoshua would be the sole leader of the Jewish people; but what compels us to say that the elders will not help at all? Moshe himself had the assistance of “seventy Elders” about whom it says, “**they shall bear** the burden of the people **with you**, you shall not bear alone.”²⁴ This demonstrates that such an arrangement accords with the principle that “there can be only one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation” (for ultimately, Moshe was the leader and ruler). In light of this, what is Rashi’s proof that it would be inconceivable for Yehoshua to conduct himself in this way?

- c) What does Rashi’s conclusion, “there can be but one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation,” add in the explanation of the verse?

²⁴ *Bamidbar* 11:17.

d) Since Rashi's intent is to exclude the elders {from a leadership role}, the wording, "not **two** leaders for a generation" is perplexing:

(a) Rashi should have said, "and not many (or some similar wording) leaders for a generation."

(b) Conversely, how does Rashi know that "not two leaders for a generation?" Perhaps "not seventy (one) leaders," but "two leaders" **would be** possible! Especially in light of the verse,²⁵ "This was Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said: "Take the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their legions."

5.

THE EXPLANATION

The explanation for all the above difficulties: The term "(this) **people**" is not a flattering reference to the Jewish people.²⁶ Accordingly, the clause "you shall come {תבוא} with this people" implies that Yehoshua will be together with **lower-status** Jews. Conversely, "**this** people"²⁷ indicates that the verse refers to the entire people, including, naturally, the leaders {i.e.,} the elders as discussed above.

Consequently, Rashi understands the verse to be making **two** points:

²⁵ *Shemos* 6:26.

²⁶ See Rashi's commentary on *Bamidbar* 11:1; *Shaar Hayichud Vahaemunah*, beg. ch. 7: "The word עַם ("nation") is related etymologically to the word עֲקָמוֹת ("dimmed, extinguished") {as in the expression גְּהֵלִים עֲקָמוֹת (Rashi on *Shoftim* [5:14](#)), describing coals in which the fire is not to be seen. In terms of the relationship of a king and his subjects, the word עַם thus signifies those whose relationship with the king is not readily apparent}.

²⁷ {"This," a demonstrative pronoun, refers to the entire people. In other words, the term "people" in general refers to common Jews. However, since the verse also specifies "**this** people," the verse must be referring to all the Jews, including the elders, and not just the common Jews. Accordingly, the term "this people" seems to be suggesting two opposite ideas, and the resolution is understood based on what the Rebbe proceeds to explain.}

- a) The words, “**this** people” — **this** (as if pointing with a finger) nation, naturally including the elders — connote that “the elders of the generation will be with you.”
- b) By the verse emphasizing “**the people**,” we understand, Yehoshua will also be {lumped} together (“with — ׀א”) even with the most common Jews. How is this possible? Rashi explains: “**Everything** must be done according to their opinion and counsel”: The elders will have **autonomy**; therefore, in this regard (opinion and counsel), Yehoshua will be on par with the rest of the people.

6.

YEHOSHUA'S ROLE

In his commentary in *parshas Pinchas*, Rashi address how the statement that “everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel” dovetails with Moshe appointing Yehoshua as the next leader of the Jewish people, as described in *parshas Pinchas*:

On the phrase, “who shall go out before them,”²⁸ Rashi explains: “Not like the kings of the {gentile} nations who sit at home and send their armies to war...” Meaning, Moshe requested {from Hashem the appointment of} a king who would lead the Jewish people in battle. Moshe also already commanded²⁹ that Yehoshua would apportion the land of Israel to the Jewish people (following their conquest of the land). There is no mention (according to Rashi’s commentary) that Moshe requested {from Hashem} a leader who would also assume “**the burden of the people**” — leading them in their internal matters.

²⁸ *Bamidbar* 27:17.

²⁹ *Devarim* 1:38, 3:28.

Who would deal with **these** matters? A novice Torah student³⁰ has no difficulty: Just as the seventy elders assisted Moshe with “the burden of the people,” Moshe assumed they would continue to do so (but alone {i.e., without Yehoshua’s involvement}). However, there can only be **one** king who leads them in battle, and it was {only} for this purpose that Moshe requested “a man over the assembly” for which he appointed Yehoshua.

Consequently, there is no contradiction between Moshe’s earlier request {i.e., in *parshas Pinchas*}, “a man over the assembly,” and what he says **here** {in *parshas Vayelech*}, “everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel,” for here he makes a distinction immediately: “You shall apportion it to them,” only “you,” {i.e., Yehoshua will apportion the land.} {Similarly, with regards to battle, it will be up to Yehoshua alone, as the next verse continues} “Hashem, it is He who goes,”³¹ - which refers to battle³²- “**before you**, He will be **with you**....”³³ {implying that Yehoshua will be the (only) one to lead the Jews in battle.} However, “everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel,” refers to everything else besides leading them in battle and apportioning the land, {i.e., more specifically} the “burden of the people.” [This also bolsters Moshe’s encouragement to Yehoshua to “be strong and courageous”; since he will not have to concern himself at all with “the burden of the people,” for the elders will take care of this.]³⁴

³⁰ {“*Ben chamesh lamikra*,” in the Hebrew original, meaning, “a five-year-old beginning to study Scripture.” This is a term borrowed from *Pirkei Avos* (5:22), which teaches that the appropriate age for a child to begin studying *Chumash* is at the age of five. Rashi wrote his commentary on *Chumash* to solve problems that a 5-year-old student would encounter in understanding the simple meaning of a verse. Additionally, Rashi never expects the student to know more than the plain meaning of the earlier verses in the Torah..}

³¹ {*Devarim* 31:8.}

³² *Devarim* 20:4; 23:15.

³³ {*Devarim* 31:8.}

³⁴ {At the end of sec. 2 above, the Rebbe explains that the fact that the elders will help Yehoshua is part of the encouragement to “be strong.” Simply understood, this means that the help extended by the elders to Yehoshua in his role leading the Jewish people will be a source of encouragement. However, at this point in the *sichah*, the Rebbe takes a different tack. The elders will not “help” Yehoshua in the usual sense of the term; rather, they alone will be involved with taking care of the day-to-day issues of the Jewish people. If so, we have to now redefine the meaning of the help the elders offer: by them alone taking care of the day-to-day issues, Yehoshua is relieved of this burden, enabling him to devote himself fully to those matters that were entrusted to him. Furthermore, according to this interpretation, the elders taking care of all of the day-to-day matters is of greater benefit to Yehoshua than if he would have had to have dealt with these matters, and the elders would merely have assisted him. This later point is what the Rebbe means by saying, “this also bolsters Moshe’s encouragement to Yehoshua to “be strong and courageous.”}

7.

THE BURDEN OF THE PEOPLE

This alone is insufficient: A novice student of Scripture would understand that Yehoshua replaced the Moshe's leadership in **all** areas, not only regarding battle (and apportioning the land). This is especially true in light of Hashem commanding Moshe not only to appoint Yehoshua, but also to, “place some of your majesty upon him, so that the entire assembly of the Jewish people will pay heed.”³⁵ Hashem also said, “and command him”³⁶ regarding the Jewish people: Know that they are troublesome, they are stubborn, etc.”³⁷ All of this implies that Yehoshua also assumed “the burden of the people” {from Moshe}.

We resolve this, albeit with difficulty: Since it was (only) the “**opinion and counsel**” of the elders {that Yehoshua was told to heed}, but the **execution** {of the decision}, **in actuality**, was done by Yehoshua; therefore, this too can be considered to be leadership.

Rashi deflects this resolution. He goes on to say that the clause “come {תבוא} with this people” — meaning, “The elders of the generation will be with you; everything must be done according to their opinion and counsel” — is only what *Moshe* had said. “However, **the Holy One, blessed is He**, said to Yehoshua... bring them {even if it is} against their will....” In other words, **Yehoshua** will also bear “the burden of the people.”

8.

HE WILL RULE OVER THE ELDERS

In addition to the distinction between our verse, “you shall come {תבוא}” and the later verse, “for you shall bring {תביא},” there is another distinction between the verses: Here it says, “this people,” and later on, “the

³⁵ *Bamidbar* 27:20.

³⁶ *Bamidbar* 27:19.

³⁷ Rashi's commentary on *Bamidbar* 27:19.

children of Israel,” which is an **honorable**³⁸ way of referring to the Jewish people (unlike “this **people**,” as elucidated above in section 5.)³⁹

Since Scripture in the verse, “you shall bring {תביא} ”uses a different way of referring to the Jewish people, calling them “the Children of Israel,” Rashi derives an additional idea: Not only will Yehoshua manage “the burden of the people” for the entire nation, but he will also exercise control over the elite of the Jews — its **elders**.

Consequently, Yehoshua was told, “you shall bring them {even if it is} against their will; **everything depends on you alone**,” unlike {under the leadership of} Moshe, when the elders “**shall bear** the burden of the people **with you**”; rather, **everything** will depend on Yehoshua. And furthermore: “**Take a stick and hit them over their heads**”: Yehoshua’s authority (his “stick”) over the elders is to be the same as over the rest of the Jewish people: the elders will be given **no** voice or influence concerning “the burden of the people.”

9.

THE BURDEN OF THE PEOPLE

In light of the above, however, Yehoshua’s leadership was the inverse of Moshe’s: Under Moshe’s leadership, the elders had assisted with “the burden of the people,” whereas under Yehoshua’s leadership, they had no opinion whatsoever. This is not smooth: Yehoshua was “Moshe’s attendant”⁴⁰ who “would not depart from within the tent.” Additionally,, “Moshe’s face was like the sun, and Yehoshua’s face was like the moon,”⁴¹ the light of which is a reflection of the sun.⁴² How, then, could Yehoshua’s leadership have been the reverse of his Rebbe’s, Moshe Rabbeinu?

³⁸ See Shemos 32:29.

³⁹ {This indicates that the verse is addressed to the prestigious Jews i.e., the elders.}

⁴⁰ *Shemos* 24:13.

⁴¹ *Rashi’s* commentary on *Bamidbar* 27:20.

⁴² {So, too, Yehoshua was like a “reflection” of Moshe.}

To address this, Rashi continues to explain: “There can be only one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation.” With this remark, Rashi alludes to precluding (not only the authority of the elders, but) {the mode of conduct of} **Moshe Rabbeinu** as well:

During Moshe’s lifetime, Yehoshua was Moshe’s attendant and was entirely devoted to Moshe and to **Moshe’s** leadership style. When it came time, however, for Yehoshua to preside over the nation, Moshe’s way of doing things was no longer relevant. During Yehoshua’s governance, Yehoshua had to act according to **his own** disposition. Had Yehoshua followed Moshe’s leadership style, there would have been “**two** leaders” — Yehoshua and Moshe (since Yehoshua’s stewardship would have mirrored that of Moshe’s).

Since “there can be but one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation,” Yehoshua’s approach differed from Moshe’s: Moshe delegated (by “emanating”⁴³ {his spirit, and thereby}) part of “the burden of the people” onto the elders. Yehoshua, however, did not need their assistance.

Although at the time of the Exodus there was “Aharon and Moshe” {two leaders to take the Jews out of Egypt} (as noted above, in section 4), that is because then, their role was not that of a “leader for a generation,” but rather, to carry out a mission (which was precise, also with respect to all of its details)⁴⁴ to take out “the children of Israel from the land of Egypt.”

⁴³ {“*Veatzalta*,” in the Hebrew original, based on *Bamidbar* 11:17.}

⁴⁴ {This parenthetical remark seems to indicate that when they took the Jews out of Egypt, Moshe and Aharon were not acting as leaders who make their own decisions. They were merely messengers, fulfilling a predetermined mission, all the details of which were decided in advance by Hashem. Since they didn’t make their own decisions, having two leaders was acceptable. However, in the case of a leader who has to make his own decisions, the Jews were limited to having one leader. If they had two leaders, they could potentially contradict each other, leading to a breakdown of leadership. -ed.}

10.

TWO MODES OF AVODAH

From the “wine of Torah”⁴⁵ in Rashi’s commentary:

Chassidus teaches⁴⁶ that Yehoshua experienced two levels: a) the level on which he stood as an attendant (and a disciple⁴⁷) of Moshe; and b) (after Moshe’s passing) the level on which he stood on his by himself, characterized as a lad⁴⁸ and **small** {compared with his previous level}.

However, there is an advantage specifically in his qualities of youth and smallness — as the verse says,⁴⁹ “For Israel {the Jewish nation} is a youth and (precisely because of this) I loved him.” The qualities of *bittul*⁵⁰ and *kabbalas ol*⁵¹ are found in the ranks of “youth” and smallness, more so than in mature *avodah*⁵² (with mind and heart). Therefore, Hashem’s love of the Jewish people that stems from His Essence is expressed specifically {for this *avodah*} on the level of “youth” and “smallness.”⁵³

This is the difference between the two verses: “you shall come {תבוא} with this people” reflects the dimension of Yehoshua as a receiver from Moshe. From the perspective of Moshe’s spiritual level, there are the “elders” (“one who has acquired wisdom”)⁵⁴ {i.e., on Moshe’s level} — divine service based on intellect and reason. The clause, “for you shall bring {תביא} the Jewish people,” however, records **Hashem’s** words to Yehoshua, said to him because of his virtue of *bittul* — “For Israel is a youth, and I

⁴⁵ {This refers to the deeper teachings of *Torah*. See *Hayom Yom*, 29 Shevat.}

⁴⁶ *Maamar “Ki Naar Yisrael” 5666* (in addenda to the series of *mammarim* entitled, “*Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah*,” 5666 [in 5751 ed., end of p. 578]; see *Or HaTorah*, “*Chanukah*,” {*Bereishis* vol. 2,} p. 303a; *Hemshech* 5672, vol. 3, p. 1444-5, et. al.

⁴⁷ {In the Hebrew original, “mekabel”; lit., “recipient.”}

⁴⁸ {Cf. *Shemos* 33:11.}

⁴⁹ *Hoshea* 11:1.

⁵⁰ {Self-abnegation.}

⁵¹ {Lit., “accepting the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven,” connoting an unequivocal commitment to Hashem, based not on a person’s own desire or understanding, but rather on his selfless submission to Hashem.}

⁵² {Divine service.}

⁵³ End of *Maamar “Ki Naar Yisrael” 5666*.

⁵⁴ *Toras Kohanim*, and *Rashi on Vayikra* 19:32; *Kiddushin* 32b.

loved him.” From the perspective of *bittul*, which transcends intellect, “those who have acquired wisdom” {viz., the “elders” — personifying rational *avodah*} were unnecessary.

This distinction is also alluded to in the wording of the two verses — “תבוא” with a “*vav*” and “תביא” with a “*yud*”:

*Vav*⁵⁵ connotes drawing from above to below⁵⁶ — and “drawing down”⁵⁷ {by its very definition, reflects a manifestation of G-dliness} in a realm **outside** of Hashem’s “Essence”; consequently, it is measured and limited.⁵⁸ In the lexicon of *avodah*, this refers to *avodah* based on reason and intellect. As such, the “elders” are necessary in order to ensure that this {Divine} effluence is manifested in the appropriate place.

“The “*yud*”⁵⁹ (which) is a only a point,”⁶⁰ {conversely} represents *bittul*. Regarding **this** *avodah*, the “elders” are unnecessary;⁶¹ on the contrary, the *yud* also brings about *bittul* in the “**elders**” {as alluded to in Rashi’s commentary}: “You shall bring them {even} against their will... take a stick and hit them **over their heads**.”⁶²

11.

THE BURDEN OF THE PEOPLE

Among the practical lessons from Rashi’s explanation:

When we demand that every Jew nowadays must dedicate time to spread Torah and Judaism (and specifically to spread the well known “ten

⁵⁵ {Written as a vertical line.}

⁵⁶ {Literally, *hamshachah*.}

⁵⁷ *Iggeres Hateshuvah*, ch. 4.

⁵⁸ {How much of the essence is expressed, in what manner, for how long, etc.}

⁵⁹ {Written as a dot.}

⁶⁰ *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hateshuvah*,” ch. 4.

⁶¹ {See *Sichos Kodosh 5730*, vol. 2, p. 521 for further elaboration. -ed.}

⁶² {A reference to the rational *avodah*, “the head.”}

mitzvah campaigns”)⁶³ which must be permeated with {the directive}, “your wellsprings will spread outward”⁶⁴ — there are those who will claim that such conduct was not implemented in earlier times. In earlier generations, we did not focus on *ahavas Yisrael* in such a manner. Until the last years, when the Previous Rebbe arrived in America, such conduct was unknown. If so, why are we launching “new” forms of *avodah*?

Refuting this claim, we respond, “There can be but one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation.” It can very well be that in previous generations such conduct was uncalled for. However, in this generation {since this conduct was a directive of our leader, it is imperative}.

This {directive} reflects the saying (and instruction) of our Sages,⁶⁵ that when Rav arrived in Babylonia (and similarly, by extension, in an era which metaphorically can be called “Babylonia” {i.e., a time of profound spiritual darkness}), “he found an unguarded field, so he fenced it.”⁶⁶

The Previous Rebbe declared that nowadays it is imperative for a person to involve himself in “your wellsprings will spread outward.” Furthermore, the **well known**⁶⁷ letter⁶⁸ of the **Baal Shem Tov** relates how Moshiach’s arrival depends on accomplishing this goal. —

⁶³ In particular, the campaigns of *ahavas Yisrael* {loving one’s fellow Jew}, Torah education, Torah study, *tefillin*, *mezuzah*, *tzedakah* (a house full of Jewish books — “Yavneh and its Sages”), lighting Shabbos candles, *kashrus*, and family purity.

⁶⁴ {I.e., the deeper teachings of Chassidus; when the Baal Shem Tov asked Moshiach when he will arrive, Moshiach responded, “When your wellsprings will spread to the outside.”}

⁶⁵ *Eruvin* 6a, 100b; *Chulin* 110a.

⁶⁶ {This is a metaphor for when Rav arrived in Babylon and prohibited the residents from climbing a tree on Shabbos even if its branches were stripped, although according to the letter of the law, this is allowed. He took this measure because there was widespread transgression, “an unguarded field,” so he “fenced it,” he disallowed this act as well. Similarly, later generations require the “fences” provided by emphasis on new modes of *avodah*.}

⁶⁷ {This is cited by the Baal Shem Tov in his well-known letter concerning the ascent of his soul on Rosh HaShanah 5507 (1746), which appears at the end of *Ben Poras Yosef*. It also appears in *Michtavim MeHaBaal Shem Tov VeTalmidav*, published in Lvov in 5683 (1923). There, the publisher writes that he copied the text from the manuscript letter which was written by the Baal Shem Tov’s son-in-law, the saintly R. Yechiel, and personally signed by the holy hand of the Baal Shem Tov. The letter also appears in *Ginzei Nistaros* (Jerusalem, 5684 (1924)), vol. 1, sec. 65; and in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov* (Lodz, 5698) “*parshas Noach*,” note 13). It appears in part at the beginning of *Kesser Shem Tov*, and in *Likutei Amarim* by the Maggid of Mezritch.}

⁶⁸ {In the Hebrew original, “*iggeres hakodesh*”; lit. “holy epistle.”}

We must deport ourselves by emulating the conduct of the leader of **this** generation. Everyone in this generation must engage in **this** *avodah*. As a result, our master, King Moshiach, will in actuality arrive very soon.

-From talks delivered Shabbos *parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech*, 5730 (1970) and *Haazinu*, 5731 (1970)