

THAT YOU NOT BEAR IT ALONE*

וַיְרַדְתִּי וּדְבַרְתִּי עִמָּךְ שָׁם
וְאֶצְלָתִי מִן־הַרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ
וְשָׁמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנָשְׂאוּ אִתָּךְ
בְּמִשָּׂא הָעָם וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶתָּה לְבַדְּךָ:

And I will come down and speak with you there;
and I will take of the spirit that is on you,
and I will put (it) on them; and they shall carry with you
the burden of the people, that you not bear it alone.

And I will come down and speak with you there—This is one of ten instances of “coming down” mentioned in the Torah (Rashi), each of which describe a manifestation of God on earth, because the process of one individual’s spiritual endowment empowering others entails the active presence of the Creator in human affairs. *And I will take of the spirit that is on you*—That is, “I will make great” (Rashi) the spirit that is on you, to make it possible when you gather the 70 elders (11:16) that My spirit shall guide you to recognize those who were afflicted for the sake of the people in Egypt, so they too shall receive the spirit. *And I will put (it) on them*—It shall in no way be diminished in you—which may be compared to “A light lying upon a candlestick, and everyone kindles (the other lights) from it, but its own light does not diminish at all” (Rashi)—and, to the contrary, that you seek to uplift them as leaders shall only increase the approbation of your own leadership. *And they shall carry with you the burden of the people*—Your leadership shall be more readily accepted since the people will see that “the elders are with you and concur in your actions” (Sforno), which the people recognize as essential because their afflictions and troubles are so numerous that many leaders are required. *That you not bear it alone*—The afflictions of the people have both spiritual and material import—apparent in the loss of intimate family relationships, the overwhelming demands of daily work, and the withering of community life—and thus the prophetic spirit of God must be instilled in many leaders so that the people may be uplifted.

* Numbers 11:17 (in Behaalotkha)