

Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

Published Mantua 1778*

Chapter XXXVI: Beha'alotecha (Num. 8:1–12:16)

Essay 4. Seventy-two candidates for the seventy Elders

סנהדרין פרק קמ"א, "בנישאריו שני-אנשים במחנה" יש אומרים בקלפי נשתיירו וכו', "אספה-לי שבעים איש מזקני ישראל", אמר משה כיצד אעשה וכו' והביא ע"ב פתקין וכתב על שבעים "זקן" ושתיים הניח חלק בללם ונתנם בקלפי וכו', ר' שמעון אומר במחנה נשתיירו וכו'.

Sanhedrin, first chapter:

[Regarding the appointment of the Elders, who would help Moses govern and judge the people, there were seventy-two candidates for Elder but only seventy were needed.] **“And two men remained in the camp;** the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad, and the spirit rested upon them, and they were among those [seventy-two] who were written [as candidates for the seventy positions] but who did not go out to the tent, and they prophesied in the camp.”¹ [Where did they remain?] **Some say** [this means] **they** [i.e., their names,] **remained** [excluded from those selected from the lots] **in the box**. At the time that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses: **“Gather for Me seventy men of the Elders of Israel,”**² **Moses said: How shall I do this?** [If] I select six from each and every tribe, there will be [a total of seventy-two, which will be] two extra. [But if] I select five from each and every tribe, there will be [a total of sixty,] lacking ten. [And if] I select six from this tribe and five from that tribe, I will bring about envy between the tribes [as those with fewer representatives will resent the others].

What did he do? He selected six from every tribe and **he brought seventy-two slips. On seventy** [of them] **he wrote: Elder, and he left two** [of them] **blank. He mixed them and placed them in the box**. He said to [the seventy-two chosen candidates]: Come and draw your slips. Everyone whose hand drew up [a slip that said]: Elder, he said [to him]: Heaven has already sanctified you. [And] everyone whose hand drew up a blank [slip], he said [to him]: The Omnipresent does not desire you; what can I do for you?

...

* English translation: Copyright © 2026 by Charles S. Stein. Additional essays are available at <https://zstorah.com>

¹ Num. 11:26.

² Num. 11:16.

Rabbi Shimon says: [Eldad and Medad] **remained in the camp**, [as they did not want to come to the lottery for the Elders]. At the time that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses: Gather for me seventy Elders, Eldad and Medad said: We are not fitting for that [level of] greatness; [we are not worthy of being appointed among the Elders]. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Since you have made yourselves humble, I will add greatness to your greatness. And what is [the] greatness He added to them? That all of the prophets, [meaning the other Elders, who were given prophecy,] prophesied [for a time] and [then] stopped [prophesying], but they prophesied and did not stop.

And what prophecy did they prophesy? They said: Moses will die, and Joshua will bring the Jewish people into the Land. . . .

Rav Nachman says: They were prophesying about the matter of Gog and Magog.

- Sanhedrin 17a

מקשים למה לו למשה לכתוב על שבעים פתקים, הנה לו להניח שבעים חלק ושתים פתובים ומי שיעלה בידו פתק חלק יהנה נמנה לזמן ומי שיעלה בידו שאינו חלק יהנה שלא מן המנויים שבזקנים.

Question 1: [The commentators] ask: Why did Moses need to write on seventy slips? He should have left seventy blank and written on only two, and whoever drew a blank slip would be counted among the Elders, while whoever drew a slip that was not blank would be among those not appointed as Elders.

וזה אינה קושיא כלל, שהגורל הנה שהנה נעשה בסיוע השכינה הנה לו להיות כמו באורים ותומים שצריך לבחון ולברר השאלה, כדאמרין בפרק ז' דיומא אורים ותומים שמאירים ומשלימים את דבריהם, ובפלגש בגבעה שלא פירשו דבריהם כראוי לא נענו כהפצם ורצונם.

The answer to Question 1 is that **this is no difficulty at all, for this lottery, which was conducted with the assistance of the Shechinah, had to function like the Urim and Thummim, where one must examine and clarify the question.** The author's point becomes clear below: the lottery was not merely a mechanism for random selection. Like the Urim and Thummim, it served as an instrument for revealing Divine will and drawing down the appropriate spiritual influence upon each recipient. **As we say in chapter seven of Yoma (73b), the Urim and Thummim are called so because they illuminate and complete their words.** Just as the Urim and Thummim required that the inquiry be precisely formulated in order for the Divine response to be fully articulated, so too the lottery slips needed to explicitly state "Elder" so that the Divine will could be expressed through the lottery's act of declaration.

In the matter of the Concubine at Gibeah, since they did not formulate their inquiry properly, they were not answered according to their desire and will.

This refers to an incident in Judges chapters 19–21. A concubine of an unnamed Levite was abused and killed when they stayed the night in Gibeah. The Levite sent pieces of her body to the other tribes calling for revenge. The Benjaminites refused to turn over the killers. The tribes went to the tabernacle at Bethel to inquire of G-d, which means that the Urim and Thummim were consulted. They asked who should go to fight the Benjaminites first. The oracle selected the Tribe of Judah, but on day 1, Israel lost 22,000 men. On day 2 they asked if they should fight again, and this time 18,000 men were lost. They were confused by the staggering losses, and on day 3 asked if they should fight or stop. They were promised victory and the tribe of Benjamin was nearly wiped out. The Rabbis, in Sanhedrin 103b, said that the inquiry was formulated improperly: instead of first asking “should we fight our brothers,” they only asked “who should go first” and “should we go out again.” Because Israel took it for granted that civil war was the correct choice, they never asked for Divine permission.

ועוד דבְּעֵינֵינוּ שֶׁהַגּוֹרֵל בְּעֶצְמוֹ יֹאמֵר "זָקֵן" וַיִּגְזֹר אוֹמֵר וַיִּמְשִׁיף הַקְּדוּשָׁה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְצִינֵנוּ בְּגוֹרֵל שֶׁל חֲלִיקַת הָאָרֶץ וְכֵן הַשְּׂנֵי שְׁעִירִים שֶׁל יוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים כְּתוּבִים "לָה" וְגַם "לְעֶזְרָאֵל" וְלֹא אֶמְרִינוּ יְכַתּוּב אֶחָד "לָה" וְאַחֵר חֲלָק, אֲלֵא וַדַּאי כְּדֵי לְהַמְשִׁיף הַאי לְכַדְאִיתִיה וְהַאי לְכַדְאִיתִיה, זֶה לְהַמְשִׁיף הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְזֶה לְהַכְנִיעַ הַקְּלִיפָה.

Furthermore, we require that the lottery itself declare “Elder,” pronounce its decree, and draw down holiness. Thus, we find regarding the lottery for the division of the Land,³ and likewise the two goats of Yom Kippur, where the lots were inscribed “for the Lord” and “for Azazel.”⁴ We do not say that one lot should be inscribed “for the Lord” and the other left blank. Rather, certainly this was in order to draw each one according to its proper designation: this one to draw down holiness, and that one to subdue the *kelipah*, the force of spiritual impurity or concealment that opposes holiness.

אֲלֵא אִי קִשְׁיָא הָא קִשְׁיָא מֵה צוֹרֵף הִנֵּה לְמַשָּׁה לְבָרוּר מִפֶּל שְׁבֵט בְּשׁוּנֵה הִנֵּה לוֹ לְבָרוּר הַשְּׁבָעִים זְקֵנִים הַיּוֹמֵר רְאוּיִים מִפֶּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיוּ מֵאִיזָה שְׁבֵט שִׁיחֵיו, וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁהָיוּ נוֹהֲגִים בְּמִינוּי הַסְּנֵהֲדָרִין, וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁבְּמִצְרַיִם הָיוּ שְׁבָעִים זְקֵנִים כְּמוֹ שֶׁכַּתּוּב בְּפֶתַח שְׁמֵעוּלָם לֹא נִפְסַק מִנֵּן זֶה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל נִגְדַּד הַשְּׁבָעִים נֶפֶשׁ שִׁירְדוּ לְמִצְרַיִם.

Question 2: Rather, if there is a difficulty, this is the difficulty: Why was it necessary for Moses to select an equal number from every tribe? He should have selected the seventy most worthy Elders from all Israel, regardless of tribe, just as they were accustomed to do when appointing members of the Sanhedrin. Likewise, in Egypt there were seventy Elders, as Rabbeinu Bechaye wrote, that this number never ceased among Israel, corresponding to the seventy souls who descended to Egypt.⁵

³ Num. 26:55–56; Num. 34:13–29; Joshua 18:10.

⁴ Lev. 16:7–10.

⁵ See Rabbeinu Bechaye on Num. 11:16.

ועוד יש לדקדק דלדעת יש אומרים כמו שפירש הרא"ם דבריהם והחזיק דבריו גם מהרש"ל בחכמת שלמה ועיי"ש, וכן מפשטא דתלמודא בפרק קמא [דסנהדרין] דקאמר כמה צדיקים היו שם משה אהרן יהושע אלדד ומידד ושבעים זקנים וכו', הכי משמע שאלדד ומידד היו אותם שעלה בינדם פתק חלק, קשה טובא אם רצונו של הקב"ה שיהיו כל הע"ב נביאים למה לא ביררם כלם מתחילה בלא שום גורל, ועוד למה אדרבא וכו' אלו השנים שקבלו נבואתם מהקב"ה ואילו השבעים נאצלה עליהם הרוח מנבואתו של משה בלבד וכמו שכתב שם מהרש"א.

Question 3: There is another point requiring examination. According to the view of “some say,” as explained by the Re'em, Rabbi Elijah Mizrachi,⁶ whose explanation was also upheld by the Maharshal in *Chochmat Shlomo* (see there),⁷ and likewise according to the plain meaning of the Talmud in the first chapter [Sanhedrin] (17a), which says: “How many righteous men were there? Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Eldad and Medad, and seventy Elders,” etc., it appears that Eldad and Medad were those who drew the blank slips. This presents a great difficulty. If it was the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, that all seventy-two should be prophets, why did He not select all of them from the outset without any lottery?

Question 4: Furthermore, why did these two in particular merit to receive their prophecy directly from the Holy One, blessed be He, whereas the seventy received an emanation of spirit only from the prophecy of Moses, as the Maharsha writes there?⁸

וגיש לומר לפי שמספר השבעים הוא מספר השוב ונכבד כמו שאמרו ז"ל שיש שבעים אומות ושבעים שרים ושבעים מלאכים הסובבים את כסא הכבוד והם שבע כל אחד כלול מעשר שהיא כללות כל הכחות העליונים, ובשבעים נפש ירדו מצרים נגד שבעים שרים אשר שלטו בישראל בזמן הגלות, ואף מספר הי"ב שבטים הם נגד י"ב מזלות וי"ב צירופי השם המיוחד, והפתוב אומר "כל-אלה שבטי ישראל שנים עשר", דוגמת הי"ב צינורות של מעלה.

Question 2 asked why it was necessary for Moses to select an equal number from every tribe. As an answer, it may be said that the number seventy is a distinguished and honored number, as our sages said,⁹ there are seventy nations, seventy ministering princes, and seventy angels surrounding the Throne of Glory.¹⁰ They are seven, each one comprising ten, which encompasses all the supernal powers. The seventy souls descended to Egypt corresponding to the seventy princes who ruled over Israel during the exile. Likewise, the number of the twelve tribes corresponds to the twelve zodiacal constellations and the twelve permutations of the Divine Name. Thus, Scripture says, “All these are the twelve tribes of Israel,”¹¹ corresponding to the twelve channels above.

⁶ Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi (“Re'em”) (c. 1455 – 1525), *Sefer haMizrachi*, a supercommentary on Rashi's Torah commentary.

⁷ Rabbi Solomon Luria (“Maharshal”) (c. 1510–1573), preeminent Polish rabbi and Ashkenazic halachic authority. His work *Chochmat Shlomo* (“The Wisdom of Solomon”) consists of critical gloss notes and textual emendations on the Talmud.

⁸ Shmuel Eidels (1555 – 1631), *Chiddushei Aggadot*.

⁹ See, e.g., Ramban on Num. 11:16.

¹⁰ The author is drawing on a broader rabbinic and kabbalistic symbolism in which seventy represents the totality of created powers, corresponding to the seventy nations and their heavenly ministers.

¹¹ Gen. 49:28.

וזהו "איש אשר כבדו בך אתם", לשון בריכה שהיא צינור של מעלה כן בירך אותם למטה, משום הכי עתה שהיו באים לקבל השפעה קדושה והנבואה רצה שכל אחד יקבל השפעתו מהצינור שלו דוקא ולקח מכל שבט בשנה, ולפי שבחושן היו י"ב אבנים ועל כל אחד יש אותיות שבין הפל הם סוד הע"ב שמות, בירר גם הוא מספר הע"ב.

This is the meaning of “each according to his blessing he blessed them.”¹² The word *berachah* (“blessing”) is in the language of *berichah* [בְּרִיכָה], which is a channel conveying water from above. Thus, he drew down blessing from above to them below.

Therefore, now that they were about to receive holy influence and prophecy, he wished each one to receive his influence specifically through his own channel, and so he took an equal number from each tribe. Since the breastplate contained twelve stones, and upon each were six letters, amounting in total to the esoteric secret of the seventy-two Names,¹³ he likewise selected the number seventy-two.

ואם תאמר אם כן למה לא היו הנקנים נמי מספר הע"ב. ויש לומר שסוד הסנהדרין הם שבועים והוא מספר חשוב אבל היה משה על גביהם שהם שבועים ואחד, והקב"ה על משה ועל כלם, ונמצא שעולים בין הפל שם הגדול של ע"ב, וזה סוד "והנה ה' נצב על-חומת אנה", ולכן מספר העי"ן קבלו נבואתם ממשה ממה שצאצאל מרוחו עליהם, שהרי הגדול שבסנהדרין מלמד את כלם והם כלם טפלים לו, אבל אותם השתים הנשארים אי אפשר שמשה יאציל אליהם, שהרי אחד הוא כנגדו שהוא הגדול שבדיינים ואיך יעשהו כמותו, והשני הוא נגד השכינה השורה עליהם, וגם זה אי אפשר שמשה יאציל עליו.

Question 5: If you ask: If so, why were the Elders themselves not also seventy-two in number?

Answer to Question 5: One may answer that the esoteric secret of the Sanhedrin is seventy, and this is an important number. Moses stood above them, making seventy-one, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, was above Moses and all of them. Thus, altogether they amount to the Great Name of seventy-two. This is the esoteric secret of “Behold, the Lord was standing upon a wall made with a plumbline [אנה] [*anach*].”¹⁴ *Anach* has a Gematria of seventy-one, and if an additional one is added for the word itself, that brings the total to seventy-two. This corresponds to Moses standing above the seventy Elders (seventy-one total), with G-d above all equaling seventy-two.

Question 4 asked why Eldad and Medad merited to receive their prophecy directly from G-d, whereas the seventy received an emanation of spirit only from the prophecy of Moses. The answer is that **therefore, the seventy received their prophecy from Moses, from that which**

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The seventy-two-letter Divine Name (*Shem Ben Ayin-Bet*) is derived from three consecutive verses in Exodus (14:19–21), each containing seventy-two letters. When combined in a specific pattern, they yield seventy-two three-letter combinations, each considered a component of the Divine Name. This Name figures prominently in Kabbalistic literature, particularly in Lurianic Kabbalah. *Zera Shimshon* associates the twelve tribal stones of the High Priest’s breastplate with the seventy-two-letter Divine Name. Since each tribe contributes six representatives ($12 \times 6 = 72$), Moses’ selection of seventy-two candidates mirrors the symbolic structure of the breastplate and the seventy-two-letter Name.

¹⁴ Amos 7:7.

was emanated from his spirit upon them. For the greatest member of the Sanhedrin teaches all of them, and they are all subordinate to him. But as for the two who remained, it was impossible for Moses to emanate to them, since one corresponded to [Moses] himself, he being the greatest among the judges; how could he make another equal to himself? The second corresponded to the Divine Presence resting upon them, and this too Moses could not emanate upon.

ומשום הכי הוצרך שיאציל עליהם הקב"ה ולפיכך היו יותר חשובים מכל השבעים, וכשאמר לו הקב"ה למשה אספה לי שבעים איש הינו שאלו דוקא יהיו נאצלים ממשה כדכתיב "ואצלתי מן-הרוח אשר עליך ושמתי עליהם", ואין הכי נמי שהיה רוצה שיהיו ע"ב ולימן את רוחו על השנים היתירים, ומשה שלא היה יודע בנדאי אם ישפיע הקב"ה עליהם הנבואה כתב חלק, ואמר לו המקום לא תפץ בה אני מה אעשה לה, כלומר אני אין לי פס להאציל אלא על שבעים.

Therefore it was necessary that the Holy One, Blessed be He, emanate upon them, and consequently they were more important than all seventy.

Question 3 had asked: If G-d had wanted seventy-two prophets, why did He not select them all from the outset, without any lottery? The answer is that **when the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses, “Gather for Me seventy men,” this meant that these specifically would receive their emanation from Moses, as it is written, “I will take of the spirit that is upon you and place it upon them.”**¹⁵ Eldad and Medad occupied a different spiritual position, and could not receive prophecy from Moses. **Indeed, [G-d] desired that there be seventy-two and desired to bestow His spirit upon the additional two. But** the lottery was necessary because Moses himself did not know beforehand which two would receive this separate, direct prophetic endowment. **Moses, not knowing with certainty whether the Holy One, Blessed be He, would bestow prophecy upon them, [left two] “blank,” and [Moses] said to [the candidate]: “The Omnipresent does not desire you —what shall I do for you?” That is, “I” — Moses — “have power to emanate only upon seventy.”**

וניחא השתא שתתקף ומיד נתנבאו מענין מיתתו של משה, שהרי אחד מהם היה כנגדו, ועוד נתנבאו על ענין גוג ומגוג שאז "והיה ה' למלך על-כל-הארץ . . . והיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד", וגוג ומגוג הם שבעים שרי אומות כמנין גז"ג ומגו"ג, וכתוב "והתגדלתי והתקדשתי" וכו', ואלו השנים זכו לתמשה דברים יותר מהשבעים זקנים כדאיתא בגילקוט על פסוק "וישארו שני-אנשים במחנה", נמצאו יתירים על הזקנים בתמשה דברים, הזקנים לא נתנבאו אלא למחר והם נתנבאו מה שעתיד להיות וכו', הזקנים לא נתפרשו שמותם ואלו נתפרשו שמותם, הזקנים פסקה נבואתם ואלו לא פסקה נבואתם, הזקנים נבואתם היתה משל משה אבל אלו היתה מהקב"ה, הזקנים לא נכנסו לארץ ואלו נכנסו לארץ עכ"ל.

This explains why they immediately prophesied concerning the death of Moses, for one of them corresponded to him. They also prophesied concerning Gog and Magog, for at that time “the L-rd shall be King over all the earth; on that day the L-rd shall be One and His Name One.”¹⁶ Gog and Magog correspond to the seventy ministering princes of the nations,

¹⁵ Num. 11:17.

¹⁶ Zech. 14:9.

according to the numerical value of “Gog and Magog,” which equals seventy.¹⁷ It is written, “Thus will I manifest My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I am the L-rd.”¹⁸

These two merited five things more than the seventy Elders, as stated in Yalkut Shimoni on the verse “And two men remained in the camp.”

Because they humbled themselves and said, “We are not worthy to be among the number of the Elders,” **they were found superior to the Elders in five respects.**

- 1) **The Elders prophesied only concerning the morrow**, as it is stated, “And to the people you shall say . . .” **but these prophesied what would occur in the future**, at the end of forty years.
- 2) **The names of the Elders were not specified, whereas the names of these were specified.**
- 3) **The prophecy of the Elders ceased, whereas theirs did not cease.**
- 4) **The prophecy of the Elders was derived from that of Moses, . . . but their prophecy was from the Holy One, Blessed be He . . .**
- 5) **The Elders did not enter the Land, whereas these entered the Land.**

- Yalkut Shimoni 737

והטעם שֶׁהיוּ יְתִירִים מִכָּל הַזְּקֵנִים תְּמִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים יוֹבֵן בְּסוּד אֶלְדָּד וּמֵדָד, כִּי שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים נִחְלַק לְשֵׁתֵי חֻלְקִים, א"ל מִיְמִין דְּתַמָּן וְנִיקַת הַחֶסֶד, מ"י מִשְׁמָאל דְּתַמָּן וְנִיקַת הַשְּׂמָאל, וְה"א שֶׁל אֱלֹהִים הַעוֹמֶדֶת בְּאִמְצַע סוּד הַלֵּב שֶׁהוּא בְּאִמְצַע כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּבֵי הַמְּקוּבָּלִים, וְעוֹד בְּכַתְּבֵי הָאֵר"י וְזָכוּנוּ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא שֶׁהָיוּ צִיּוּרוֹת לְהַמְשִׁיךְ הַשְּׁפָע וּמְשׁוּם הָכִי נִקְרָאוּ בְּשֵׁם דָּד כְּמִין שְׁנֵי דָדִים שֶׁבְּאִשָּׁה יְמִין וּשְׂמָאל.

Question 6: Why did Eldad and Medad surpass the seventy Elders in these five specific respects?

Answer to Question 6: **The reason they surpassed all the Elders in these five respects can be understood through the esoteric secret of Eldad and Medad. The Divine Name “Elohim” is divided into two parts: א"ל on the right, from which kindness draws sustenance, and מ"י on the left, from which the left side draws sustenance. The *heh* of Elohim standing in the middle is the esoteric secret of the heart, which stands in the middle, as the Kabbalists wrote.¹⁹ Furthermore, in the writings of the Ari, may he be remembered for life in the World-to-Come, they are channels through which influence is drawn down. Therefore, [El-dad and Me-dad] were called by the name dad, like the two breasts [*dadim*] of a woman, right and left. Thus, El-dad is formed with the right-hand side of the Name Elohim, “*El*”, as a prefix, and “*dad*” as a suffix. Me-dad is formed with the left-hand side of the Name Elohim, “*Me*”, as a prefix, and “*dad*” as a suffix.**

¹⁷ If one includes the conjunctive, then the Gematria גוג ומגוג = 3 + 6 + 3 + 6 + 40 + 3 + 6 + 3 = 70.

¹⁸ Ezek. 38:23.

¹⁹ Moses Cordovero (“Ramak”) (1522–70), *Pardes Rimoni* (Safed 1548), Sha’ar HaShemot, ch. 8, sec. 9.

ועוד יש לומר שהואיל שהדין הוא קיום העולם הזה שנברא בה"א, לזה "אלהים נצב בעדת־אל" דהיינו חצי מימין וחצי משמאל, שכן הסנהדרין הללו מימינים לזכות והללו משמאלים לחובה, לפי ההארה הנמשכת להם משם אלהים, ועקר הדין הוא ה"א שבאמצע דהיינו קיום העולם וזהו "בקרוב" דהיינו באמצע "אלהים ישפט". ודייק לומר "נצב בעדת־אל", שאל הוא חסד ועקר פוננת הדיינים לפתוח בזכות בדיני נפשות כדכתיב "והצילו העדה", ועוד שאם הנדון יוצא מבית דין זכאי אין מחזירין אותו כמו שפרש רש"י על פסוק "ונקי וצדיק אל־תהרג" וכו' ועיי"ש.

The author offers a further Kabbalistic elaboration.

It may also be said that since judgment is the sustaining force of this world, which was created with the letter *heh*, therefore “G-d stands in the Divine assembly, in the midst G-d will judge”²⁰ — that is, half on the right and half on the left. Thus, these members of the Sanhedrin incline to acquittal and those incline to liability, according to the illumination drawn to them from the Name Elohim. The essence of judgment is the *heh* in the middle, which is the sustaining force of the world. This is the meaning of “in the midst”—that is, in the middle—“G-d will judge.” He was precise in saying, “G-d stands in the Divine assembly [בעדת־אל] [*be’adat El*],” for *El* denotes kindness, and the primary intention of judges in capital cases is to begin with arguments for acquittal, as it is written, “The assembly shall save the manslayer from the blood-avenger.”²¹ Furthermore, if the defendant leaves the court acquitted, he is not brought back, as Rashi explained on the verse, “Do not slay the innocent and the righteous,”²² etc.; see there.

Thus, the structure of Eldad and Medad’s names — embodying the two flanking aspects of the Name Elohim, with the *heh* of judgment at the center — reflects their unique role in sustaining and expressing the Divine presence within the camp, beyond what the seventy Elders could achieve through the emanation of Moses alone.

* * *

²⁰ Ps. 82:1.

²¹ Num. 35:25.

²² Ex. 23:7.