

SHABBAT TABLE TOPICS - SHEMOT 18 - MOSHE'S LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 18, Ralbag and Abarbanel debate the issue of Moshe's leadership skills: Ralbag writes that one of the purposes of our chapter is:

To let us know the intensity of Moshe's vigilance in cleaving to Hashem, to the extent that due to his deep vigilance, he would err in certain matters. As such, the Torah shares that Moshe, with his vast knowledge, did not turn his attention to determining the best way of judging the people until Yitro, his father-in-law directed him.

Ralbag	
Name	R. Levi b. Gershom, Gersonides ר' לוי בן גרשום, רלב"ג
Dates	1288-1344
Location	Provence
Influenced by	Ibn Ezra, Rambam
Works	Biblical commentaries, Milchamot Hashem, math, astronomy
Exegetical Characteristics	Rationalist, philosophical
Impacted on	Ran, Akeidat Yitzchak, Abarbanel

Abarbanel	
Name	R' Don Yitzchak Abarbanel ר' דון יצחק בן יהודה אברבנאל
Dates	1437-1508
Location	Lisbon, Toledo, Naples, Corfu, Sicily, Venice
Influenced by	Ralbag, Akeidat Yitzhak
Works	Biblical commentaries, philosophical and messianic works

Abarbanel responds:

Many have already spoken much about this matter, against the master of prophets, suggesting that he was lacking in civic leadership... And this is a lie, for the perfection of his ways demonstrates his knowledge of them. And how could it be that Hashem did not teach him this basic wisdom and understanding?

With whom do you agree? Set up a debate at your Shabbat table, drawing on material from both Shemot 18 and other stories in Tanakh which relate to Moshe's leadership qualities.

DID MOSHE NEED YITRO'S ADVICE?

The second half of Chapter 18 begins with a description of how the nation stood in line all day long waiting to be judged by Moshe. Upon viewing this scene, Yitro realizes that the situation is unbearable, and he makes the rather obvious suggestion that Moshe appoint other judges to assist with the workload. Whereupon Moshe implements Yitro's advice and Yitro departs having accomplished his objective.

Interestingly, there is no other case in the Torah of anybody besides Hashem offering Moshe advice.¹ Additionally, Yitro's advice seems like such an obvious and simple solution that one cannot help but wonder: How could it be that Moshe, the greatest of all men and in possession of

¹ See here for cases where the law eluded Moshe (נתעלמה ממנו הלכה), where Moshe was at a loss for how to proceed because he had not yet received the law, or where a third party is responsible for the giving of a law. According to Sifre Bemidbar 78, our story is a case where the law eluded Moshe. See also Akeidat Yitzchak who compares our story to some of the other cases.

a direct line to Hashem, needed Yitro's help to figure this out? As Abarbanel aptly formulates in his fifth question on this chapter:²

Concerning Yitro's advice to Moshe regarding the appointment of the judges: For certainly Yitro's words were good and correct, but even the greatest simpleton would understand and know that it was a foolish idea for one person to stand in judgment from the morning until the night... And how did Moshe, our teacher, and all of the Elders of Israel not realize that if he would appoint judges over the people, it would have lightened his load? And who would not know that the judges need to be "capable men, God fearing, men of truth, who hate unjust gain," that Yitro needed to teach this to Moshe, the master of all prophets and the greatest of all sages?

In Exegetical Approaches we will examine a range of approaches to this question which differ in their portrayal of both Moshe and Yitro, as well as in their understanding of the relationship between the different units in our chapter.

EXEGETICAL APPROACHES

SYNOPSIS

The Akeidat Yitzchak notes that in trying to understand this story, one is caught between a rock and a hard place. If Yitro's plan was an obvious and appropriate corrective for a difficult situation, then Moshe looks foolish for not solving the problem on his own. On the other hand, if Yitro's plan was unhelpful or unnecessary, then why would Moshe implement it at all? There are three basic approaches to understanding the thought processes of Yitro and Moshe, and they paint differing portraits of the two protagonists and their interaction:

- **Moshe needed help in correcting his system, and Yitro was able to provide him with an outsider's insight and perspective** - Ralbag, Ibn Kaspi, and Tzeror HaMor.
- **Moshe was making the best of a difficult situation, but Yitro correctly advised him that there was a need for God to fix the underlying cause of the problem by giving a code of civil law** - R. Yitzchak Arama in his Akeidat Yitzchak charts this middle ground in attempting to portray both Moshe and Yitro in the best possible light.
- **Moshe's system was the best possibility for the time being, and Yitro's advice was unnecessary or unhelpful** - there are a number of distinct variations of this possibility, but they all agree that the appointment of judges which ultimately occurred was not directly connected to Yitro's advice (see Chronology box below) and took place only significantly afterwards:
 - **The long line for judgment was a one-time aberration** on the day of Yitro's visit, while in general there was no need for additional judges at this time.
 - **There was a consistent need for additional judges to assist Moshe, but additional preparatory steps needed to be taken** before they could be appointed:
 - The nation needed to first receive the laws - Abarbanel.
 - Moshe needed to initially judge the people himself in order to win over their hearts so that they would accept the Torah and its commandments - Shadal.

² Cf. the formulation of the Akeidat Yitzchak.

- **Moshe needed help in correcting his system, and Yitro was able to provide him with an outsider's insight and perspective** - Ralbag,³ Ibn Kaspi, and Tzeror HaMor.
 - Critique of Moshe's Leadership - Ralbag explains that Moshe's great spirituality and closeness to Hashem caused him to make errors of judgment in mundane matters, and thus he needed Yitro to guide him in setting up an effective judicial system. See here⁴ for a more general discussion of Moshe's leadership and possible leadership flaws.⁵ Ralbag tempers his criticism with strong praise of Moshe's wisdom and the completeness of his personality, presenting his willingness to listen to advice and correct his actions as a shining example. Nevertheless, his position aroused the ire of Abarbanel who heatedly disputes Ralbag's assertion (calling it a "lie"). Abarbanel maintains that Moshe had superior administrative skills, noting that it would be impossible that Hashem had not instructed Moshe in basic knowledge and common sense.⁶
 - Chronology - While many exegetes explain that Yitro visited in the first year in the wilderness, Ralbag maintains that Yitro arrived and offered his advice only in the second year - see Chronology of Shemot 18. By this point in time, civil laws had already been given and Moshe would have already had ample opportunity to put a judicial system into place. For Ralbag, this magnifies Moshe's administrative shortcomings and highlights that he did not think of Yitro's advice on his own.⁷
 - Yitro's inspiration - R. Avraham Saba in his Tzeror HaMor commentary focuses not on a possible administrative deficiency of Moshe, but rather on the Divine inspiration which Yitro possessed allowing him to see even what Moshe did not - see Yitro's Religious Identity. He explains that Yitro merited this inspiration because of his good deed in coming to bless the Jewish people.
 - Why Hashem didn't command Moshe - Ralbag does not explain why Hashem worked through the agency of Yitro and did not previously advise Moshe to appoint judges. See Ralbag's Exegesis for Hashem utilizing man and nature. Tzeror

Chronology of Shemot 18

When did the various events of Chapter 18 occur? Did they take place before the events of the chapters which follow? Or did they happen only after the Decalogue or the building of the Tabernacle?

- All of Chapter 18 occurred before the Decalogue - the entire chapter is in its chronological place.
- All of Chapter 18 occurred after the Decalogue - the entire chapter is **not** in its chronological place.
- Chapter 18 combines six events which happened during different time periods - part of Chapter 18 is in its chronological place while part is not.

³ Toelet 14, the passage which contains the sharpest formulation, is not found in the Venice edition of Ralbag's commentary, but does appear in the recent annotated editions. See Ralbag's exegesis regarding the character of various omitted passages. Ralbag is the first exegete to frontally address our issue, and his position influenced subsequent Spanish commentators. Abarbanel's diatribe (see below) is apparently directed against this opinion of Ralbag. See Abarbanel and Ralbag for more on their relationship.

⁴ Ralbag in Shemot 4:10, 6:9, and Shemot 18 Toelet 11 explains that Moshe's spirituality also prevented him from being an effective speaker. See also analyses of Moshe's leadership in Bemidbar 11 and Bemidbar 20.

⁵ Ibn Kaspi and Tzeror HaMor also make clear that Yitro was able to provide insight that Moshe did not have on his own, but their formulations are much less sharp than Ralbag.

⁶ See below for an analysis of Abarbanel's own position.

⁷ Dating Shemot 18 to the beginning of the second year also places it in close proximity to the story in Bemidbar 11 in which Moshe similarly appears overwhelmed and understaffed, and needs Hashem to charge him with appointing assistants.

- HaMor proposes that Hashem waited to advise Moshe on this matter so that Yitro would receive credit for making the suggestion and the entire nation would understand why Moshe married Yitro's daughter.⁸ See also Or HaChayyim who suggests that Hashem wanted to demonstrate that there is much wisdom among Gentiles, and that He did not select the Jewish people because of their intellect.
- Ideal and reality - In a private conversation, Prof. Uriel Simon suggested that Moshe's system was a model for an ideal world, but Yitro's plan was designed to account for a reality in which the demands on Moshe's time were simply too great.
 - Yitro the consultant - R. Eitan Mayer⁹ presents a variation of this approach employing a "corporate metaphor" which portrays Moshe as the CEO of the not-for-profit organization of the Jewish people, and Yitro as the outside management consultant. According to him, Yitro is the outsider who brings a fresh perspective to the insiders who have become accustomed to the status quo.
 - **Moshe was making the best of a difficult situation, but Yitro correctly advised him that there was a need for God to fix the underlying cause of the problem by giving a code of civil law** - R. Yitzchak Arama in his Akeidat Yitzchak charts this middle ground in attempting to portray both Moshe and Yitro in the best possible light.
 - Why had Moshe not already appointed judges - The Akeidat Yitzchak explains that by the time of Yitro's advice, the people had only received some basic laws at Mara. Therefore, until the people received the body of civil law in Parashat Mishpatim, Moshe needed to adjudicate all disputes, as both Moshe and the nation did not trust anybody else to judge fairly. And thus, there is no fault to be found in Moshe's leadership, as he was doing the best that could be done with the hand that God had dealt him.
 - If Moshe was acting correctly, what was Yitro suggesting - According to R. Yitzchak Arama, Yitro (like Moshe) realized that there could be no effectively functioning judiciary without first having a code of civil law,¹⁰ and therefore he attempted to address the root of the problem by proposing that the nation receive a Divine civil law code. Thus he understands that Yitro's words "and God will command you" ("וַיִּצְוֶה אֱלֹהִים") in 18:23 refer to the necessary condition of God giving Moshe the laws (rather than to God commanding Moshe to appoint the judges).¹¹ According to the Akeidat Yitzchak, Yitro was also well aware of the impending revelation, as Zipporah and her sons had come to participate in the experience - see Chronology of Shemot 18.
 - Divine civil law: Yitro's revolutionary concept - The Akeidat Yitzchak suggests that until Yitro's advice, Moshe did not realize that Hashem was planning on bequeathing a Divine code of civil law, and that Yitro was the first to conceive of this concept and recognize its desirability.¹² While at first blush, this approach

⁸ See here regarding Moshe's marriage to Zipporah. The idea of giving Yitro credit is based in part on Sifre Bemidbar 78 which explains that Moshe was already commanded at Mount Sinai regarding the judges, but the implementation eluded him, in order that Yitro would get credit. The Sifre appears to place at least the second half of Chapter 18 after the Decalogue - see Chronology.

⁹ See http://www.yu.edu/faculty/emayer/parsha_shiurim/18yitro.html.

¹⁰ Compare to Abarbanel's position below that Yitro had no idea that laws would be given, and was recommending that the judges decide cases based on their own intuition, like in the Midianite system.

¹¹ Cf. Ibn Ezra and Abarbanel's interpretations of these words.

¹² R. Arama writes: "ובא יתרו והעירה על צרכה, וגם רוח המקום נוחה הימנו, כדי שירגישו תועלת החלק הזה מהמשפטים היותו א-". In Chapter 46, he expounds at length on this theme. Cf. the Midrash in Pesikta DeRav Kahana 12:11 which may be a reaction to the possibility later formulated by the Akeidat Yitzchak. A significantly more radical position is put forth by R. Chaim

may be difficult to digest, in truth, the Torah was the first corpus to combine ritual prescriptions with civil legislation; all other Ancient Near Eastern codes of civil law were established by the king and were separate from matters of religious worship. Thus, the Akeidat Yitzchak is proposing that Moshe originally thought that in civil matters, the nation would conduct themselves like all other nations, i.e. there would be a separation of church and state.¹³ Cognizant of the novelty of his approach,¹⁴ R. Arama concludes by pointing to parallel cases¹⁵ where Torah laws are given as the result of new circumstances, and where it appears that Moshe had been previously unaware of the need to institute them.¹⁶

- Chronology - In order to understand both Moshe and Yitro, Akeidat Yitzchak needs to posit that Yitro gave his advice before the Decalogue but that it was implemented only in the second year once the nation had received the laws - see Chronology of Shemot 18.¹⁷ However, he does not explain why Yitro would have given his advice already before the Decalogue, knowing that it could not yet be implemented, and given the likelihood that Moshe on his own could have figured it out when the time was ripe.
- Perspectives on Moshe and Yitro - The Akeidat Yitzchak depicts both Moshe and Yitro as capable leaders possessing administrative competence and insight. According to him, Yitro was a wise man¹⁸ whose advice was fundamentally sound, and he praises Moshe for implementing Yitro's advice as given, citing the verse from Mishlei 12:15 "but he who is wise listens to counsel."
- **Moshe's system was the best possibility for the time being, and Yitro's advice was unnecessary or unhelpful** - there are a number of distinct variations of this possibility,¹⁹ but they all agree that the appointment of judges which ultimately occurred was not directly connected to Yitro's advice (see Chronology) and took place only significantly afterwards:
 - **The long line for judgment was a one-time aberration** on the day of Yitro's visit, while in general there was no need for additional judges at this time.
 - Moshe had been away - According to the Mekhilta and Rashi, Yitro observed Moshe judging the people on the day after Yom HaKippurim

Hirschensohn in his work Seder LaMikra Vol. II (Jerusalem, 1932): 131-137. He proposes that the entire code of civil law found in Shemot 21-22 (Parashat Mishpatim) was all part of Yitro's advice.

¹³ Akeidat Yitzchak seems to consider both the possibility that Moshe thought that there wouldn't be a civil law code at all, as well as the option that there would be a code of civil law, but humanly legislated. Even regarding ritual law, one may consider the possibility that Moshe did not yet know that Hashem was planning on presenting the nation with a set of rules. Until this point, Moshe had heard only that the nation would "worship" God on Mount Sinai (Shemot 3:12), and he may have learned that Hashem would also speak only in Shemot 19:9.

¹⁴ In his own words: " והנה אם יקשה לבך על זה, תאמר איך יתכן שעל פי עצתו של יתרו נתנו הדינים לישראל, והלא התורה כלה ". "כהויתיה קדמה לעולם תתקע" ד דורות

¹⁵ Such as the inheritance of daughters (Bemidbar 27) and Pesach Sheni (Bemidbar 9), and the cases of the blasphemer (Vayikra 24) and the mekoshesh (Bemidbar 15). See Moshe for further discussion.

¹⁶ See the Akeidat Yitzchak's formulation: " וכבר היה משה בלתי חושש לחסרונה, כמו שלא היה מקפיד על הדינים ההם, עד ". "שבא לו הצורך אליהם, ובא יתרו והעירה על צרכה

¹⁷ See the discussion there regarding R. Arama's position that Moshe waited to appoint judges until the second year, its motivations, difficulties, and alternatives.

¹⁸ See Yitro's Character for more regarding Akeidat Yitzchak's portrait of Yitro.

¹⁹ A radical expression of this position appears in Philo's work On Drunkenness X:37. In this work, Philo presents an exceedingly negative portrait of Yitro (see here) and goes so far as to say that Yitro in his arrogance 'proposes laws contrary to those of nature.' However, it is difficult to find any textual basis for his tirade, and Philo himself praises Yitro's proposal in The Special Laws IV:XXXIII:173-175.

(when he descended from Mount Sinai with the second tablets) - see Chronology. If Moshe had spent the last four months on Mount Sinai, one can readily understand why a huge backlog of cases had accumulated in his absence.

- Moshe had taken a day the previous day off when Yitro visited - Chizkuni, in explaining why the Torah notes that "it happened on the next day" posits that on the day of Yitro's arrival Moshe was busy with Yitro and had not judged the people. This might explain why he needed to work overtime on the following day.²⁰
- Newly acquired wealth - R. Yaakov Meidan²¹ offers an alternative predicated on the assumption that most of the Yitro story appears in chronological order - see Chronology, and that Yitro arrived and observed Moshe shortly after the battle with Amalek. According to him, the division of the spoils with Amalek caused significant strife and was responsible for Moshe's heavy caseload on that particular day.²² R. Meidan posits that shortly thereafter things settled down and while the nation was encamped at Mount Sinai there was little need for additional judges. It was only in the second year, when the nation resumed their journey that complaints spiked once again and Moshe needed assistance - compare opinion cited in Hoil Moshe and see Relationship of Shemot 18 - Bemidbar 11 - Devarim 1.
- Recent water shortage - R. Meidan²³ offers an additional possibility that Moshe's busy schedule resulted from the need to allocate the water which the nation had just received.²⁴ According to this explanation, the people's complaints and the need for more judges arose only while they were in transit and not during the year they were at Mount Sinai.
- **There was a consistent need for additional judges to assist Moshe, but additional preparatory steps needed to be taken** before they could be appointed:
 - The nation needed to first receive the laws - Abarbanel.²⁵
 - Why had Moshe not already appointed judges - According to Abarbanel, Moshe had already thought of Yitro's suggestion by himself and was planning to implement it as soon as it would be viable. He explains that although Moshe himself had received the Torah's civil laws already at Mara, it was not until Parashat Mishpatim that he was instructed to transmit the laws to the people. Thus in the meantime Moshe could not yet entrust cases to other

²⁰ Cf. R. Saadia in his Commentary to Shemot 18:13 who says that Moshe only judged the people on certain assigned days, and thus did not judge them on the day Yitro came.

²¹ In his article, "איפה ואיפה - עיון בפרשיות נדודי ישראל במדבר", Megadim 17 (1992): 79-80 (http://www.herzog.ac.il/tvunot/fulltext/mega17_medan.pdf).

²² Cf. Lekach Tov and Sekhel Tov 18:13 who attribute the workload to disputes regarding the spoils from the Egyptian army, and Chizkuni's note (18:13) that this would not make chronological sense.

²³ In footnote 67 of the same article.

²⁴ This is an extension of the suggestion he develops (pp. 62-64) that despite the miraculous nature of the manna and water, supplies were not unlimited - see Shemot 15-17.

²⁵ See Moshe's Duties and Yitro's Advice for a discussion of Abarbanel's alternative suggestion in his commentary to Devarim 1. There he offers that the need for additional judges came about only in the second year as the nation prepared to conquer and settle the land of Israel.

judges.²⁶ Abarbanel's explanation of why Moshe had not already selected judges is thus almost identical to the Akeidat Yitzchak above.²⁷ They differ significantly, however, in their assessment of what Moshe was planning and what Yitro was suggesting.

- What was Yitro thinking? While the Akeidat Yitzchak assumes that Yitro knew about the upcoming revelation and conditioned the appointment of judges on the nation's first receiving the laws, Abarbanel disagrees and thinks that Yitro knew nothing of the imminent revelation or the giving of a law code²⁸ and erroneously thought that Moshe was planning to continue indefinitely as the sole judge.²⁹ According to Abarbanel's understanding, Yitro recommended that Moshe appoint judges immediately (without the nation first receiving any of the laws), who would then render verdicts based on their own common sense.³⁰ Consequently, Abarbanel concludes that Yitro's advice was both ill-timed (" ויתרו "אכלה פגה העצה הזאת") and reflective of a Midianite model of justice rather than a Divine one.
- Chronology - Like the Akeidat Yitzchak, Abarbanel needs to claim that Yitro gave his advice before the Decalogue but that Moshe selected judges only in the second year once the nation had received the laws - see Chronology of Shemot 18.³¹
- Perspectives on Moshe and Yitro - It is likely that Abarbanel's position reflects his instinctive recoil (see above) from the suggestion of Ralbag that Moshe's administrative skills were lacking and that he was in need of Yitro's advice. In response, Abarbanel tries to demonstrate not only Moshe's wisdom but also the flaws in Yitro's advice. Thus, Abarbanel emphasizes that Moshe's ultimate implementation was not a result of Yitro's suggestion,³² that it

²⁶ Abarbanel does not explain why Moshe could not have taught civil law to the nation already at Mara, and thereby have avoided the unmanageable workload.

²⁷ They also concur in the need to split Shemot 18 into two different time periods - see below. There are numerous near verbatim parallels between their commentaries, and this is not by chance. See Akeidat Yitzchak and Abarbanel regarding the relationship between these two commentators.

²⁸ Abarbanel adds that Moshe did not share this information with Yitro. In contrast, according to the Akeidat Yitzchak, Moshe was unaware that Hashem planned to give a civil law code, while Yitro assumed that this would happen.

²⁹ Cf. Akeidat Yitzchak who suggests that this may have in fact been Moshe's plan until Yitro gave his advice.

³⁰ In other words, according to the Akeidat Yitzchak the essence of Yitro's advice was that there was a need for a code of law (to enable an effective judicial system), while according to Abarbanel it was to appoint judges (even without a legal code).

³¹ According to Abarbanel, though, it is unclear why the Torah chose to record Yitro's advice, and why the Torah would make it appear that Moshe followed it to the letter. Abarbanel attempts to explain that Moshe, out of respect for his father-in-law, told him that he would implement his advice. However, see R. Eliezer Ashkenazi in Ma'asei HaShem, Ma'aseh Torah 5, who rejects Abarbanel's argument, noting that it is not Moshe himself who states that he followed Yitro's advice, but rather the Torah in its narrative voice recording that Moshe did so.

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differed from Yitro's advice in several critical respects, and that Moshe by himself had already thought of whatever positive aspects Yitro's plan contained.³³ Abarbanel adds that for these reasons Moshe does not even credit Yitro for the suggestion in his retelling of the story in Devarim 1.³⁴ This is all in stark contrast to the Akeidat Yitzchak (see above) who portrays Yitro and his advice in a very positive light.³⁵

- Moshe needed to initially judge the people himself in order to win over their hearts so that they would accept the Torah and its commandments - Shadal.
 - Why Hashem didn't command Moshe - Shadal thus explains why Hashem had not yet commanded Moshe to appoint judges.
 - Implementation - It is unclear according to Shadal here how long a period was necessary until Moshe could begin to delegate, but according to one possibility in Shadal 18:1 Moshe implemented the advice before the Decalogue. See Chronology of Shemot 18.

POINTS OF DISPUTE

- Did Moshe exhibit leadership flaws?
 - Yes - Ralbag.
 - No - Abarbanel.
- Portrait of Yitro - see Yitro's religious identity
 - Divinely inspired - Tzeror HaMor, Akeidat Yitzchak.
 - Well-intentioned but not so helpful - Abarbanel.
 - Arrogant - Philo.
- Attitude toward Gentiles and their wisdom
- Why were there so many litigants?
 - This was the norm - Ralbag.
 - There were disputes regarding the spoils from Amalek or over water quotas - R. Meidan.
 - A backlog from Moshe's prolonged stay on Mount Sinai - Rashi.
- When did Yitro suggest his advice?
 - Immediately after the battle with Amalek - Akeidat Yitzchak, Abarbanel.
 - On the day after Yom HaKippurim - Rashi.
 - In the second year - Ralbag.
- When did Moshe appoint judges?
 - Before the Decalogue - Ma'asei HaShem, Shadal.

is not Moshe himself who states that he followed Yitro's advice, but rather the Torah in its narrative voice recording that Moshe did so.

³³ Thus the Akeidat Yitzchak and Abarbanel have a fundamental difference of opinion on what might have happened had Yitro not given his advice. According to Abarbanel, the eventual outcome would have been the same, while according to the Akeidat Yitzchak, Moshe might never have appointed judges.

³⁴ R. Eliezer Ashkenazi in Ma'asei Hashem critiques Abarbanel's position and argues for an alternative explanation that in Devarim 1 Moshe is concerned only with the implementation and not the genesis of the idea and therefore doesn't mention Yitro. He points out that in similar fashion, Moshe doesn't always mention that an instruction came from Hashem. Additional approaches can be found in Ramban Devarim 1:18 - see Chronology.

³⁵ See Yitro's Character for further comparison of the views of Akeidat Yitzchak and Abarbanel.

- After the Decalogue, but in the first year.
- In the second year - Akeidat Yitzchak, Abarbanel.

RELATED TOPICS

- Chronology of Chapter 18 - what part (if any) happened after the Decalogue?
 - The entire chapter - Ralbag.
 - The second half of the chapter (from 18:13 and on) - Rashi.
 - Moshe's selection of the judges - Akeidat Yitzchak, Abarbanel.
 - Just Yitro's departure - Shadal.
 - None - Ma'asei HaShem.
- Relationship of Shemot 18 to Bemidbar 11 and Devarim 1:
 - Shemot 18 = Bemidbar 11 = Devarim 1 - R. Meidan.
 - Shemot 18 = Devarim 1 - Akeidat Yitzchak.
- Why doesn't Moshe give credit to Yitro in Devarim 1?
 - It was really Moshe's own idea - Abarbanel.
 - Moshe is just recounting the events - Ma'asei HaShem.
- Did Moshe implement Yitro's advice as given, or did he make significant changes?
 - He implemented to the letter - Ma'asei HaShem.
 - He made significant changes - Abarbanel.