



TAL

YITRO 5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Cling To Him!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



Yitro hears about all that Hashem did for the Jewish people when He took them out of Egypt and decides to join them. The first Rashi on this week's Parsha asks what exactly did Yitro hear that made him come to cling to the Bnei Yisrael? He states that Yitro heard specifically about the splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek.

The Meor Ve Shemesh is puzzled with this Rashi. What made Rashi single out these two specific occurrences? Surely the Pasuk could be understood in its simple format that Yitro heard every-

thing that Hashem did i.e. the ten plagues and all the other miracles. Furthermore, when Rashi himself explains later in the Pasuk, he states clearly that Yitro also heard about the miracle of the Mann and the Well of Water. So why is it that Rashi seems to imply he only heard about the splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek?

A second question is asked. In our Parsha, we are told that Yitro took his daughter Tsipora and **her** two sons to meet the Bnei Yisrael. Why does the Torah link the two sons to Tsipora? Surely it should have

said he took Tsipora Moshe's wife and his two sons to meet him. The Torah goes out of its way to imply that they are **her** sons.

The Meor Vashemesh explains that Yitro heard about all the miracles and he decided that he too would serve Hashem. He would be like a Ger Toshav, keeping the seven Noachide laws. There was no need to join Klal Yisrael.

At Kriat Yam Suf, the Bnei Yisrael reached their highest level – VayaAminu B'Hashem UbEMoshe Avdo – they believed in Hashem and Moshe His servant. Even the simplest amongst them reached a level of prophecy higher than the later prophets. Yet soon after they reached Refidim, the Mefarshim explain that they were Rafu Yadayim BaTorah – were weak in Torah. They let their guard down and Amalek attacked. Yitro from the outside saw that someone can one day be on a spiritual high but yet on the next be prone to falling from this peak. He was worried that he too would fall from his spiritual enlightenment, and therefore decided that the only way to secure his high spiritual position was to cling to the Bnei Yisrael and Moshe in particular.

We can now understand why the Torah relates to the children as

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Shabbat Begins 16:40

Shabbat Ends 17:52



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being her children. Yitro was saying in effect: "You named your children because you wanted them to be certain type. Gershon, so that he would be a stranger in this world and his main focus on being a Ben Olam Habah, and Eliezer because you wanted Eliezer to be someone who has Emuna in Hashem. Now they are slipping, they need to be near you. Until we come to you, and stay in close proximity, your children will be lost; they will be her children, separated from their father and from his beliefs. In order for them to keep on the correct path they need to be close to you as well."

The Rambam in (Deot 6) says that there is a positive commandment in the Torah to cling to G-d. He asks if it possible to cling to G-d who has no physical existence. The Rambam explains that the way to fulfil this commandment is to cling to His people – i.e. the Talmidei Chachamim. By constantly being in their presence, even for mundane purposes such as eating with them at their table, drinking with them, doing business with them, marrying your daughters to them, one can fulfil this commandment. We see how important it is to always be located in an environment where the Torah is of central importance. With this Rambam, we can also explain the Mishna in Avot. The

Mishnah says that one should always be around Talmidei Chachamim, drinking thirstily from their words and sitting in their dust. One could understand why it is important to hear their words, but why must one sit in their dust? Based on what we have explained, this is quite understandable. It is integral for a person to be constantly located amongst the righteous scholars because one puts himself in an environment which is conducive to growth and success in Torah, and even if all one is doing is sitting in their presence, this will ensure that a person does the right thing consistently and constantly.



Chazal write "Whoever attaches himself to evildoers, even if does not act as they do, is punished together with them; whoever attaches himself to those who perform Mitsvot, even if he does not join them in that performance, nonetheless is offered the same reward." There are spiritual accomplishments that are

beyond the reach of many people. They need not despair, but change their strategy. They can lay claim to Devekut by associating with those for whom it is working reality – the Talmidei Chachamim. The Rambam observes that even this is not a workable solution. Not everyone has access to and can create a relationship with a genuine Talmid Chacham. The Torah must mean, therefore, that by associating with the **world** of Talmidei Chachamim, one participates in the mitzvah of Devekut to the best of one's ability. If the association cannot be with a Talmid Chacham, it can be with people one degree of separation away – their students. King David said, "Shivti b'vet Hashem kol yimei chayai" "May I sit in the house of G-d all the days of my life." How can one be in G-d's house all day every day? It is not possible. The answer is that even when you leave, you should take the lessons of G-d's house with you 24/7.

Let us work to be close to Talmidei Chachamim, Aseh Lecha Rav – appoint for ourselves a Rabbi that we can associate with- so that we can drink from his Torah, and through this gain Devekut to Hashem.

Our Parsha opens with the familiar words: Vayishma Yitro - and Yitro heard.

Rashi goes to great lengths to explain exactly what he heard that impressed him and encouraged him to follow the Bnei Yisrael into the desert.

However, there is possibly a deeper meaning that has a lot of significance to all of us, in our own daily lives, that can enrich us if we truly understand the message of the Possuk.

The great Gaon and Tzaddik, Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurebach zatza'l once related that when he was a youngster and learning in the famous Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, in

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Parasha Insights

Guest Writer



Jerusalem, he recalled that nearby there was a police station, which had two pillars outside the entrance and each one was attopped with a statue of a lion.

One day, their Rebbe told them, that if those metallic lions would hear music - they would get up and dance! The boys stared at the Rebbe. This made no sense - but the Rebbe was insistent and the boys decided to take him up on his word.

As soon as the day was over, the class, as one, ran home and collected an assortment of musical instruments and rushed to play their music in front of the lion statues.

They played the keyboard, flute, recorder, clarinet and even a set of drums, but the metallic lions were impassive. They didn't flinch or turn a hair.

The boys were disappointed and couldn't wait to go to Cheder the next day and question their Rebbe on what he had promised. When they put their complaints forward the next morning - the clever Rebbe smiled. He assured them, that he was absolutely correct. If the lions would have heard the music - they would

have danced - but although the class produced a merry band, the lions didn't hear anything.

Just because the boys waved their batons and produced the sounds and strains of cheerful music, isn't a guarantee that those nearby can hear it. One made of metal - doesn't hear anything at all. Similarly - the entire world heard of Kriyat Yam Suf, yet - majority were stoic and impassive, not turning hair, like metal statues. The miracle was played out in front of them but they heard nought.

Yitro heard.

He came.

The Alter of Slabodka once had chance to rebuke a student in his Yeshiva over a particular middoh which needed correcting.

Several days later, the Alter approached his Talmid again and repeated his previous message in a similar manner. The boy looked at his Rebbe in surprise and wondered why he was being told this again. He exclaimed that he had already heard the message a few days previously.

The Alter smiled and explained that this reminded him of a scenario where a man was standing in the middle of a busy main

road and holding up the flow of the traffic.

The cars started to blow their horns in frustration and the gentleman smiled and waved back but remained fixed to his spot, oblivious to the exasperation of the traffic. Clearly unmoved by their horns which were now blowing angry impatient sounds, a car driver jumped out and shouted at him as to why he was ignoring the cars and buses.

Patiently, he explained that he wasn't ignoring anything at all - he could hear everything...

With no other option, several men bodily lifted him off the main road. Indeed he had heard - but hadn't moved.

What is the point in hearing, witnessing and seeing the Yad Hashem?

Vayishma.

Yitro heard.

And he came.

When we witness miracles - do we simply hear and remain glued to our spot?

Where do we put ourselves?

1. What percentage of the Jewish People died during the plague of darkness?

13:18 - Eighty percent (four-fifths).

2. Why did the oath that Yosef administered to his brothers apply to Moshe's generation?

13:19 - Yosef made his brothers swear that they would make their children swear.

3. Why did the Egyptians want to pursue the Jewish People?

14:5 - To regain their wealth.

4. Where did the Egyptians get animals to pull their chariots?

14:7 - From those Egyptians who feared the word



of G-d and kept their animals inside during the plagues.

5. What does it mean that the Jewish People "took hold of their fathers' craft" (*tafsu umnut avotam*)?

14:10 - They cried out to G-d.

6. How did G-d cause the wheels of the Egyptian chariots to fall off?

14:25 - He melted them with fire.

7. Why were the dead Egyptians cast out of the sea?

14:30 - So that the Jewish People would see the destruction of the Egyptians and be assured of no further pursuit.

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8. To what future time is the verse hinting when it uses the future tense of "Then Moshe and Bnei Yisrael will sing"?

15:1 - Resurrection of the dead during the time of mashiach .

9. Why are the Egyptians compared to stone, lead, and straw?

15:5 - The wickedest ones floated like straw, dying slowly. The average ones suffered less,

sinking like stone. Those still more righteous sunk like lead, dying immediately.

10. The princes of Edom and Moav had nothing to fear from the Jewish People. Why, then, were they "confused and gripped with trembling"?

15:14 - They felt horrible seeing Israel in a state of glory.

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Rav Meir Simcha, as was the custom of many Rabbonim in Europe, had a Gabbai who was his personal assistant. The Gabbai would execute whatever task or errand Rav Meir Simcha asked him to execute. Today, such a position would be called "Chief of Staff". He executed the orders of the Rav.

After a certain shaila came to the attention of Rav Meir Simcha, he instructed his Gabbai regarding what to do. The Gabbai objected to what he was being asked to do and told Rav Meir Simcha that he did not agree with the Rav regarding this issue. Rav Meir Simcha told him, "You never agree with what I

have to say." The Gabbai was startled. The Gabbai said, "What do you mean I never agree with what you have to say? This is the first time that I ever disagreed with you!"

Rav Meir Simcha explained what he meant. "Why is it" he asked, "that you never objected before? It is because every other time you agreed with me. Therefore, you did what I said because you felt I was right. The first time you did not agree with what I had to say, you

told me so. That means that you never really agreed with me. The only reason you did what I said in the past was not because you nullified your will to what I have to say. You did it because you felt that it was the right thing to do. That is not the role of a Gabbai. The role of a Gabbai is not a sounding board who is supposed to give the Rav validation. The role of the Gabbai is that I am the Rav, you are the Gabbai. You do what I tell you to do."

Our Chachamim



MAZAL TOV TO -

- Guy Avital on the Brit of his son Idan Eliyahu (above)
- Josh and Sophie Feldman on their wedding (right)
- Shimon and Sarah Rothberg on the birth of a baby boy
- Adino and Daniella Ebrahimoff on the birth of a baby girl



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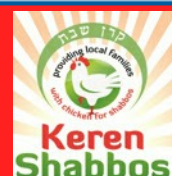


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