

הוא calls us הנבחר עם, Hashem chose us. But how is it that we were chosen to receive the torah? We had to work our way up. Starting from מצרים of טומאה, from the מצרים we had to build ourselves up gradually. Now we all are familiar with the famous מדרש that כלל ישראל was sleeping. This is referred to in שיר השירים. They went to sleep that night, and then כביכול הוא, הקדוש ברוך הוא, had to wake them up to receive the torah. What's the message that we should learn from this?

R' Elimelech Biderman brings in his sefer a unique interpretation from the ערוגת הבושם. He says that כלל ישראל didn't stay up all night then. They didn't prepare themselves that particular night. Instead, they were woken up with great hustle and bustle, and they had to come and receive the torah before they had time to arrange themselves or prepare properly. That's a message for us, for the דורות. No matter our circumstances, no matter how many difficulties or challenges we may face, we each have the ability to learn the torah and to accept the torah, even if we're not completely ready. Yes, we have to work on it. We have to work on ourselves. But it's no קונץ to receive the torah when everything is peaceful, quiet, and when we're fully prepared. The קונץ, the real trick, the greatest feat - is to receive the torah when it's difficult, when it's hard, when we're not ready. That's an interesting take on that story about how they had to be awoken by הקדוש ברוך הוא, and we got the message. Everybody, or many people, stay up the night of שבועות to learn, to make up for that deficit. And the fact is, we've been trying to make up for that night all these years, because each and every year we receive the torah anew for ourselves.

Another interesting point that R' Elimelech Biderman brings down is Why is it that מתן תורה appears specifically in יתרו? Because יתרו himself rose up from עבודה זרה. He elevated himself and became part of כלל ישראל, part of השם עם.

Chazal tell us in בבא בתרא that if someone sells a piece of land to someone else and there's no access road to it, there's a מחלוקת whether the sale includes the road to access it. That's in the case of a sale. But if it was given as a gift, there's a famous principle: הנותן בעין יפה נותן - Someone who gives a gift does so generously. The חידושי הרי"ם says that a gift includes not just the object you receive, but everything necessary to enjoy it fully. The תורה, he explains, is the ultimate gift. So of course, it comes with the access road.

Every single Yid, every person, is given the strength and the ability to approach the תורה, says the חידושי הרי"ם. All we need to do is get on the road and begin walking. We can achieve what we might think is difficult or even unattainable. But if we put our minds to it, we too will be able to accept the תורה. And not just accept it, but accept it happily. בעזרת השם, in the זכות of this יום טוב and the זכות of our עלטערן, may we be successful in doing just that. גילו ברעדה, we should feel the שמחה, and we should understand how wondrous this יום טוב of מתן תורה is, and how us being the הנבחר עם separates us from all the גוים in the entire world.

