



שמע קולנו

“יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו”



Parshas Yisro

פרשת יתרו

A Direct Confrontation

Emmet Weisz ('22)

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One of the most interesting parts of this week's *parsha* is the Israelites' reaction to receiving the Ten Commandments. After witnessing this powerful experience, they came to Moshe and told him, "You speak with us, and we will hear. Let God not speak with us, lest we die" (*Shemos* 20:16). In *Devarim* 5:25 we learn that God approved of what they said. Moshe reassured the people, telling them not to fear because God had come to test them and so that they would fear God and not sin. From then on, *Hashem* no longer spoke to the people directly, and they relied on Moshe and other prophets. This conversation raises several questions: Why did *Hashem* approve of the people's desire not to hear from God directly? If it was so important to give the Ten Commandments directly to the entire nation, why would God agree to let Moshe be an intermediary? And why would Moshe tell the people not to fear if the point was for the fear of God to be on their faces?

To attempt to answer these questions, we first need to look more closely at what God told Moshe in *Devarim*:

"שמעתי את קול דברי העם הזה אשר דברו אליך היטיבו כל אשר דברו: מי יתן ויהי לבבם זה להם לראות אתי ולשמר את כל מצותי כל הימים למען יטב להם ולבני העם לעלם" (דברים ה'כ"ו-כ"ז):

"...I have heard the words of this nation who have spoken to you; everything they have spoken is good. I wish (lit. who will give) their heart would always be so, to fear me and keep my commandments, so that it would be good for them forever."

The *Kli Yakar* and others explain that Moshe thought the people were distancing themselves from God because of a lack of love, but *Hashem* responded that they were doing so because of a presence of fear. One might think that God would now repeat the experience of appearing to the nation –

clearly it worked at instilling fear! However, God says "I wish" they would always fear Me, rather than forcing them to. The Ramban points out that the *Gemara's* dictum "all is in the hands of Heaven save for the fear of Heaven" means that God does not force people to have *yiras shamayim*. Additional scary experiences would not serve the ultimate objective of each person having an internal motivation to follow *Hashem*. This also explains what Moshe meant when he told the people not to fear. He wasn't saying they shouldn't have *yiras shamayim*, but there was no need for them to be terrified of dying. They would have to maintain their *yiras shamayim* on their own.

Now that God no longer spoke directly to the people, they needed leaders to instruct them what to do. They needed to be able to trust in their leaders and listen to what they said. At first, having Moshe as their teacher reassured them. However, when Moshe ascended the mountain, he left Aharon and Chur in charge. The people therefore decided to create the Golden Calf instead, as a replacement of Moshe. Even hearing a direct command from God was not enough to stop them from committing idolatry. They needed to build up more trust in Aharon and Chur.

This explanation clarifies the interaction between God, Moshe, and the Israelites after the Ten Commandments, but it raises the opposite question: Given that externally provoked fear generally has little value, why did God appear to the entire nation in the first place? The fear it provoked certainly did not prevent the sin of the Golden Calf and many other sins the nation committed in the desert. The first reason Moshe gave, "לבעבור נסות אתכם", can be translated as "in order to test you [the Israelites]," but Rashi gives a different explanation. He says that the word *nasos* comes from *neis*, meaning banner. By speaking directly to the whole nation, *Hashem* raised their reputation in the

world like a banner. They would be known as the people with a special connection with God. Although they did not always live up to their reputation, they could look back at *maamad Har Sinai* and realize their potential for greatness. Although we sometimes make mistakes, may we remember our high spiritual level at *Har Sinai* and always strive to improve.

Aristotle was a Jew? and The Right Way To Spend Shabbos *Meir Morell ('22)*

The *Me'am Loez*, authored by Rabbi Yaakov Culi (1682-1732), on the *possuk* in *Shemos* 19:17 (page 512 in the Jerusalem 5729 edition) brings down a fascinating letter that was sent by Aristotle in his old age, to his famous student Alexander the Great:

"Blessed is God, that opens the eyes of the blind, that shows the sinners the straight path. He is exalted with praises that are worthy of Him – For I do not know how to praise Him upon all of the mercy and great kindness that he bestowed upon me.

That he took me out of this foolishness that I was immersed in all the days of my life in dealing with the wisdom of philosophy to explain everything according to nature – that's understood through rationalization.

And I wrote many books on this wisdom – like the sand that is on the banks of the sea. Until I was rebuked now by the later part of my life with one sage from the sages of the Jews. And in his speaking to me, he demonstrat-

A SHORT VORT

Akiva Zra ('21)

ועתה אם-שמעו תשמעו בקלי'."

"Now, therefore, if you will indeed listen to My voice." (*Shemos* 19:5)

The *Shem MiShmuel* asks, why was it only at this point before *Har Sinai* that *Hashem* tells the Jews to listen to his commandments? Why couldn't he command them to listen any earlier?

The answer is that it was only at this point in time, the receiving of the *Torah*, that the Jews were completely free of their physical and mental enslavement from the Egyptians. *Hashem* waited because dependence on others doesn't allow for complete faith in Him.

In the *Talmud Yerushalmi* it says that if there is a Canani slave, he is exempt from *Krias Shema*. This is because as long as the slave is under the yoke of another master, they cannot fully accept the "yoke of the kingdom of Heaven."

We too, nowadays, need to think about this. We need to make sure we are not completely dependent on others or things that have no connection to *Hashem*. It is not by chance that the first *berachah* with a request in *Shemoneh Esrei* talks about knowledge and understanding - before coming to a relationship with *Hashem*, we must be fully in control of our own mind and mental faculties.

May we all be able to fully accept the "yoke of the kingdom of Heaven" and connect to *Hashem* in the greatest of ways.

ed his tremendous wisdom. And I recognized the high virtue of the holy *Torah* that was given at Mount Sinai. And he drew my heart with the words of the *Torah* that showed me and explained to me true novelties and wonders that were done [by *Hashem*]. And I was uncivilized since I did not understand that most of the things that are driven by the Holy One Blessed be He in a wondrous manner that's external to the way of nature.

And from the time that I saw this – I took to heart to expound and to investigate the wisdom of the *Torah*. For all of its words are founded on foundations of truths, and it is not like the wisdom of philosophy that is vanity.

And therefore, you my student – Alexander the great king – Do not push my works [for people to learn them]– not you and not my fellow philosophers. For if it was in my hands to gather all of the books that I authored using this wisdom, surely I would burn them with fire in order that they would not remain any part of them. However, this matter is not in my hands, for my books are spread throughout the world and it's impossible to gather them all. And I know well of the harsh punishment that my Creator will punish me for this great sin that I transgressed. That I lost my time with my own hands and that I caused the multitude to sin.

Therefore, my son Alexander, I wrote this letter in order to inform you, you and all of your fellows – that most of the things that people want to explain in the way of nature in order that they will be understood by the intellect are matters of falsehood. For surely, the Holy One Blessed be He, He is the Solution to the world and He leads it with great force.

And because of my fate that caused my books to be spread throughout the western lands – I hereby inform on all of them – that one should not waste his time with them. Do not look at them and do not touch them with your hands. For it is a great sin to waste time on my books of philosophy – for it is a lie that has no legs [to stand upon].

And now I have saved my soul with this that I proclaimed my error and my guilt – it [the Law of the Torah's punishment] is not as stringent upon me for the past [faults of mine] for I didn't know.

However now that I revealed this matter to the creatures – that I lived in error and my heart burns for the time that I had destroyed with vanities. Woe is to those that their hearts continue [to follow] after my books. Surely under them will be the grave.

And know that according to what that same Sage taught me – I found many matters in the book of proverbs that King Shlomo authored that a person should not be drawn after the wisdom of philosophy in his saying to "Guard yourself from a strange woman from a foreign female whose words are smooth." (*Mishlei* 7:5)

Woe to the eyes that thus they see. Woe to the ears that they thus is what they hear. Woe is to me that I destroyed my body and my strength – for these damaging matters. And this that you praise me by saying that my fame has spread throughout the world because of the books that I made. And they admire me with great admiration. Surely death is better than this – that my books are spread throughout the world. Surely those that are diligent in the *Torah* will inherit [eternal] life in the world to come.

5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

וְיָהִי מִמָּחֳרַת וַיָּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה לְשֹׁפֵט אֶת-הָעָם וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעָם
עַל-מֹשֶׁה מִן-הַבֹּקֶר עַד-הָעֶרֶב:

"And it was the next day, and Moshe was sitting to judge the people; and the people stood before Moshe from morning to evening"

Q. The *halacha* is that if three judges are judging a case and err, they are obligated to pay back the *ba'al din* (litigant) who suffered a loss when their mistake is revealed. However, if only two of the judges erred, while the third judge actually gave the correct ruling, when the mistake is revealed, the first two judges each pay a third of the money, and the third judge does not need to pay anything; the *ba'al din* absorbs the loss of the last third of the money. The *Ketzos Hachoshen* (25:12) asks on this *din* based on the principle espoused by Rabbi Nosson (*Bava Kamma* 53a), that in a case where an ox shoved another ox into a pit, the owner of the damaging ox pays for half the damage, and the owner of the pit pays for half the damage. This is because even though the pit would not have been an issue if the ox had not been pushed, since we cannot obligate the owner of the first ox to pay more than half, we assume that the other damaging party must collect, since "wherever we cannot collect from this one (ie. the owner of the ox), we collect from this one (ie. the owner of the pit)". Presumably, the same principle should apply here: since we cannot collect from the third judge, since he did nothing wrong, we should collect the remaining third from the first two judges! Why is this case different that this rule should not apply?

A. In the case of the ox, there are two parties who are considered responsible for the damage, the owner of the ox and the owner of the pit. Therefore, we calculate how much each of them needs to pay for the full amount to be compensated. However, when two judges overrule one judge, the minority is considered to be not a part of the case at all; in the language of some *acharonim*, he is "*batel birov*" nullified to the majority opinion (see *Chiddushei HaGrach* to *Perek Hamaniach*). In other words, it is as if a *beis din* of two members decided the case. Thus, it is not that the third judge who ruled correctly is exempt from his third of the payment; he is completely out of the discussion in this case! Therefore, his third of the payment is not rebounded onto the other two judges, and the two mistaken judges must only pay a third of the value each.

- Source: Source: *Mishmeres Chayim Chelek I*, "Inyanei Dinim" 2

And those that deal with my books will inherit *gehenom*. And even I am prepared to be punished for them all. And the reason why I did not write you this letter before now, for I suspected that you would be angry at me and you would do evil to me. However, now, I decided to say, to inform you of this. For I know that before this letter of mine will arrive in your hand I will have already been placed in a coffin of wood – for I reached the end of my days.

And Peace from the Teacher Aristotle – that separates from [life in] the world – to Alexander the great king of Greece.”

Now, one can definitely argue about the authenticity of this letter, and there is much discussion one could find in their own research, but the potent moral the *Me'am Loez* learns from this letter is extremely valuable whether or not it's this letter was authentic.

The *Me'am Loez* continues: “Anyone who reads this letter written by the philosopher [Aristotle] himself, should learn not to waste time, and specifically on the holy *Shabbos*, since there is a special sin when someone wastes time on emptiness when they could learn, if they are capable. And for someone who is a total *am ha'aretz*, they should go to shul and listen to the *drasha* of a wise man. And this is why *Torah* was given on *Shabbos*, because the main learning of *Torah* is on *Shabbos*, because on *Shabbos* one must learn more than they learn during the week, because it is a day of tranquility when one isn't busy with anything. (This is the reason that the *Me'am Loez* brings down this story here, because *Shemos* 19:17 is when Moshe is about to go up the mountain) And we find that anyone who isn't involved in *Torah*, and is immersed in hearing riddles and reading stories, is 'desecrating' *Shabbos* and his punishment will be great. And this is like what we say in the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Shabbos* day: 'Moshe was happy in the portion he was given'. This is to say that Moshe was happy on *Shabbos* because this was the day that the *Torah* was given. It is also worthwhile to learn *Torah* on *Shabbos* because it is a day of light on which blessing rests. Like it says in *Parshas Bereishis*: 'And God blessed the seventh day'. From here we see that there needs to be preparation for *Shabbos*, because on *Shabbos* blessings descend to the world. And there is no greater blessing than *Torah*, because that is how we survive and that is how one acquires their world (the world to come), and there would have been no better day for the giving of the *Torah* than *Shabbos*. And so too it was said in the *Gemara* that '*Shabbos* was only given to the Jews so they could be involved in *Torah*'”.

Why the All?

Rafi Weil ('22)

The *possuk* (*Shemos* 20:1) introducing the *Aseres HaDibros* states *Vayidaber Elokim es kol hadevarim ha'eleh leimor* - God spoke all of these words saying. Why is the word *kol* (all) present in this *possuk*? The *Torah* could have simply stated that *Hashem* spoke “these words”; what did it add by saying “all these words”? To answer this question,

Rashi (quoting a *Mechilta*) says that “*kol*” is teaching us that the *Aseres HaDibros* were stated in one utterance. *Hashem* spoke all ten of them at once. The *Torah* then proceeds to enumerate each commandment on its own, because humans are not capable of understanding all ten statements jumbled together at one time. To give an analogy, it's like when you are having a conversation with a bunch of friends and all of a sudden everyone starts talking to you. There is no way to hear everyone's individual statement.

While this answer explains the use of the word “*kol*”, it raises another perplexing question. What is the point of saying all of the commandments at once? If *Hashem* would have to repeat them one at a time so that the Jews could understand them, why start off with an incomprehensible blur? The Rav, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, gives a beautiful answer to this puzzling question. He says that the point of first speaking the commandments all at once is to teach a lesson. As Jews, we can't pick and choose. Judaism was set up in a way in which we listen and adhere to *Hashem's* commandments that He established for us. All of them. They only work when they are a package deal. Even though the *Aseres Hadibros* were divided into *bein adam lamakom* commandments and *bein adam lechavero* commandments, we are obligated to follow all of the commandments as if they were one complete unit. We can't decide that we are going to be very focused on our *avodas Hashem*, but then treat our fellow classmates with disrespect. On the other hand, we can't be the nicest, kindest person in the world, but be lax about our *Torah* learning and *davening*.

The significance of the word “*kol*” and viewing these commandments as one unit instead of ten separate ideas, is to show that we must strive for completeness. As Jews, our responsibility is to adhere to the system of *Torah* in its entirety. Our devotion to *Hashem* includes the way we treat others, and our sense of morality must be guided by *Hashem's* standards.

Always Be Active

Yaakov Weinstock ('22)

For one to take on a large undertaking or challenge, one must be inspired to take on the task. For some, the inspiration can be a story or speech they heard. For others, it's a role model that they look up to and are inspired to mimic and follow. In this week's *parsha*, we are told what Yisro's inspiration was to join *Bnei Yisroel* in the desert. The first *possuk* in the *parsha* writes “*va'yishma Yisro kohein Midyan chosen Moshe es kol asher asah Elokim liMoshe uliYisroel amo*”- and Yisro, the priest of *Midyan*, the father in-law of Moshe, heard all that *Hashem* did for Moshe and the Jewish People. Rashi specifies that Yisro heard about *Kriyas Yam Suf* and *Milchemes Amalek*. However, why did Rashi feel the need to write that Yisro heard of these events specifically, and why were both needed? Wasn't hearing about the sea splitting for *Bnei Yisroel* enough on its own to inspire someone to join the Jewish people? In fact, the *Mechilta* presents these two ideas as conflicting: Rebbi Yehoshua says that he heard only about Amalek,

and Rebbi Eliezer holds that he heard of *Kriyas Yam Suf*. What was Rashi's goal by combining these two seemingly arguing opinions?

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that there is an entire back-story with Yisro before joining *Bnei Yisroel*, which was a two step process. The news of *Kriyas Yam Suf* was heard all around the globe. The event caused everyone to realize that *Hashem* punishes people *middah kineged middah*. Just like the Egyptians murdered the Jewish baby boys by throwing them into the water, the Egyptians themselves were destroyed through water. When Yisro understood the magnitude of the event, he began to think that he wasn't completely innocent in the slavery of the Jews. The Midrash says that Pharaoh had three advisers: Bilaam, Iyov, and Yisro. When Pharaoh came up with the plan against the Jews, Yisro ran away from Pharaoh and went to Midyan. Looking back, Yisro thought that he should've stayed and tried to convince Pharaoh otherwise instead of running away from the situation. He potentially could have prevented the terrible affliction that was placed on the Jews in Egypt if he stayed. Therefore, he made up his mind to do *teshuvah*. He formatted his *teshuvah* that just like he sinned in a passive way, by ignoring the suffering of the Jews, so too he would repent in a passive manner, and only give helpful advice to *Bnei Yisroel* when they invited him to come. He learned the concept of *middah kineged middah*, and just like his mistake was done through being passive, so too he would do *teshuvah* in a passive manner. Then, he saw the war against Amalek. The Midrash says that Amalek traveled four hundred *parsaos* (about 350 miles) to fight *Bnei Yisroel*. When Yisro saw the immense effort that Amalek was using to attack *Bnei Yisroel*, he made a *kal vichomer* that if these people, who are coming to attack *Bnei Yisroel*, were willing to put in so much effort, all the more so he, who was trying to help *Bnei Yisroel*, should expend effort and be more active. After seeing this, he decided to travel himself and join *Bnei Yisroel* in the desert to help them. Therefore, Rashi quoted both of these events, because the events together represent a transformation. Yisro went through from being a passive person to a more active person, which motivated him to join *Bnei Yisroel*.

There is still the issue of the *Mechilta* itself, which presents these two ideas as separate and arguing opinions. I would like to suggest that really, both opinions understand the story of how Yisro ended up with *Bnei Yisroel* as the *Chasam Sofer* does. However, they argue on which event was more significant in terms of causing Yisro to join *Bnei Yisroel*. According to Rebbi Yehoshua, who holds that Yisro heard specifically about Amalek, he believed that the key moment was hearing about the war, and hearing about *Kriyas Yam Suf* was just the prelude that allowed Yisro to have that transformative moment at *Milchemes Amalek*. However, Rebbi Eliezer disagrees, that even though *Milchemes Amalek* was the transformative moment that inspired Yisro to be active and go join *Bnei Yisroel*, *Milchemes Amalek* wouldn't have been able to have that effect on him if not for the foundation that hearing about *Kriyas Yam Suf* built in Yisro. Therefore, the main event is Yisro hearing about the splitting of the sea.

No matter how one views the significance of each event,

Yisro's story, in totality, teaches us a crucial lesson in our *avodas Hashem*. Constant growth in *avodas Hashem* requires an active growth mindset. One must continually look for opportunities to grow, and grab those opportunities immediately upon seeing them. It requires this enthusiasm that Yisro gained at *Milchemes Amalek* to help us in achieving our full potential in our *avodas Hashem*, and may we all continue to grab every opportunity possible to grow as people.

Yisro's Unique Gratitude

Conatan Ganchrow ('19)

This week's *parsha* begins with Moshe's father-in-law, Yisro, hearing about all the good that *Hashem* did for *Klal Yisrael*. Yisro takes Moshe's wife and children, and heads to the desert to join the Jewish people. Upon arriving, Yisro says to Moshe בְּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הֲצִיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פָּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הֲצִיל אֶת הָעָם מִתַּחַת יַד מִצְרַיִם. This seems to be a beautiful moment for the Jewish people, with Yisro coming, recognizing *Hashem*'s kindness, and joining them. However, the *Mechilta* says something astonishing. The *Mechilta* says that this showed the disgrace of *Klal Yisroel*, that there were 600,000 people, and not one thanked *Hashem* before Yisro arrived and said "*Baruch Hashem*." The obvious question is: what does it mean that no one thanked *Hashem* before Yisro arrived? Just a *parsha* earlier, didn't all of *Klal Yisroel* sing a *shira* after *kriyas yam suf*?

I heard a beautiful answer from Rabbi Shalom Rosner in the name of the *Shemen Hatov*. The *Shemen Hatov* quotes the *Tiferes Shlomo* and explains that this isn't really the first time that anyone thanked *Hashem*. But what Yisro did, that no one had done before him, was thank *Hashem* for what he did for others. *Klal Yisroel* had been very thankful for what *Hashem* did for them, but that was because it benefited them. Yisro was grateful for what was done for the Jewish people, not for himself. Along similar lines, Rashi explains that the words " וַיִּשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל " mean that Yisro rejoiced, that he was so happy to hear about all that *Hashem* did for *Klal Yisrael*.

Rabbi Rosner explains that we can understand the *yesod* of "*vi'ahavta lireiacha kamocha*" from this. When we think about *vi'ahavta lireiacha kamocha* for a second, it's an incredibly challenging *mitzvah*. How can I love someone the way I love myself? That seems nearly impossible?! Explains the Ramban, *vi'ahavta lireiacha kamocha* is about feeling someone else's joy like it is your own and feeling their pain like it's your pain. This is a very high *madreigah* of *ahavas Yisroel* that is certainly not easy to reach, a level that we need to work hard to achieve.

There is a well-known story involving Rav Aryeh Levin zt"l. Rav Aryeh went with his wife to the doctor because she was having knee pain. When they arrived, the doctor asked what was wrong. Rav Aryeh famously replied "our

knee hurts.” A *tzaddik* feels someone else's pain like it is his own, and one's joy as if it were theirs. This isn't easy for us to feel. After all, it is very natural for us to care more about ourselves than others. But if we understand that the Jewish people are one family, one entity, and that our fellow Jews have a piece of *Hashem* inside of them the same way we do, it may be a little easier to obtain this *middah*. May we all learn from Yisro to develop a deep *ahavas Yisroel*, and to really feel for our brothers and sisters.

Vayehi Beshalach Pharaoh?

Aaron Sisser ('23)

Due to an error on the part of the editors, the following article was not included for publication in last week's issue. We are therefore including it here instead.

This week's *parsha*, *parshas Beshalach*, starts off with the word “*Vayehi*”, which means “and it was”. The opening *possuk* of the *parsha* states “וַיְהִי בִשְׁלַח פָּרֹעַ” – “and it was when Pharaoh sent out the nation.”

This *possuk* is establishing that the following events occurred after Pharaoh sent out the nation - the Jewish people - from bondage. At first glance, this all seems very ordinary, and nothing seems irregular in the *possuk*. However, we learn in *Maseches Megillah* (10b) that the word “*vayehi*” is typically used in a situation that is at least slightly unpleasant. The word has a negative connotation and often implies that something bad or at the minimum, not the best will soon happen. This, however, seems to contradict the sentiment that the *Torah* is bringing out by all of the following (and previous) events! The Jewish people were just released from slavery and exile in Egypt which they were tragically experiencing for over two centuries! These times are seemingly a joyous period and should be written in the *Torah* with language that has positive connotations. Why, then, does the *parsha* of *Shabbos Shirah*, the week of praise of *Hashem*, *parshas Beshalach*, start off with a word that is known to have a negative connotation?

The answer to this question lies in the fact that some of the Jewish people were unable to see the full picture at this time. Moshe, and sometimes Aaron as well, repeatedly went to Pharaoh on behalf of *Hashem* to try and attain the release of the Jewish people from bondage. However, Pharaoh did not listen to their pleas and did not free the enslaved nation. This only changed once *Hashem* performed many miracles and used His strength and power to free the Jewish people Himself. Unfortunately, some of the Jews failed to see *Hashem's* role in the matter and attributed their freedom to the kindness of the Egyptian Pharaoh. They were thanking Pharaoh for freeing them. The misguided gratitude of these Jews is shown in the first *possuk* of the *parsha*, where the *Torah* states “*Vayehi Beshalach Pharaoh Es Ha'am*”. The reason the word *Vayehi* is used - a word with a negative connotation - is to show how sad it was that some Jews thought “*Beshalach Pharaoh Es*

Ha'am” - that Pharaoh was the one who sent the Jews out of Egypt by his own kindness. These Jews were unable to realize that it was all from *Hashem* and that *Hashem* caused Pharaoh to free the Jews. *Hashem* was really the One who freed the Jews, and so the *possuk* should have stated “*Beshalach Hashem es Ha'am*”. However, the *possuk* states “*Beshalach Pharaoh Es Ha'am*”, and begins with the word *Vayehi* that has negative implications, to show that tragically there were still those attributing their freedom to Pharaoh's kindness and not to *Hashem's* kindness and greatness.

This explanation ties in nicely with another idea centered on the same few words of the same *possuk* at the beginning of *parshas Beshalach*. The *trope* - cantillation - of the first two words of *Beshalach* - “*Vayehi Beshalach*” - is a *revi'i* followed by a *munach*. The word *revi'i munach* can be translated to mean “four remain”. This trope alludes to what we learn in a Rashi about the ninth plague that *Hashem* struck Egypt with - the plague of darkness. Rashi states that *Hashem* did another thing during this darkness other than just punishing the Egyptians. There were also a group of Jews who did not want to leave Egypt, and thus *Hashem* deemed that they should be killed. However, *Hashem*, in His all-knowing wisdom, did not want the Egyptians to see that He was punishing the Jews as well. This is because if the Egyptians were able to see *Hashem* punishing these wicked Jews, the Egyptians might think that it was not a divine punishment at all, for both them and their enemies - the Jews - were being punished, while the Jews were claiming to be on the side of *Hashem*! Therefore, *Hashem* wanted to kill these wicked Jews secretly. So, during the plague of darkness, *Hashem* made it so that the Egyptians not only could not see but also could not move. It was during this time that *Hashem* killed these wicked Jews who did not want to leave Egypt, and the Egyptians were never able to notice that *Hashem* was punishing the Jews as well. Rashi goes further and states that it was an astounding four-fifths - 80% - of the Jewish people that were so evil that *Hashem* deemed them worthy of death rather than freedom from enslavement to the Egyptians. This understanding of four-fifths of the Jewish people not being a part of the freedom from slavery but rather being killed in Egypt connects well with the trope of the words “*Vayehi Beshalach*”. As previously, stated, the trope there - *revi'i munach* - can be translated to mean “four remain”. Combining this knowledge with Rashi's understanding of the ninth plague, we see that this trope can be understood as follows. The words “four remain” can mean the four-fifths of the Jewish people remained in Egypt! Four-fifths of the Jewish people were killed and remained in Egypt, while those Jews who were worthy were freed by *Hashem*. This corroborates Rashi's statement that four-fifths of the Jewish people were killed by *Hashem* for wanting to remain in Egypt.

We see that only a fifth of the Jewish people were still alive to be freed from Egypt when the time came, and of those, some still attributed their success not to *Hashem*, but to the kindness of Pharaoh. What then, can we learn from this? We can learn that however obvious it may be, we still have to show gratitude to those who help us and to do the right thing in general. Even though it is obvious to us that the Jewish people should have been longing to be

freed from their slavery in Egypt, and that once they were freed they should have attributed their success to the One who caused their freedom - *Hashem*, some Jews at this time were unable to do so. In conclusion, we must always be careful to try to show gratitude to the right people - and *Hashem* - and also always be careful to try to do the right thing, no matter how obvious the right thing to do may be.

Whether the correct course of action is exceedingly clear, or exceptionally inconspicuous, we should all always try to do the right thing whenever we can. May we all be *Zocheh* to always make the correct decisions, and hopefully, this will bring about the coming of *Mashiach*, *bimheirah biyameinu Amen!* Have a great *shabbos*!

GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: RAV YITZCHOK SCHEINER AND RAV MESHULAM DOVID SOLOVEITCHIK AND RAV DR. AVRAHAM TWERSKI

Meir Morell ('22)

This week we lost two of the great Israeli *Roshei Yeshiva* of our time, Rav Yitzchok Scheiner and Rav Meshulam Dovid Soloveitchik. The *Shulchan Aruch* writes in *Yoreh De'ah* 344: "The *mitzvah* of eulogizing the deceased is supposed to inspire people to cry over the deceased, by way of humbling and sad words which recount the praises of the deceased". Hopefully, recounting the lives of these *gedolim* will cause us to realize what we have lost.

Rabbi Meshulam Dovid Soloveitchik (1921-2021) was born to Rav Yitzchak Zev, the Brisker Rav, and Alte Hendel Soloveitchik, in Brisk, Lithuania. This made him the last living grandchild of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, acclaimed *Maggid Shiur* of the Volozhin *yeshiva* and the founder of the "Brisker *Derech Halimmud*" (way of learning). He was the fifth of twelve children. After the family managed to escape Europe and settle in *Eretz Yisroel* during the Holocaust, Reb Dovid learned under his father. He married Yehudis, the daughter of Rav Asher Sternbuch, of London.

Several years after the passing of his father, Rav Dovid founded his *yeshiva* in the Gush Shemonim section of the Givat Moshe neighborhood of Yerushalayim, based on the *Brisker derech* of his family. Thousands of *talmidim* learned under Rav Dovid, and many more saw him as their *Rebbi*. He even had *talmidim* who were grandsons of his cousin, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik ("The Rav"), such as Rav Yitzchok Lichtenstein, a *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Torah Vodaas*, and Rav Mosheh Twerksy HY"D, a *Rebbi* in *Yeshivas Toras Moshe*.

Rav Dovid was known for his brilliance, much like his father, grandfather, great grandfather, and the rest of his family. He was considered by Briskers to be one of the last authentic remnants of a pre-World War II Jewish Lithuania, and was often quoted for his memories of his father's and grandfather's lives and teachings.

Rav Dovid never wrote any *seforim*, but his *talmidim* compiled his *Shiurim* into *Shiurei Rabbeinu Meshulam Dovid HaLevi on Nazir, Arachin*, and three volumes on *Zevachim*. Two volumes on *Torah* and *Drashos Mussar U'Tefilah* were also compiled and published.

He passed away on *Motzaei Shabbos*, 18 Shevat 5781, from COVID-19 complications at the age of 99, after being in and out of the hospital for a few months. He died surrounded by family and *talmidim*, praying for his survival and later saying *vidui* with him. He was buried beside the Brisker Rav on *Har Hamenuchos*. It was announced at the funeral that in accordance with his wishes, his oldest son, Rabbi Velvel (Yitzchok Zev) Soloveitchik will succeed his father as *Rosh Yeshiva*.

Rav Dovid is survived by his wife, Rebbetzin Yehudis, his sons Rav Yitzchak Zev and Rav Asher, and daughter Hendel, who is married to Rav Nechemia Kaplan, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Shaar HaTalmud*.

Rabbi Yitzchok Scheiner (1922-2021) was born in New York to Rav Dov and



(Photo Caption: Rabbi Dovid Soloveitchik (left) and Rabbi Yitzchok Scheiner (right)).

Perl Scheiner, two Polish immigrants.

During the 1940s, he studied at RIETS under Rav Moshe Aharon Poleyoff, and at *Yeshiva Torah Vodaas* under Rabbi Shlomo Heiman. Toward the end of the 1940s, he married Esther Leah, the daughter of Harav Moshe Bernstein, the son-in-law of Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Kamenitz* in Belarus. Rav Bernstein served as a *maggid shiur* in the original *Yeshivas Kamenitz*, and later founded *Yeshivas Kamenitz* in Yerushalayim.

After his marriage, Rav Scheiner continued to learn at *Torah Vodaas*, where he was considered an outstanding *gaon* (genius) and the pride of the *yeshiva*. When his father-in-law immigrated to *Eretz Yisroel* to establish the *Kamenitz Yeshiva* in the 1960s, Rav Scheiner moved to serve as *maggid shiur* at the *yeshiva* of Montreux in Switzerland.

After the passing of his father-in-law, Rav Scheiner headed the *yeshiva* in Yerushalayim alongside his brother-in-law, Rav Asher Lichtenstein. Following the passing of his brother-in-law in 1998 and later his cousin Rav Chaim Shlomo Leibowitz in 2016, Rav Scheiner served as the central *Rosh Yeshiva*, with his brother-in-law's son at his side.

In 2003, he was appointed to serve as a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* of *Degel HaTorah*. Rav Scheiner's wife passed away in 2007, but he continued to live in the same home in the Kerem Avraham neighborhood in Yerushalayim.

He passed away on 18 Shevat 5781, after suffering from COVID-19 for a few weeks after receiving the first dose of the vaccine, during the funeral of Rav Dovid Soloveitchik. He is survived by two sons, Rav Avraham and Rav Simcha, and one daughter who is the wife of Rav Yaakov Kraus, all of whom are *Rabbeim* in Kamenetz.

A few hours after the writing of this article, *Klal Yisroel* found out about another giant who was lost to this terrible disease, *Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel Twerski*.

Rabbi Dr Abraham J. Twerski (1930-2021) was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Rav Yaakov Yisroel, the Hornosteipeler Rebbe, and Devorah Leah Twerski. He was a scion of the Chernobyl dynasty and a grandson of the second Bobover Rebbe. Rabbi Twerski was the third of five brothers. His two older brothers were Shloime and Motel, and his two younger brothers were twins, Aaron and Michel. He was known for his brilliance in both Jewish and secular studies. He attended public high school in Milwaukee, and graduated at age 16. He enrolled in the Hebrew Theological College of Chicago (now located in Skokie, Illinois), and was ordained a rabbi in 1951. Rabbi Moshe Kessler recalls that when he was a 13-year-old in 1952, Rabbi Twerski, then in his early 20's and a fellow student at *Bobover Yeshiva* on the West Side, paid Kessler to test him on *Pri Megadim* – which Rav Twerski would recite by heart, both backward and forward. In 1952, he married Goldie Flusberg. In 1953, Rav Twerski enrolled at Milwaukee's Marquette University, and subsequently graduated from its medical school in 1960. He received his psychiatric training at the University of Pittsburgh, and spent an additional two years on the staff of a state hospital in Pennsylvania. He was then asked to become the head of the department of psychiatry at Pittsburgh's St. Francis Hospital.

He was the assistant leader of Congregation Beth Jehudah with his father from when he received his *semicha* until 1959. During this time, he composed a melody for the Hebrew verse Psalms 28:9 "*Hoshiyah es amecha*", which became ubiquitous in Jewish circles.

Rav Twerski's medical career included the Gateway Rehabilitation Center, Pittsburgh, which he founded and served as medical director emeritus, clinical director of the Department of Psychiatry at St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine, and founder of the *Shaar Hatikvah* rehabilitation center for prisoners in Israel.

Rav Twerski's clinical career specialized in addiction, and much of his popular writing concerns self-improvement and ethical behavior. He merged the *Mus-sar* and morality movement with the Twelve-Step Program, blending these concepts with ideas from clinical psychology.

Rav Twerski retired from full-time work in 1995, and then moved to Monsey, New York, where his second wife Gail was from. After about ten years in Monsey, they moved to Teaneck, New Jersey. Rav Twerski finally moved to Israel with his wife, and called for his fellow Jews to do the same.

His brothers are Aaron Twerski, the Irwin and Jill Cohen Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School, as well as a former Dean and Professor of tort Law at Hofstra University Law School; Rabbi Michel Twerski, the Hornosteipeler Rebbe of Milwaukee; the late Shloime Twerski, the previous Hornosteipeler Rebbe of Denver; and the late Rav Mordechai Dov Ber Twerski of New York.



Rav Twerski authored over 60 books on Judaism and self-help topics, including several books with Charles M. Schulz's Peanuts comic strips used to illustrate human interaction and behavior.

He died on 18 Shevat 5781, after contracting COVID-19 the week before and being hospitalized in a hospital in *Eretz Yisroel*. He was 90 at the time of his passing. He insisted multiple times that there be no eulogies at his funeral, and instead asked that his song "*Hoshiyah es amecha*" be sung while his coffin was being escorted. The moment was incredibly moving for those who were present or participating on livestream.

Rabbi Twerski is survived by his second wife, Gail; brothers Rabbis Michel and Aaron; three sons, and one daughter.

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

"בילע המוות לנצח, ומחה ה' אד-ני דמעה מעל כל-פנים וחרפת עמו, יסיר מעל כל-הארץ כי ה' דיבר" (ישעיה, כ"ה:ח)

ECHOES IN TANACH

Arveh Klein ('22) & Avidan Loike ('22)

אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׁא אֶתְכֶם עַל-כְּנָפֵי נְשָׁרִים וְאָבֹא אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי: - *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me."* (Shemos 19:2)

כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעִיר קֶנוּ עַל-גּוֹזְלָיו וְרָחַף יִפְרֹשׁ כְּנָפָיו יִקְחֵהוּ יִשְׁאַהוּ עַל-אַבְרָתּוֹ: - *"Like an eagle who rouses his nestlings, Gliding down to his young, So did He spread His wings and take him, Bear him along on His pinions,"* (Devarim 32:11)

In both of these *pesukim*, the first from *Yisro* and the second from *Ha'azinu*, God is compared to a "*nesher*" (a strong/powerful bird- there is a *machlokes* about what bird the word *nesher* actually refers to, either an eagle or a griffon vulture). What is this strange comparison made between God and a *nesher*, and why is it used in these two places?

Rashi says that the reason the *posuk* compares God to a *nesher* is because a *nesher* is very merciful upon its young. This is echoed in the fact that the *nesher* doesn't enter its nest until it flaps its wings and shakes its nest with its wings to wake up the baby birds, so that they will not be scared.

Rabbienu Bachya says that there are two main reasons God is compared to a *nesher*. The first is because the *nesher* is the king of all the birds, as it is the mightiest bird, just like God is king of the world. The second reason is that just like the *nesher* carries its young on its wing, so too God carries us, the Jewish People, on His "wing". This idea reflects the fact that God takes care of us, the same way the *nesher* protects its young.

The *Malbim*, quoting the *Torah Ohr*, notes that just like a *nesher* is careful to protect its young night and day, so too God always protects the Jews, during both night and day.

Why is God referred to as a *nesher* in both *Parshas Yisro* and *Ha'azinu*?

In *Yisro*, when the Jewish people are about to receive the *Torah*, they are at their highest point. This use of the word *nesher* is a promise to the Jews that God will take care of them forever. This lesson is again echoed in *Ha'azinu*, near the end of Moshe's life; when the Jews are probably distressed about Moshe being close to death (as Moshe had been the main leader of the Jewish people, second only to God). The use of the word *nesher* in Scripture is a reminder for the Jewish people that *Ha-shem* will always be there for us, in our time of need.

CHUMASH B'YUN

What Is the Superfluous Phrase?

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

One need not proceed too far into the *perek* of *Matan Torah* (*Shemos* 19) before encountering a verse that strikes us as quite repetitive.

"In the third month of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai. And they journeyed from Refidim and arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai and they encamped in the Wilderness; And Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain." (*Shemos* 19:1-2)

Two questions are inescapable. First, the arrival in *midbar Sinai* is mentioned twice, in both the first and second *possuk*. Second, why is Refidim the place they came from mentioned at all? We were already told this in the previous *parsha*, "And the entire assembly of the children of Israel journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin to their journeys, according to the word of *Hashem*, They encamped in Refidim . . ." (*Shemos* 17:1) And if there is a need to restate it, why is it written in the second *possuk* after the congregation has already arrived?

Rashi deals with a few of these questions. How many of them is a matter of some controversy. In fact, this is one of those cases where Rashi alters a few words of the *Mechilta* which he seems to be citing in order to create a very different *kashya* than the Midrashic one.

In the *Mechilta* (and although there are two *Mechilta*, that of R. Yishmael and of R. Simon, the questions posed is essentially the same in both, albeit with several seemingly significant textual variants) we read:

" 'They journeyed from Refidim and they arrived in the Wilderness of Sinai. . . ' Why do we need this? Isn't it already explained their journeys and their campings in the Wilderness of Sinai? (The reference here is to *Bamidbar* 33, where all of *Klal Yisroel's* journeys are listed.) Why then does it state 'They journeyed from Refidim and they arrived in the Wilderness of Sinai'? Rather, it equates their journey from Refidim to their arrival in the Wilderness of Sinai. Just as with their journey from Refidim they were testers and quarrelers, [as they said] 'Is the L-rd present among us or not?' (*Shemos* 17:7), likewise with their camping in the Wilderness they tested and quarreled, 'Is the L-rd present among us or not?' This to inform you of the power of repentance, because in a very short while when they performed repentance they were immediately accepted." (*Mechilta d'R. Shimon* 48:2)

Let us now turn to the *Mechilta* of R. Yishmael. Here we find a longer version. We will then attempt to see which, if either, Rashi is following. I will omit the citing of the *possuk* and the question, which are completely identical to the other *Mechilta*. Past this point, though, the text diverges: "it is to declare that their departure from Refidim was like their coming into the Wilderness of Sinai. Just as their coming into the Wilderness of Sinai was with repentance, so also was their departure from Refidim with repentance. Another interpretation: It declares that their coming into the Wilderness of Sinai was like their departure from Refidim, that just as when they departed from Refidim they had provoked G-d, and yet when after a little while they repented, they were also favorably received by Him." (*Mechilta D'R. Yishmael Yisro Chodesh* 19: 2)

Rashi writes as follows: "Why did the *Torah* need to go back and specify from where they had come? Did it not already write that they were encamped in Refidim? It is clear that they had journeyed from there. But this is to liken the journey from Refidim to their coming to the Wilderness of Sinai. Just as their coming to Sinai was in a state of repentance, so too their journey from Refidim was in a state of repentance."

The first area where Rashi diverges from both *Mechiltas* is in the question he asked. Rashi sees the second *possuk's* mention of Sinai as needless, because the first *possuk* already tells us where they were. Alternatively, he is referring to the mention of their being in Refidim as is stated above in *Perek* 17. In either event, this is not what is asked in both *Mechiltas*, who see our mention of Refidim as superfluous because it is stated later in *Bamidbar*.

Why did Rashi create his own question? A possible answer may be found in the *Yalkut Shimoni* (*Bamidbar Remez* 262) where we read the following as the question: "Does it not already say 'On that day they came to the Wilderness of Sinai?' ". According to the *Yalkut*, we are asking neither from the summary of travels in *Bamidbar* or from the earlier reference in 17: 1, but from the first *possuk* to the second. This solves the oddity of a *possuk* here being rendered superfluous due to a later mention of the same words. The words concerning Rashi are not in *Bamidbar*, but in the previous *possuk*.

If our current understanding is correct, then the many *Chumashim* citing the *Mechilta* as Rashi's source

are incorrect. Thus, according to our approach of seeing Rashi as only troubled by “Sinai” being mentioned twice, the question is one not two. The *Mechilta* wants to know why the entire *posuk* is needed. The *Yalkut* is only questioning the *Wilderness of Sinai*.

This may provide a means to answer the Ramban's question on Rashi here, which is as follows: “I don't understand this, for thus it is stated regarding all the journeys, They encamped in Elim, They journeyed from Elim and they arrived in the Wilderness of Sin.” He understands Rashi's question as based on the phrasing of journeying, as in the *Mechilta*, which is the same as in *Bamidbar*. Following the *Yalkut* that is not Rashi's question at all. See the Ramban for his alternative grasp of our *posukim*. (*Bamidbar* 19:1 – 2)

In fact, the *Mizrachi* sees validation of this fact in Rashi's language, “Why is it necessary to go back and specify. . .” This implies that we are not speaking of *pesukim* in *Bamidbar* or even to those in *Perek* 17, but to the mention of the “Wilderness of Sinai” in the preceding verse.

All would be well at this point if not the fact that Rashi clearly says the problem is, “Wasn't it already written that they were camped in Refidim?” This would seem to echo the *Mechilta* and not the *Yalkut* which is only concerned with an extra use of the “Wilderness of Sinai.” To this, we may respond that the superfluity is of the second use of Sinai. It is then explained by its juxtaposition with Refidim, but not the superfluity of Refidim

There are many more wonders of *Torah* in these *pesukim* here, concerning the nature of the “repentance”, as well as the *Ohr Hachaim* who has his own answer to the extra “Sinai.” But those subjects will have to wait for another day.

MUSSAR MOMENTS

Max Korenman ('22) and Avidan Loike ('22)

Within this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Yisro*, Yisro, Moshe's father-in-law, comes to the camp of *Bnei Yisroel* and observes how everyday life goes on. Upon watching Moshe judge the people, Yisro interestingly criticizes the method in which Moshe goes about doing it. Yisro famously says “מִהֲיִדְבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר - אַתָּה עוֹשֶׂה לָעָם מִדּוֹעַ אַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב לְבַדְּךָ וְכָל־הָעָם נֹכְדִים עֲלֶיךָ” - What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit by yourself, while all the people stand before you?” As an outsider, Yisro in fact gives Moshe a suggestion as to a new, logical, and more productive system of judging. He proposes a hierarchy system in which Moshe would deal with the major and difficult issues, and other judges would deal with minor matters. When Yisro gives over this idea, he describes four necessary characteristics within these judges. Rashi explains what these different traits actually denote. The first of the four traits is that of *anshei chayil*, a man of wealth, in order for the judge not to be incentivized by bribes or any other method of disservice. Additionally, the men needed to be *Yarei Hashem* (God-fearing), which shows how their decisions would be based on *Hashem's* will. The men also had to be people that were trusted, *anshei emes*, in order so that people would be willing to rely on them. Lastly, these judges had to be *sonei betza*, people that hate money in regards to the law. These qualifications given by Yisro can teach a valuable lesson to *Bnei Yisroel* as a whole. To become a leader in *Klal Yisroel*, it isn't that important to be smart or charismatic; all that matters are the above traits. While being wealthy seems to be an odd trait desirable for being a leader, its importance lies within the stronghold of being virtuous. As we go into *Shabbos* and *Krias Hatorah*, we should realize that to take ourselves to a higher level, everything necessary is in our hands, and it's feasible to do if we keep the characteristics which Yisro laid out close to heart.

WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH

וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל-זֶה וְאָמַר קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:

"And they [the angels] would call out to one another and say "Holy, Holy, Holy, is Hashem Tzivakos; the world is filled with His Glory" (Yeshayahu 6:3)

The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin 31a*) derives from this *possuk* that one should never walk four *amos* with an upright and haughty posture, since this is a haughty thing to do in *Hashem's* presence, which fills the whole world. Reading this *Gemara*, there is an immediate question which jumps out: if the *possuk* teaches that *Hashem's* presence is everywhere, then why is it only a problem to walk four *amos* haughtily? Shouldn't the *Gemara* say that one should **never** walk with an upright posture?

There is a well-known contradiction between two statements of the Rambam in *Hilchos Deiyyos*. In one context (1:5), the Rambam compares the approach of a fool and a pious man when it comes to self-improvement. The Rambam states that a pious man practices moderation in all areas, while the fool immediately goes to extremes. Specifically, the Rambam gives the *middah* of *gaivah* (arrogance) as an example - the pious man will moderate his haughtiness in a healthy manner, while the fool will go to extremes to eradicate every last bit of *gaivah* from his soul. However, later on (2:3), the Rambam clarifies that there are certain character traits for which this approach should not be exercised; instead, these traits must be completely stomped out of a person, since even a drop of them can be poisonous. The two traits listed by the Rambam which fall into this category are anger, and *gaivah*. This seems to blatantly contradict the Rambam's previous statement about practicing moderation in regards to *gaivah*! How can the Rambam write two opposing statements? The *Ohr Sameach* explains that while *midioraisa*, we are only obligated to mediate our haughtiness like every other *middah*, the *rabanan* made a *gezeirah* that we must air on the side of caution, and practice extreme humility without a trace of arrogance. The reason for this is that people will not know where to draw the line, and will inevitably end up with more haughtiness than is spiritually healthy.

Rav Herschel Schachter *shlit"a* explained that this point relates specifically to one's *limmud haTorah*. Because *Torah* represents the wisdom of *Hashem*, it is by nature infinite. Thus, each time a person comes up with a novel idea or learns some new insight in *Torah*, he is coming closer to the essence of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. It therefore follows that the more a person learns, the more humble they should become, since they become more cognizant of the unending tapestry of *Torah* and the incomprehensible greatness of the Creator. Thus, the *rabanan* advised us to be exceedingly humble, since traces of haughtiness improperly managed can make a person an unfit vessel to receive *Torah*.

With this, perhaps we can explain our *Gemara* above. The *Gemara* (*Berachos 6a*) famously tells us that from the time the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, *Hashem* resides only in the four *amos* of *halacha*. Thus, the *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* can be understood as a warning not to walk with a haughty posture for "four *amos*" - that is, do not enter the four *amos* of *halacha* without exceeding humility. The only way to acquire *Torah* is to approach it from a place of modesty, with the understanding that we are approaching something far too great for us to ever truly understand. If we begin with this approach, we will over time merit to learn more and more, and gain a deeper and deeper understanding of what an incredible gift we received at *Matan Torah*.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Links In The Chain

Shimi Kaufman (21)

Torah Torah chagri sak.

This week, the *Torah* world was shaken by the near-simultaneous loss of Rav Dovid Soloveitchik ztz"l, Rav Yitzchok Scheiner ztz"l, and Rav Dr. Avraham J. Twerski ztz"l. The magnitude of each of these losses is only intensified by their proximity; each one of these *gedolim* gave so much to the Jewish people, and their absence leaves a void that may never truly be filled. *Yehi Zichram Beruchim.*

For members of our community, it is often difficult to know how to feel at moments like these. In some instances, we feel the loss clearly - figures such as Rav Twerski and Rav Jonathan Sacks (who passed away just a few months ago) were active presences in our institutions, and many of us were lucky enough to hear *divrei Torah* from them personally. At the very least, we have likely read or heard something from them at least once. But figures like Rav Scheiner and Rav Soloveitchik may feel a bit more distant. (For those who may be unaware, Rav Yitzchok Scheiner was Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Kamenitz, and Rav Dovid Soloveitchik was Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Brisk. Both *yeshivos* are located in Yerushalayim and are among the premier centers of *Torah* learning in the world.) While we know they were great *talmidei chachomim*, we have a hard time relating personally to their passing. The shadows of these giants in *Torah* loom, and yet we have no way to connect with the loss which *Bnei Yisroel* has suffered. How can we feel the enormity of this tragedy if we have no connection to these *gedolim*?

In *Parshas Yisro*, there appear to be two instances where *Klal Yisroel* is rebuked for seemingly innocuous behavior. In the beginning of the *parsha*, Yisro suggests to Moshe that, rather than presiding over every judicial case among the nation himself, he should create a system of judges, to handle cases of increasing complexity. This way, only the most intense *shailos* would find their way to Moshe himself. Moshe agreed readily to the suggestion, and Yisro's system was implemented. However, when Moshe mentions this incident in his final address to *Klal Yisroel* at the end of his life (*Devarim* 1:14), Rashi understands it as a form of veiled rebuke. Rashi writes that the appropriate response by the nation would have been to protest the change, saying "is it better to learn from the master or the teacher?" Instead, the nation was happy to accept inferior judges who were less qualified than Moshe himself. But what exactly is Moshe's complaint here? Moshe knew very well that this system was far more efficient, since he himself agreed to it for that very reason. And if the complaint was that the people were settling for inferior judges, the entire purpose of the system was that any cases which were overly complex would be brought to Moshe in the end! Nor were these judges slouches either - the list of requirements which Yisro gave for who could judge the people was so extensive that no candidate could be found who met all of them! Why were the people being rebuked for agreeing to this plan?

Later in the *parsha*, we find that, after hearing the first two of the *Aseres Hadibros* directly from *Hashem* Himself, *Bnei Yisroel* ask Moshe to be the in-between from *Hashem* to them, since the experience of hearing *Hashem* directly was far too intense for them. Once again, *Bnei Yisroel* are criticized for choosing to hear the *Torah* from Moshe, forfeiting the right to hear it from the mouth of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. This is strange in light of the *Midrashim* which describe how utterly overwhelming it was hearing the first two *Dibros* from *Hashem*; according to one *Medrash*, the entire nation died upon hearing *Hashem* speak! Why were the Jewish people criticized if they were unable to handle hearing

Hashem's

voice?

Matan Torah is a fundamental part of our religion because it is defined as the point of Mass Revelation, the moment at which *Hashem* revealed Himself, *bichvodo ubi'atzmo*, to a nation of people. Never again has this been repeated in human history; *Hashem* appeared to individuals, but never again to an entire nation. Therefore, this event provides the basis for the whole of Judaism, because the memory of this event passed from generation to generation is the biggest proof that the Revelation was authentic. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi expresses this point in his *sefer "Kuzari"* - the foundation of our belief is the transfer of this event from generation to generation, from father to son. This is what we refer to when we speak about *mesorah* - the *Torah* has been transferred through the years in the Jewish people since it was first given at Sinai.

This is also the reason behind what is referred to as *yeridas hadoros*, the principle that scholars of a particular generation are on a lower level than those who came before. This is not because the people who lived in the times of the *Rishonim* or the *Amoraim* were by nature "smarter" than those in the days of the *Acharonim* - an ordinary mailman would be no more qualified to decide *halacha* if he lived in the year 1000 or 2000. But the *talmidei chachomim* who studied *Torah* in those *doros* were by nature more attuned to the *amitah shel Torah* (truth of *Torah*), since they were closer to the event of *Har Sinai* than we are. Primacy in the *halachic* tradition is determined not by mental capacity, but by proximity to Revelation. We assume that the closer one is to *Har Sinai*, the more his thoughts will be in accord with *Hashem's* will.

This concept can help us to understand both mistakes of *Klal Yisroel* in this week's *parsha*. If *Har Sinai* represents the ultimate source of *Hashem's* Word as accessible to the masses, then it follows that every Jew's greatest desire should be to connect to it. Therefore, *Klal Yisroel* were rebuked in both instances for choosing to add another level of separation between themselves and Revelation; both by choosing to hear the last eight *Dibros* from Moshe instead of *Hashem*, and by choosing to be judged by other members of *Bnei Yisroel*, rather than Moshe who heard the *Torah* directly from *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. The nation was reprimanded for their lack of sensitivity and care towards main-

taining the integrity of the Sinaitic tradition. By deliberately distancing themselves from the direct transfer of *Torah* from God to man, they were ever-so-slightly weakening the connection of the Jewish people as a whole to their essence, the *Torah*.

Perhaps this can help us put the losses we have experienced this past week in perspective. The *gedolim* we lost represented another world, a world of intense *Torah* scholarship which we often have trouble relating to. Rav Dovid was the last surviving son of Rav Velvel Soloveitchik, the son of the esteemed "Reb Chaim Brisker". Rav Yitzchok Scheiner was a son-in-law of Rav Moshe Bernstein, who was himself a son-in-law of Rav Boruch Ber Lebowitz, the author of "Birchas Shmuel" and one of the most profound influences on modern Talmud study. Even if we were completely unaware of them, their presence connected the Jewish people a bit more to its past, another link in the long chain of *mesorah*. And with their passing, we are left one step further from that fateful moment at Sinai.

As we read about *Kabbolas HaTorah* this week, may we be able to use the memory of these *gedolei olam* to reinvigorate our excitement for *Torah* learning, to grab hold of our people's unique connection with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*.

Wishing everyone an amazing *Shabbos*,

-Shimi Kaufman

HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Yosef Weiner ('23)

In this week's *parsha*, we are commanded to honor our parents. Thus, this week's column will discuss some of the details of a related commandment, namely the obligation to honor one's older brother.

The *Gemara* derives from the *vav* in the word *va'es* in the *posuk* which commands one to honor his mother and father that one must honor their older brother as well (*Kesubos 103a*). The Ramban explains that the obligation to honor one's older brother is an extension of one's obligation to honor their parents, as it is assumed that they want the younger children to respect the older ones (*Hasagos Al Sefer Hamitzvos Shorashim: 2*). However, some believe that this obligation is independent of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av vi'eim*. This emerges from those who are of the opinion that one is obligated to honor their older brother even after their parents' death, as at that point the obligation surely cannot be an extension of *kibbud av vi'eim*. This opinion can be derived from the Rambam, as he writes that one is obligated to honor his father's wife (not referring to mother) as long as his father is alive. However, when stating the obligation to honor one's older brother, the Rambam does not write a limit to the obligation (*Hilchos Mamrim 6:15*).

There are a variety of practical differences that emerge based on whether or not the obligation to honor one's sibling is independent of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av vi'eim*. First, is one still required to honor their older sibling following their parents' passing? According to the Ramban that the obligation to honor one's older brother is an extension of their obligation of *kibbud av vi'eim*, the obligation to honor one's older brother would not apply following their parents' passing. However, the *Minchas Chinuch* writes that one is still obligated to respect their older brother even after their parents die, as the obligation is independent of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av vi'eim* (*Mitzvah 33*). This seems to be the opinion of the *Shulchan Aruch*, as well considering that the *Mechaber* does not write that the obligation ends following the death of the parents (*Yoreh Deah 240:22*).

Additionally, who has the power to allow others to not treat the older brother with special respect is predicated upon the *machlokes*. According to the Ramban, the older son would not possess this power to reject his own honor, as the obligation to honor the older brother is an extension of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av vi'eim*, and thus only the parents may do so. However, according to those who claim that it is an independent obligation, the power lays in the hands of the son.

Furthermore, the Chida is of the opinion that an older sister is also included in the obligation; additionally, he *paskens* that all older siblings must be honored by those younger than them (*Birchei Yosef Yoreh Deah 240:17*). This is supported by the reasoning of the Ramban that the obligation is an extension of *kibbud av vi'eim*, as it is assumed that parents would want children to respect all who are older than them. However, the *Piskei Teshuvos* (*Yoreh Deah 240:19*), based on the ruling of the *Shvus Yaakov* (Vol. 1:76), writes that only the eldest son requires special respect from the younger siblings. This follows the Rambam's reasoning that the obligation to honor the older brother is independent of *kibbud av vi'eim*.

Lastly, the Rema points out that the obligation to honor one's older brother applies even if the younger child is a *talmid chacham*, and the obligation applies to both paternal and maternal siblings (*Yoreh Deah 240:22*).

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

Yisroel David Rosenberg ('23)

Don't Get Too Close

At *Matan Torah*, with *Bnei Yisroel* gathered around *Har Sinai*, there was an *issur* for anyone to touch the mountain under penalty of death. When describing exactly who is prohibited from touching *Har Sinai*, the *possuk* says “*im beheimah im ish lo yichyeh*”, “whether beast whether man, they will not live” (*Shemos* 19:13). The *meforshim* discuss who and what is included in the prohibition by these words.

The *Ibn Ezra* and the *Chizkuni* explain that *ofos*, birds, are not mentioned because they would evade capture by flying away and would not be able to be judged before a *beis din*. The *Torah Temimah* makes the point from a *Gemara* (*Bava Kama* 54b) that *chayos*, wild animals, would be included in this prohibition because they are included in the general rule of *beheimos*, as they are mentioned in direct conjunction to them in *Parshas Shemini*. The *Torah Temimah* continues to explain from the *Gemara* that the word “*im*” in the *possuk* serves to include birds.

Rabeinu Bachya takes a very different approach and learns about the nature of *olam hazeh* and *olam habah* from the *possuk's* wording. He argues that the word “*beheimah*” is not to be taken literally, but rather refers to *resha'im* who are often compared to animals. Therefore the *possuk* means that both the righteous and the wicked will not live if they touch the mountain. Rabeinu Bachya then delves into a *possuk* in *Koheles*. The *possuk* says “*mi yodei'a ru'ach bnei ha'adam ha'olah hee lemalah veru'ach habeheimah hayoredes hee lematah la'aretz*”, “who knows that the spirit of man goes up and the spirit of animals goes down to the earth” (*Koheles* 3:21). Rabeinu Bachya says that the word *beheimah* in this context refers to *resha'im*, and so the whole of the *possuk* means that though the souls of *tzadikim* obviously go upward and the souls of *resha'im* go downward; *mi yodei'a*, who can possibly know in this world who is righteous and who is wicked and which way their soul will therefore go. He continues to explain from the *pesukim* in *Koheles* “*mikreh echad*”, one fate awaits both *tzadikim* and *resha'im* and that “*kemos zeh kein mos zeh*”, “like the death of one such is the death of the other” (*Koheles* 3:19), the death of all appears the same in *olam hazeh*, this world, because “*hakol shav el ha'afar*” (*Koheles* 3:20), in this realm eventually everything returns to dust. In this world every one appears equal, but in the next world it is not so, and the levels are divided. This is why it says in *Parshas Yisro* that “*lo yichyeh*”; none would live for touching the mountain - neither *tzadik* or *rasha* would be allowed to continue living, and “living” clearly refers to staying in this world. It shows that while in this instance, no distinction would be made between righteous and wicked for punishment in this world, that is not the way of the next world. After this *cheit* a *rasha* would not go on in either this world or the next, but a *tzadik* would leave this world and go to the next. The righteous merit *olam haba*, and there they are clearly separated from those who are not in their company.

PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. Besides for Moshe, who else in the *Torah* is a son-in-law of Yisro?
2. In what three contexts are animals mentioned in the *parsha*?
3. What *possuk* contains the word “*lo*” four times?

Parsha Summary

Moshe's father-in-law Yisro, after hearing about the great miracles which occurred at the *Yam Suf* and at the war with Amalek, decides to come join the Jewish people in the desert. Moshe gathers a large group to come greet and dine with Yisro. Some time later, Yisro sees Moshe sitting and judging all of *Klal Yisroel*. Upon seeing this, Yisro suggests that rather than Moshe adjudicating every case in the whole nation, there should be a system of ascending judges, so that only the most difficult questions would come to Moshe. Soon after, *Hashem* tells Moshe to tell the nation to prepare for *Matan Torah*; for three days, they are to separate from their wives and take care not to become impure in any way. Moshe is also instructed to establish various boundaries, such that the nation will come nowhere near touching the mountain, and Aharon and the *Zekeinim* will only be allowed to a certain point. On the third day, *Hashem* declares the *Aseres Hadibros* from atop *Har Sinai*, before the whole of *Klal Yisroel*.

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