

HASHKAMA WEEKLY

פרשת יתרו

י"ט שבט תשפ"ו

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חכמה ב-AI תאמין?

By Reb Gemini

Consider the following "Torah" thought, generated by Gemini: Did the AI get it right? Do you find it to be accurate? Or did the technology miss the boat?

It is a universal truth, acknowledged by every married man in this shul, that when the shver (father-in-law) comes to visit, he will inevitably find something wrong with how you run your house. Usually, the critique is about the thermostat setting or the salt in the kugel. However, in our Parsha, Yisro walks in and critiques the entire judicial system of Klal Yisrael. He observes Moshe Rabbeinu judging the people from dawn until dusk and delivers the famous rebuke: "Nabol tibol"—you will surely wither away (Shemos 18:18). It is a dry, pragmatic observation. We Litvaks often convince ourselves that burning the candle at both ends is a segulah (spiritual remedy) for holiness, but Yisro teaches us that it is actually just a segulah for a breakdown. The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that Yisro's advice was not merely to save Moshe's energy, but to ensure the durability of the mishpat (justice) itself. Without a sustainable structure that allows for menuchas hanefesh (peace of mind), the transmission of Divine wisdom becomes technically impossible. This critical restructuring sets the stage for the second, earth-shattering half of the Parsha: Matan Torah. One might ask, what is the shaychus (connection) between Jethro's management consulting and the giving of the Ten Commandments? The answer is that you cannot receive Infinite Wisdom if you are too distracted by administrative bottlenecks to hear the shofar. The Gemara in Sota (5a) tells us that Hashem chose Har Sinai specifically because it was the lowest of the mountains, symbolizing extreme humility. Yisro's intervention forced Moshe to enact a similar humility—admitting he could not do it alone and accepting help from the Zekenim (Elders). Just as the mountain had to be low to receive the Divine presence, the leader had to lower his own burden to create space for it. Yisro provided the necessary "Guf" (body/structure) of the nation, so that at Sinai, Hashem could breathe in the "Neshama" (soul) of the Torah.

Practical Takeaway: We all like to think we are indispensable, but if Moshe Rabbeinu could delegate his workload, so can you. This Shabbos, stop hovering over the people setting up the Kiddush to make sure the herring is arranged symmetrically. By letting go of the small controls, you create the mental space to receive the big things—like actually enjoying your cholent and perhaps hearing a word of Torah without checking your watch.

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Shabbus Zmanim

Chestnut Ridge, NY

1:30 pm	מנחה
5:01 pm	הדלקה
--:-- pm	מנחה - קבלת שבת
5:19 pm	שקיעה
5:37/5:48 am	עלות השחר (16.1/72)
7:00:28 am	נץ החמה
7:15 am	שחרית
Hot kiddush & Shiur after davening	
9:00/9:36 am	סיור קריאת שמע
10:03/10:27 am	סיור תפילה
12:10:17 pm	חצות היום
12:40:17 pm	מנחה גדולה (30)
3:11:27 pm	מנחה קטנה (גר"א)
4:16:04 pm	פלג המנחה (גר"א)
--:-- pm	מנחה
5:21 pm	שקיעה
6:04/6:11 pm	צה"כ ר' משה (8.5/50)
6:13 pm	מעריב (52)
6:21/6:33 pm	צה"כ (60/72)



Next Week's Zmanim

Chestnut Ridge, NY

1:30 pm	מנחה
5:10 pm	הדלקה
5:28 pm	שקיעה
7:15 am	שחרית
5:29 pm	שקיעה
6:21 pm	מעריב (52)

This Week's Riddle

Riddle: Name two people in the Torah - one male, one female, one Jewish, one not - who have similar names that mean the same. One of the people is in this parsha.

Answer: Tzipora the wife of Moshe, and Tzipor the father of Balak (Bamidbar 22:2), have similar names that mean a bird.



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משל ונמשל ב-א תאמין?

By Reb Gemini

Mashal: We have all met that one Gabbai in a shul—let's call him Reb Yankel—who is convinced that if he does not personally unlock the front door, turn on the urn for coffee, straighten the siddurim, and meticulously inspect the chazzan's tie, the entire edifice of Yiddishkeit will crumble into dust before Mussaf. You watch him running around, sweating through his white shirt, murmuring about how "nobody takes responsibility anymore," while fifty capable men stand around with their hands in their pockets because Yankel snatched the broom from them five minutes ago. It is a tragedy wrapped in a comedy; he thinks he is the Atlas of the kehillah, holding up the sky, but to everyone else, he just looks like a man who frantically refuses to let anyone else help him carry a heavy table. He believes his exhaustion is proof of his righteousness, but in reality, his refusal to delegate is not a badge of honor—it is just a bottleneck with a beard.

Nimshal: This was precisely the precarious situation Yisro found when he arrived in the midbar and observed his son-in-law, Moshe Rabbeinu. As the Torah describes in Parshas Yisro, Moshe was sitting from morning until evening, judging the people alone, a model of unsustainable holiness. Yisro, a man who had seen the inner workings of every hierarchy in the ancient world, offered a sharp critique found in Shemos 18:18: "Nabol tibol gam atah gam ha'am hazeh"—"You will surely wear yourself out, both you and this people." Rashi explains that the term "nabol" implies withering, like a fig detached from its source. The Sforno adds a layer of depth here, noting that Yisro was teaching Moshe that intellectual perfection cannot be achieved when the body is crushed by an administrative burden. By hoarding the avodah, even with the purest intentions of ensuring emes (truth), Moshe was inadvertently denying the Zekenim (Elders) their chance to lead and the people their chance to receive timely guidance. True leadership, Yisro argued, is not about being the only conduit for Hashem's will; it is about building a system where the Torah can flow through many vessels without breaking the primary one.

Practical Takeaway: The mussar for us, sitting here in 2026, is quite simple, though perhaps painful for the control freaks among us to hear: You are not the CEO of the Universe—that position has already been filled. Often, we convince ourselves that we must micro-manage every aspect of our children's chinuch, our parnassah, or our community projects because we fear that "good enough" is a disaster. But as the Chovos HaLevavos reminds us in Shaar HaBitachon, our excessive toil often stems from a lack of trust that Hashem can manage the outcome without our frantic interference. This week, try to delegate one task you think only you can do. Let your child pack their own briefcase even if it is messy; let a coworker handle the email even if they do not use your preferred font. If Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest Navi who ever lived, had to learn to step back to let the Torah flourish, we can certainly afford to let someone else handle the kiddush setup. The world will keep spinning, and you might actually have the energy to enjoy Shabbos.

GOOD SHABBUS!