



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

OD YOSEF HAI
50 FINCHLEY LANE, NW41DJ
TEL: 020 8203 5701

Thoughts on Parashat YITRO Year 23 by Dayan Abraham David

'Vayishma Yitro Kohen Midian ... et kol asher asa Elokim le Moshe Vulyisrael', And Yitro the High Priest of Midian heard all that G-d did for Moshe and Yisrael, His People that he took them out of Egypt. Rashi tells us, what did he hear that made him come to join Moshe and Am Yisrael in the desert? *Kriyat Yam Suf and milchemet Amalek*; hearing about the splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek. But Rashi continues on *'el Kol asher Asa'* to include the hearing about the 'manna' the *'Be-er'* the travelling spring of water that accompanied them *'Vu beamalek'* what G-d did to Amalek. What really made him come? And why does Rashi repeat about Amalek?

Rashi seems to be telling us what really stirred Yitro to leave his home and security to join Moshe in the desert. It was hearing about *Kriyat Yam Suf* which the whole world heard about. As our Rabbis tells us it was a world event as the waters everywhere in the world split which made the nations enquire and find out about the splitting of the Reed Sea and the salvation of Israel. Yitro heard about it and so did Amalek and yet Amalek came and waged

war on Israel in the desert. This is what stirred Yitro to come, for he heard about both events, the splitting of the Reed Sea to save Yisrael and the audacity of Amalek to make war on the nation G-d had made such wonders to save. How could Amalek dare?

Yitro understood a human failing. Amalek, when he heard about the great miracle of the splitting of the Reed Sea and the saving of Am Yisrael, had a moment of awakening to G-d's involvement and power in the world, a message to draw closer to his service. Instead, Amalek, in his wickedness, wished to go his own way and did not wish to answer the stirring in his heart so he tried to explain it away and became a cynic. Then he went even further from his so-called belief that it was a natural phenomena and there was no miracle for the Jews, to fight them to prove his point thus making a *Chilul Hashem*. Yitro reasoned that if one does not work and act on a stirring of his soul and inspiration, to ease his conscience he will become a cynic and then deny it. So Yitro moved forward, joined Am Yisrael and accepted upon himself to come close to G-d. He was credited with a *Parasha* and some laws of the Torah in his name and secured the future of his descendants in the sanctuaries of the Torah. Whereas Amalek earned for himself the name of being the enemy of Hashem and

the Jewish People for all generations, *'Milchamah LaHashem Ba Amalek mi dor dor'*.

So Yitro opened his eyes and followed the progress of the miracles G-d continued to do for his people. He heard the details of the miracle of the manna, the travelling well and the punishment G-d had given to Amalek when Yehoshuah defeated them while Moshe raised his hands in prayer, this had led on from his first hearing.

When we are inspired by an interesting insight of the Torah in a shiur or speech or inspired by a special event of Kiddush Hashem, we should not just try to forget it, but act upon it and draw ourselves closer to Avodath Hashem, otherwise, in time, there might be a danger of us becoming cynics. You will find people like Amalek who try to play down such events and cool the inspiration of others because it soothes their conscience to do so.

TORAH GEMS

The Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai with the words: *"Naase Ve Nishmah"* we accept fully without reservation or conditions even before knowing the contents of the Torah. However, we find a difficulty for the Talmud in Masechta Shabbat explains the Pasuk *'Yayityatsvu Be Tachtet Hahar'* they stood beneath the mountain to mean literally under the mountain, that G-d lifted the mountain above them and threatened to drop it upon them if they would not accept the Torah i.e. they were being forced to receive the Torah under duress. Why did they have to be forced if they had already willingly

accepted the Torah? Some commentaries on the Talmud explain that even though they accepted willingly there was a fear that maybe when they would be shown the glory accompanying the giving of the Torah with the lightning and fire from Heaven, the clouds of glory and the Hosts of Angels they would become overwhelmed and want to retract, feeling it would be beyond them; and that is why they were now being coerced so they would not retract. We could explain this with an allegory to a princess who was saved by a farmer; the king when he came to take her back offered to reward her saviour with her hand in marriage, the farmer willingly accepted the beautiful princess. As they approached the metropolis the streets were decorated and lined with guards in brilliant uniforms all glitter and gold, to welcome them. On approaching the palace in its majesty, the farmer became overwhelmed and felt it was too much for him and wished to retract, he had not imagined such magnificence. That is why the mountain was raised upon them to prevent them from retracting when they would see all the glory.

The Midrash Tanchuma in Parsha Noah gives another explanation. The Bnei Yisrael had accepted the Torah willingly: *'Be Naase Venishmah'*, this was the written law 'Torah Be Ketav', as we have it in the Sefer Torah, which would have a limit. On Moshe's return from the mountain he had told them there was an Oral Law 'Torah Baal Peh' which would

explain the Written Law. The Torah Baal Peh as we know contains all the Mishnah Brytot Talmud Midrashim and is more vast than the sea, and had to be studied with great diligence and sacrifice. They became alarmed and were reluctant to accept this Oral Law, for this they were forced. The Written Law depends on the Oral Law and they cannot be separated. It has been this Torah Baal Peh which has distinguished us from all the nations who imitated the Written Law. Even though we accepted the oral law under duress, at the time of Mordecai and Esther, we willingly accepted it on seeing the merit of the Torah Baal Peh, the study of which brought the salvation. As the Midrash tells us when Haman saw Mordecai teaching the Jewish children the Oral Laws of Kemitza, the small amount of flour offered on the Altar. He said 'your little flour will push away all my ten thousand talons of silver. It is the Oral Law, the Mishna and Gemara, midrashim and Zohar which has made the Jewish people spiritual giants.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

It was the custom in Poland for the Rabbonim of small towns to act as judges only in cases not involving more than four hundred zlotys. Cases involving larger amounts were to be sent to the District Rabbi.

Rabbi Hayyim Schoenberg, the Rabbi of Stutzin, broke away from this tradition and decided a case involving eight hundred zlotys. The District Rabbi summoned Rabbi Hayyim to Tiktin to explain his conduct.

Rabbi Hayyim replied: "I consider the rule to be false. We read that Jethro counselled Moses and said: 'Every great matter, they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge themselves' (Exodus 18:22). Moses, however, did not follow this regulation, and according to his instructions (18:26), 'the difficult cases they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged for themselves'. You, Tiktiner Rav, wish to enforce Jethro's rule that every matter involving great amounts should be sent to you without reference to the difficulty of the case or its clearness.

"I, however, believe in the rule of Moses, that the amount involved does not matter; only the degree of difficulty in the case or its clearness. Only difficult cases should be sent to the higher court, even if they involve but a single zlota. Clear cases, however, may be left to the lower court even if they involve thousands. As the Talmud says (Sanhedrin 8) 'The case of a penny is the same as the case of a thousand'".

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

1) We learn from the blessings Yitro made in the parasha that when we see a place where a miracle was made for Am Yisrael, the whole Jewish nation, we make a beracha: *'She asa nisim leavotenu bamakom haze'*. But we must see the exact place i.e. we cannot make the beracha on the whole Red Sea or all the Jordan River only where the Bnei Yisrael crossed. Today it would be possible to make such a beracha at the excavations of the walls of Jericho.

2) When a person sees the place a miracle happened to him only, he or his descendants born after the event may make the beracha with *'Shem u Malchut'*. When he does make such a beracha he includes and mentions any other miracles which happened to him.

3) This beracha is only said on a miraculous escape outside the boundaries of nature, i.e. if he was attacked by a bear or lion and survived. Or a roof or a wall fell upon him and under normal circumstances he should have been killed he makes the special beracha: *She asa li nes bamakom haze'*, whenever he sees that place after an interval of 30 days.

4) However, if he was held up by armed men or a heavy stone fell near him, which might have killed if it struck him he does not say this beracha, this is not called out of the boundaries of nature.

5) If he was shot at or stabbed (*lo alenu*) and it only hit or penetrated his arms or legs missing his actual torso or head then he makes the beracha without *'Shem'* and *'Malchut'* and thinks it in his heart. But if it penetrated his body which would normally have killed him he can make the beracha with *'Shem' u 'Malchut'*.

6) The beracha should not be confused with Birchat HaGomel which has other criterion.

**Avot Ubanim
Motzei Shabbat
one hour after Shabbat
terminates.
There will be
refreshments and prizes.**

**If you wish to sponsor a
Kiddush
Please contact
Monty Sassoon 07787 571313
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724**

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by Jason
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses
followed by a kiddush**

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	4:36 pm
Shabbat terminates	5:46 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	4:20 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	4:15 pm
Shacharit Weekdays (netz)	7:00 am
Shacharit Sundays (netz)	7:00 am
Mincha	1:30 pm
Arbit	7:45 pm