



וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן "18:1

משה את כל אשר עשה אלקים

למשה ולישראל עמו, כי הוציא ד'

"את ישראל ממצרים"

"And Yisro, the minister of Midyan, heard all that Hashem did to Moshe and to Yisroel, His people; that Hashem took Yisroel out of Mitzrayim." The Torah tells us that Yisro heard about what occurred to Moshe and Klal Yisroel, and he therefore wanted to join them. We know that it is truly special to be a part of the Chosen Nation – Hakodosh Boruch Hu's nation. However, why did Yisro feel the need to actually join Klal Yisroel in the Midbar? Why not just convert to Judaism, and serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu from where he was? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P'shat offered in the closing paragraph.

בא וראה שאין "2:29 – דברים רבה

– "מעשיו של הקב"ה כמעשה בשר ודם" – "Come and see that the actions of Hakodosh Boruch Hu are not like that of the actions of flesh and blood." According to the ways of the world, if a person of flesh and blood acquires for himself a flesh and blood patron so that he stand up for him in all times of distress, and subsequently that person is seized for committing a crime, his powers and ability to help are limited. For example, if one is told that someone from his household has been seized, he will respond that he will stand up for him and see to it that he is released. However, if the seized person was already taken out to be killed, he is without anyone to help him, for once he has been sentenced to death, the patron is powerless to save him from his executioner. However by Hakodosh Boruch Hu, it is not so. The Malachei Hashareis told Hakodosh Boruch Hu that Moshe, a member of His household, was seized. Hakodosh Boruch Hu told them, "I will stand up for him." Later, the Malachei Hashareis told Hakodosh Boruch Hu that Moshe was standing in front of Paroah in judgment. Then they told Him that Moshe's verdict is being read. Then they told Him that he is going out to be killed. Hakodosh Boruch Hu responded, "I will stand up for him." Indeed, Moshe went out to be killed, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu saved him from the hands of his executioner, as the Posuk says, "ויצילני מחרב פרעה."

Devorim Rabbah 2:29 – עץ יוסף

– The Medrash is telling us that while a person may believe he can help others when they are seized, he feels helpless when they are convicted and being taken out to death, for he knows that he can be of no assistance to the one being led to his death. However, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not so, and He can always save a person, from all situations and at all times. There are times when Hashem will wait until the person is about to be killed and then save him, in order to demonstrate His might.

ויקה יתרו חתן "18:2 – בן איש ח

– "משה את צפורה אשת משה" – "And Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, took Tzipporah, the wife of Moshe." Yisro took Tzipporah and her two sons now, to teach Klal Yisroel a מוסר השכל, a very wise and important lesson for life. It says in Shemos Rabbah 1:32 that Tzipporah was called as such because she purified her father's house with the blood of the "צפורה" – "bird" which purifies a Metzorah. Being that Tzipporah was Zoche to be the wife of Moshe Rabbeinu, and because of it her father's entire household converted and became Geirim – they came under the Kanfei Hashechina, and were from the great people in Klal Yisroel, then certainly Klal Yisroel should take Mussar for themselves. If having a connection to Moshe Rabbeinu can have such a great effect on Goyim, how much more so can Moshe have a positive effect on Yidin, his brothers, his nation, by them being close to Moshe. **ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם** – "And her (Tzipporah's) two sons: of whom the name of one was Gershom, for he had said, 'I was a sojourner in a strange land.'" – "ארץ נכריה" – "a strange land" is a reference to Mitzrayim, which was called, "נכריה" to all of its residents, for they were constantly made to move from one location to another. Bereishis 47:21 **ואת העם העביר אתו לערים, מקצה גבול מצרים ועד קצהו** – "As for the nation, he resettled it by cities, from one end of Mitzrayim's borders to the other." Rashi explains that Yosef transferred all the people of Mitzrayim from one city to another, in order to demonstrate that individuals no longer had a claim to their former property. There was a great hunger in

Mitzrayim, and Yosef had control over all of the food in Mitzrayim. In order to obtain food from Yosef, one had to give Yosef, the Kingship of Mitzrayim, all of their lands. By Yosef having them constantly move, it was apparent that they did not have any ownership rights in the land. Thus, they were called, "נכריה" – sojourners in their land. As the Arizal explains on the Posuk in Bereishis 15:13 **"כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם"** – meaning that Klal Yisroel would be strangers in a land, that the land would not be the resident's land – namely, the resident Mitzriyim were not owners of the land they inhabited. When Moshe went to Midyan, he married Tzipporah, who was a "תושב" a resident in the land of Midyan. Moshe wanted a remembrance of his being a stranger in a land that was "נכריה" – the land of Mitzrayim, so he called his son, גרשם. All of the Mitzvos we perform we are to do, **"זכר ליציאת מצרים"** – as a remembrance of our being Zoche to leave the land of Mitzrayim. We must remember that we were slaves in Mitzrayim, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu took us out of Mitzrayim, in order that we serve Him: learn Torah and perform the Mitzvos of the Torah.

ושם האחד אליעזר, כי אלקי אבי בעזרי

– "And the name of the other was Eliezer, for the G-d of my father came to my aid, and saved me from the sword of Paroah." Chazal say in Devorim Rabbah 2:29 that the actions of Hakodosh Boruch Hu are very different than the actions of a man of flesh and blood (see above). Hakodosh Boruch Hu makes His greatness known, for He does not need to prepare for a miracle even one moment. He can assist at any moment. It is a great Musar to learn from this for Klal Yisroel's journey through the Midbar. If at any point in time Klal Yisroel are lacking anything, they must have full Emunah that Hakodosh Boruch Hu will give them all they need, and He does not need to prepare it, but can give it on a moment's notice so to say. Had Klal Yisroel truly learned this lesson before their travels through the Midbar, they would not have received the punishments that they did. The Torah tells us the names of Moshe's children here, for it was to be a lesson for Klal Yisroel before their journey through the

Midbar, that they should not complain to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and have complete Emunah that all their needs would be satisfied.

– “וישמע יתרו” 18:1 – מהר"י שטייף

It says in the Sefer דרדקי דרדקי that the reason that Yisro wanted to join Klal Yisroel was because he heard of the great attribute of Klal Yisroel, that they did not go to battle against the Mitzriyim, even before they were told that the Yam would split for them. Klal Yisroel were Zoche to a miracle where the Yam split for them, and they did not battle against the Mitzriyim. One could have advanced an argument and said that it wasn't that Klal Yisroel chose not to fight against the Mitzriyim, but that they did not fight because they had no idea how to. They were servants in Mitzrayim for years, and did not know how to fight, and therefore they did not fight. The answer to this question is that we see clearly that this was not the case, for when it came to the battle with Amalek, Klal Yisroel did go out and fight them. We see that Klal Yisroel did know how to fight, and that which they did not fight against the Mitzriyim was because they did not want to be *כפוי טובה*, ingrates, against them. Klal Yisroel exhibited the great Midah of Hakoras Hatov, even though the Mitzriyim were not exactly nice to them, but Klal Yisroel were still in their land for many years, and did not want to fight them. When Yisro heard of the battle of Amalek, he then understood that Klal Yisroel did not fight the Mitzriyim because of Hakoras Hatov, and this made him want to be a part of Klal Yisroel. This is what Rashi means when he says, that Yisro heard about Milchemes Amalek; Yisro heard about the Milchemes Amalek, and then he knew that Klal Yisroel had the amazing Midah of Hakoras Hatov.

– “וישמע יתרו” 18:1 - צרור המור – The Torah is teaching us that Yisro saw and understood the matters of Hakodosh Boruch Hu and His wonders, for Yisro was wise. He therefore heard all that occurred and analyzed it, until he came to this revelation that all is from Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and He runs every aspect of this world.

– “וישמע יתרו” 18:1 - רע"ב – Rashi says on these words: What was it that

Yisro heard that had such a profound effect upon him, that it caused him to join Klal Yisroel? Yisro heard about the Krias Yam Suf, the splitting of the sea, and the war with Amalek. Why does Rashi tell us that Yisro heard about Krias Yam Suf and Milchemes Amalek, when the Posuk says explicitly, “כי הוציא ד' את ישראל” – because Hashem took Klal Yisroel out of Mitzrayim? The Torah says that Yisro was “שמע” he heard, which implies he heard with his ears. However, Yisro was in Midyan and he was unable to hear what happened to Klal Yisroel directly. The Posuk should have said, “ויגיד” – and Yisro was informed by others as to what happened. By the Posuk saying “וישמע” and not “ויגיד” we have to come up with a P'shat that Yisro heard directly. Rashi says that Yisro heard Krias Yam Suf, for the sound of the waters splitting went from one side of the world until the other, for as Chazal tell us that all of the waters in the world split at the same time as Krias Yam Suf. The same is true with the Milchemes Amalek, that it was heard throughout the world, for Moshe caused the sun to stand still – which also went from one side of the world to the other. Yisro was not told information about these incidents, rather the sound of these events was so great, that it was like Yisro heard it directly, hence the Torah says, “וישמע יתרו.”

– “וישמע יתרו” 18:1 - חתם סופר

What did Yisro hear that caused him to join Klal Yisroel – he heard about Krias Yam Suf and Milchemes Amalek. “שמע” – He heard, and he came. Why do Rashi and others tell us that Yisro came because of Krias Yam Suf and Milchemes Amalek, when the Posuk tells us explicitly, “כי הוציא ד' את ישראל ממצרים” – “Because Hashem took Yisroel out of Mitzrayim?” Yisro sinned to some extent by his being an advisor to Paroah about the evil he perpetrated against Klal Yisroel, even though Yisro gave him good advice – not to harm Klal Yisroel, as the Gemara in Sotah 11a says. Makkos 5b – One who is part of a group of those who sin, even if he doesn't actually sin, nonetheless he is punished along with the sinners. Yisro was part of a group of sinners, and was therefore liable. Yisro did much Teshuva for his being part of

that group and turned away from Avodah Zarah. Nonetheless, now that he heard about Krias Yam Suf, he recognized the Midah of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, that everything is Midah K'neged Midah. Yisro understood from this that his Teshuva should also be Midah K'neged Midah. He therefore wanted the opportunity to give good advice to Klal Yisroel. That meant that he was required to give good advice to Klal Yisroel if the situation arose where he could give them good advice. Perhaps it was good enough for him to stay where he was and potentially give advice from there. Was there any reason that he had an obligation to do more than that, to actively seek to do whatever he could to give them advice? Perhaps he did not have to terribly inconvenience himself, or worse, by going through the Midbar with them. That was until he heard that Amalek advanced from faraway to attack Klal Yisroel. If to do evil to Klal Yisroel, Amalek was willing to go far, then certainly he must act in kind and travel through the Midbar with Klal Yisroel in order to give them advice, and rectify his wrong.

Now we can understand why Yisro was not content to be Jewish, but wanted to be with the Jews. While it is certainly a great privilege and wonderful thing to be a Yid, one must know that the way to grow in Yiddishkeit is to be around other Yidin, specifically Tzaddikim and Talmidei Chachomim, as they have a profound effect on all around them, and they help elevate all to a greater level of Ruchniyos. Klal Yisroel demonstrated great Middos, including the Midah of Hakoras Hatov. How can one acquire such a Midah if he does not have it? While a person can work on it on his own, his best chance of acquiring that Midah is by being around those who live it. The more one sees it and becomes accustomed to it, the more he will be attracted to it, and will end up doing it as well. Yisro also wanted to have a direct opportunity to assist Klal Yisroel. He wanted to do for others, and if he was far away from them, he would not have had the opportunity to help others. May we be Zoche to be in a proper environment which helps foster our continued growth in Yiddishkeit.