

Parshat Yitro

By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen

PARSHAT YITRO

Parshat Yitro begins by relating how impressed Yitro is upon hearing the amazing events that transpired to the nation led by his son-in-law, Moshe Rabeinu (a"h). He decides to convert to Yahadut. Yitro sends word to Moshe that he will soon be arriving in Bnei Yisrael's camp. Yitro wants Moshe to leave his post and greet him in the desert before he arrives.

The Torah Hakedoshah tells us that Moshe Rabeinu did go out to greet Yitro: "The man bowed and kissed him and asked the peace of his dear one" (Shemot 18:8).

Rashi Hakadosh (a"h) is bothered by the ambiguity. "Who bowed to whom? Who kissed whom? Who was the one to make the gesture? Was it Yitro, the father-in-law, who kissed Moshe - or did Moshe, the son-in-law, leader of millions of people, run to greet his father-in-law a Midianite priest, and bow and kiss him?"

Rashi quotes the Mechiltah which refers us to Sefer Bamidbar where Moshe Rabeinu is called "the man Moshe" obviously the words, "the man bowed and kissed him" in our parshah must mean that same man - Moshe.

Why, however, did the Torah choose a seemingly convoluted way to tell us that Moshe prostrated himself before his father-in-law? Would it not have been easier to tell us that "Moshe the

man bowed and kissed him and asked the peace of his dear one"? Why did the Torah use the words "the man" and send us to Sefer Bamidbar to learn who "the man" was? The answer can be explained with a story.

Rabbi Tzvi Kamenetzky of Chicago, tried to contact a friend who was vacationing at Schechter's Caribbean Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida. After about 15 rings, the hotel operator, an elderly, southern black woman, who worked at the hotel for thirty years politely informed him that the man was not in the room. "Would you like to leave a message?" she inquired.

"Sure," responded Reb Tzvi, "tell him that Rabbi Kamenetzky, called."

The woman at the other end gasped. "Raabbi Kaamenetzky?" she drawled. "Did you say you were Raabbi Kaamenetzky?" She knew the name! It sounded as if she was about to follow up with a weighty question, and the Rabbi responded in kind.

"Yes." He did not know what would follow. "Why do you ask?"

"Are you," asked the operator, "by any chance, related to the famous Rabbi Kamenetzky?"

There was silence in Chicago. Rabbi Tzvi could not imagine that this woman had an inkling of who his grandfather, the great sage was - the Dean of Mesivta Torah Ve'daat to whom thousands had flocked for advice and counsel. She continued.

"You know, he passed away about ten years ago at the end of the wintah?" She definitely had her man, thought Reb Tzvi. Still in shock, he offered a subdued, "Yes, I'm a grandson."

PARSHA

HALACHA

STORY

Q&A

SHIURIM

JOKE

RIDDLE

QUOTES

DAVEN FOR

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya
Michael ben Yonah
Ro'ee ben Rachel
May bat Ilana
Ben Tzvi ben Ilana
Gidon ben Esther
Ruchamah bat Chanah
Esther bat Mazal
Yosef ben Devorah
Yaffa bat Rivka
Baruch Chai ben Zoya
Rivkah bat Malkah
Nissan ben Liza
Gavriel ben Toviyo
David ben Liza

Baila Chava
bat
Sorka

Freida Leah
bat
Pesha Rachel

Yehoshuah Mordechai
ben
Leah Gita

Chaim Yehudah
ben
Aidel

"YOOOU ARE?" she exclaimed, "well I'm sure glad to talk to ya! Cause your grandpa - he was a real good friend of mine!"

Reb Tzvi pulled the receiver from his ear and stared at the mouthpiece. He composed himself and slowly began to repeat her words, quizzically. "You say that Rabbi Kamenetzky was a good friend of yours?"

"Sure! Every mornin' Raabbi Kaaamenetzky would come to this here hotel to teach some sorta Bible class. Now my desk is about ten yards from the main entrance of the hotel. But every mornin' he made sure to come my way, nod his head, and say good mornin' to me. On his way out, he would always stop by my desk and say good-bye. Oh! Yes! He was a great Rabbi but he was even a greater man. He was a wonderful man. He was a real good friend of mine!"

The Torah could have told us the narrative an easier way. It could have told us that Moshe bowed before, and kissed Yitro. It does more. It tells us that it was a man who kissed Yitro. True, it was Moshe that performed those actions. But they were not the actions of a Moshe, they were the actions of a mentch!

Often we attribute acts of kindness, compassion, and extra care to super-human attributes of our sages and leaders. The Torah tells us that it is the simple mentch that performs them. Inside every great leader lies "the man." We are as well told that "...the man Moses was the exceedingly humble, more than any one on the face of the earth" (Bamidbar 12:3). It was the man Moshe, who was exceedingly humble, more than any one on the face of the earth.

HALACHAH CORNER

QUESTION: What happens if parents disapprove of a potential marriage partner?

ANSWER: Generally, a person should not obey his parents' wish if it is against Torah law; the obligation to honor parents does not override other commands of the Torah. As marriage constitutes an important mitzvah, perhaps a child in this case is not required to obey his parents' wish not to marry the woman of his choice.

Ha'Rav Ovadyah Yosef (a"h), in his sefer Halichot Olam, states that if the parents deem the girl or her family unacceptable for substantive reasons, and the marriage would cause them embarrassment, then one must obey his parents and not marry the girl.

For example, if the parents disapprove of certain negative qualities they see in the girl or her family, or if her or her family's religious standards are lacking, and they would thus suffer embarrassment as a result of the marriage, then the boy should obey the parents' wishes.

The Torah states in Sefer Devarim (27:16), "Arur makleh aviv v'eimo - cursed is he who humiliates his father or mother."

Therefore, if the parents are legitimately concerned that the marriage would bring them and their family shame, due to the negative qualities or poor religious standards of the girl or her family, the boy may not marry her.

Rav Ovadyah's ruling is based upon the ruling of the Netziv (a"h).

If, however, the girl he is dating is proper, modest and upstanding, and she comes from a generally good family, but the parents disapprove of the match due to personal or otherwise insignificant factors, the young man should consult with a halachic expert for guidance. Depending on the specific circumstances, it might be permissible in such a case to disobey his parents and marry the girl.



THE TIDES OF PROVIDENCE

It's not what you gather, but what you sow,
That gives the heart - a warming glow.
It's not what you get, but what you give,
That decides the kind of life you live.

It's not what you have, but what you spare.
It's not what you take, but what you share
That pays the greater dividend
And makes you richer in the end.

It's not what you spend upon yourself
Or hide away upon a shelf,
That brings a blessing for the day.
It's what you scatter by the way.

A wasted effort it may seem.
But what you cast upon the stream
Comes back to you recompense
Upon the tides of providence.



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HEARTFELT CONSIDERATION

Rav Aharon Kotler (a"h) and his son Rav Shneur went to Rav Isser Zalman (Rav Aharon's father-in-law) to say goodbye shortly before leaving Eretz Yisrael for Rav Shneur's wedding.

Rav Isser Zalman stopped in the middle of the stairs on the way down rather than escorting them all the way to the street.

When they asked him about it he said, "Many of the people who live in this neighborhood have grandchildren who were murdered by the Nazi's yemach shemam. How could I go down to the street and embrace my grandchild, flaunting my joy publicly when they no longer have grandchildren to embrace?"

Let us learn from Rav Zalman the sensitivity and consideration towards our fellow Jews. What makes a Jew great, what renders him a "gadol," in the eyes of Hashem is not only his learning of Torah or how many hours a day he spends in front of a Gemara. The greatness of a Jew is the consideration and sensitivity he displays towards his brother and the kindness he will offer when his brother is in pain and in need.

QUOTES

** "Circumstance does not make the man; it reveals him to himself." **

** "When you let go of your attention for a little while, do not think you may recover it whenever you please."

** "To live a life of virtue, you have to become consistent, even when it isn't convenient, comfortable, or easy." **

REBBE ALREADY TOLD ME

The Alter of Slabodka (a"h) was an outstanding educator who knew when to rebuke a student and when not to say a word. Once, he rebuked a student but the student did not rectify his behavior. Several weeks passed.

When they next met, the Alter repeated his earlier rebuke, word for word, without any introduction or epilogue.

"But Rebbe, you already told me that. I heard exactly the same words from you just a few weeks ago," said the student.

The Alter looked at him and asked, "If you're walking down the middle of a main street in London and 25 cars are all honking at you and you innocently turn your head around to look at them, lift your hand, and say politely, 'Thanks I heard you' - have you really heard? You have not really heard. If you really heard then you would have gotten out of the way and onto the sidewalk in order to avoid the cars."

Yitro left all his foreign gods and came to the wilderness. That's how one listens."

FROM MY POINT OF VIEW

Parents will testify that you cannot make everyone happy. The home is as political as the halls of any government building. If one child merits a special reward, it is sure to arouse jealous complaints from his or her siblings.

If a mother would like to treat the children to a special day of entertainment, you can be certain that what will excite Yaakov will leave Raizy with a forlorn face.

People just seem to see things from their own point of view. When the Kohen went into the Kodesh Hakodashim on Yom Kipur, he said a special tefilah on behalf of the welfare of the community.

In this once a year opportunity to approach Hashem on behalf of his brothers and sisters - the Kohen said, "And please do not fulfill the request of the travelers."

Why not? Because travelers pray for the weather to be moderate and dry so that the roads are easy to pass and their trip is comfortable. However, these ideal travel conditions are not beneficial to the farmers who need sufficient rain for healthy crops to bring to the market. The Kohen asks that the general good should supersede the good of the minority, of those who are traveling.

It is not unusual to maneuver for your own best interests. If you do so, try and consider how your request will effect the general public or other members of your work place, organization or family.

Look beyond your own interests and put yourself in other people's shoes. See things from their point of view. This will bring peace and harmony as it will yield a better outcome, in general than that which might be brought about by the selfish interest of any individual member of the group. In the end, everyone will be better off.

ON THE HEELS OF TU B'SHEVAT

How odd it feels to look out at a frozen landscape of trees standing as skeleton-like statues, knowing that it is time to celebrate the "New Year for Trees"- Tu B'Shevat. It may make us wonder as we crunch on carobs and dates, "What's wrong with this picture?"

The appointed season for the "New Year for Trees" is, on a practical level, a fiscal cut off point to determine which fruits belong to which year. It occurs at that time when the trees are ready to blossom as winter's water graduates to become syrup through the xylem and phylum.

The Gemara relates a famous incident regarding Choni Hamagel. He was troubled by a verse we are all familiar with: "Shir Hamaalot...When Hashem returns the captivity of Tzion, we will have been like dreamers."

Continued on page 5

ON THE HEELS OF TU B'SHEVAT

Continued

Since the time of the exile between the first Bet Hamikdash to the second was seventy years, Choni Hamagel wondered, "Can a person sleep for seventy years?"

Choni Hamagel met a young man on the road planting a carob tree. He inquired how long it would take for that tree to bear fruit. The man told him, "Seventy years." Choni Hamagel asked him if he thought he would be around to reap the benefits of his labor. The man informed him, "When I came into this world, I found a carob tree that others had planted for me. Just as my ancestors did, I plant this tree for my descendants."

Shortly after that brief encounter, Choni Hamagel fell into a deep slumber. Remarkably, he awoke seventy years later to find the grandchild of that farmer picking carobs from the same tree. Choni Hamagel revisited his own community where he had been presumed dead for many years. He heard his Chidushei Torah being quoted in the Bet Midrash. He even encountered his very own grandchildren, but no one believed him to be the real Choni Hamagel.

He was in a world not his own, so he prayed to be taken from that world and, once again, his wish was granted. We imagine that this should have been a dream come true. In fact, it was an intolerable nightmare. Why? The first part of the story is perhaps the key to explaining the second.

Continued on page 9

RIDDLE

We are little creatures. All of us have different features. One of us in glass is set - one of us you'll find in jet. Another you may see in tin. And the fourth is boxed within. If the fifth you should pursue - it can never fly from you.

What are we?

Answer on page 9



JOKE

After a long, bumpy flight, the passengers were glad to finally land. They disembarked, and the attendants checked for items left behind.

In a seat pocket, one of the flight attendants found a bag of marbles with a note saying, "Much love, Mom."

Quickly, she gave the bag to the gate agent in hopes it would be reunited with its owner.

A few minutes later, an announcement came over the public-address system in the concourse: "Would the passenger who lost his marbles on Flight 502, please return to the gate?"

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

If the Torah or the chachamim
forbid a behavior, you should not
make your own calculations.
You should heed their
words dutifully.

(Anonymous)

**ATTENTION LADIES**

Call us to host a learning group in your community.

(347) 430-5700

Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking on the following dates:

Date: February 12, 2017

Time: 8:00pm

Place: 1175 East Laurelton Parkway
Teaneck, NJ

Special Tu Be'Shevat Program

Date: February 15, 2017 / **Time:** 4:15pm

Place: 4915 10th Ave - Brklyn, NY
Boro Park Center

Date: February 22, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: March 8, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: March 19, 2017 / **Time:** 7:45pm

Place: 148 Copley Ave - Teaneck NJ

Date: March 22, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 4, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 26, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 29, 2017 - Shabat

Time: 5:00pm

Place: 1364 E7th - Brklyn, NY

Date: April 30, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 1100 Trafalgar St. – Teaneck NJ

Date: May 10, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: May 21, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 275 Taft Court, Paramus NJ

Date: May 24, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: June 07, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: June ?? – To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: Teaneck NJ

Date: July ?? – To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 1288 West Laurelton Parkway
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Date: August ?? – To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 115 Addison Rd.
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

INTRODUCING...

A SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR LADIES

The Rabanit will now be offering INDIVIDUAL, one-on-one classes on the phone for women who wish like to learn ONE topic in depth.

The advantage of the private classes is the ability to learn the subject of your choice in a deep and detailed manner - and the opportunity to ask questions and receive undivided attention.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS:

1. Choose a topic from the list below
2. Call our office and schedule your appointment for the time and day that best suits you
3. Depending on the topic you choose, an email with any materials you require for the lectures will be sent to you so you can follow along as you learn together with the Rabanit.
4. Payment for the series is made at the commencement of your classes.
5. You are now ready to begin your enlightening journey!!

Below is the list of topics:

SHABAT
EMUNAH & BITACHON
THE SECRET OF THE MIKVEH
SHALOM BAYIT
TEFILAH
WOMEN IN JEWISH HISTORY
THE PARSHAH IN DEPTH
BREISHIT

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We're beginning our
second cycle

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Rabanit

Kineret Sarah Cohen

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Shiur To Post Monday, Feb 13

“Parshat Yitro”
He Heard & He Came

Log on and enjoy the live
lectures and be inspired.

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY 17 SHEVAT

PURIM SARAGOSSA (1421)

A harmful plot was brewing against the Jewish community of Saragossa, but they were completely unaware of the looming danger. They were spared, however, thanks to a handful of synagogues beadles who acted on a dream they all had.

The resulting salvation on the 17th of Shevat was celebrated by Saragossan Jews, and dubbed "Purim Saragossa."

A Hebrew Megilah (scroll) was penned, describing the details of the miraculous story. To this day, this scroll is read in certain communities on Purim Saragossa.



Q&A

Dear Rebetzin Cohen,

I was recently at a funeral at the airport of someone who was being flown to Israel for burial. This isn't the first time I've heard of this happening. Why go to such great lengths to be buried in Israel?

RESPONSE: Thank you for writing in with such an amazing question.

The Torah Hakedoshah in Sefer Breishit describes how, before their deaths, Yaakov and Yosef requested to be buried in Eretz Yisrael. Many Jews throughout history have gone to great lengths to be buried in Eretz Yisrael. Here's why.

According to the Gemara, being buried in Eretz Yisrael brings a certain measure of atonement for sins: Rav Anan said, "Anyone buried in Eretz Yisrael is considered as if he was buried beneath the altar; it is written here, in Sefer Shemot, 'An altar of earth (*adamah*) you shall

make for me.'" Does this apply to everyone buried in Eretz Yisrael, or only to those who lived there as well?

The Talmud Yerushalmi discusses this issue: Rabee bar Kiri and Rabee Elazar were strolling in Istrina and they saw coffins arriving in Eretz Yisrael from the galut. Rabee bar Kiri said, "What are they achieving? I apply to them the verse in Sefer Yirmiyahu, 'You make My inheritance desolate, and you came and defiled My land [in your deaths].'"

Rabee Elazar replied, "When they arrive in Eretz Yisrael, a clod of earth is placed in the coffin, as it is written, 'His land will atone for His people.'" The halachah follows Rabee Elazar, and burial in Eretz Yisrael is effective even for those who never lived there.

One of the fundamental tenets of Judaism discussed by the Rambam (a"h) is that the dead will come to life once again in the era of Mashiach. The Gemara of Ketuvot explains that all the dead will be resurrected in Eretz Yisrael. The bodies of those who are buried outside of Eretz Yisrael will burrow through the earth until they reach the land and there their neshamot will be reinstated in their bodies. For tzadikim, special tunnels will form beneath the ground, to make the journey easier and more dignified.

In order to avoid this whole process, many choose to be buried in the soil of the Holy Land. Notwithstanding the great zechut of being buried in Eretz Yisrael, some great Jewish leaders have opted to be buried in the galut to be close to their flock, just as Moshe Rabeinu was buried in the galut by Divine decree. Here is how the Midrash recounts the incident:

Hashem, said to Moshe: "With what right do you request to enter the Land? I will illustrate a mashal of a shepherd who went out to pasture the king's flock. Alas, the entire flock was captured by bandits. When the shepherd wished to enter the royal palace, the king said to him: "If you come in now, what will people say? That it was you who caused the flock to be taken! Your glory Moshe is that you took 600,000 people out of bondage. But now you will have buried them in the wilderness and bring a different generation into the land? This being so, people will say that the generation of the wilderness have no share in Olam Haba! No, better be beside them and you shall enter with them in the time of Mashiach." (Midrash Bamidbar Rabah).

ON THE HEELS OF TU B'SHEVAT

Continued

The man planting the tree lived with the accepted reality that we are here in this world to plant. "Those who sow with tears, reap in joy!" In this world of action, we perform tasks whose results are beyond our imagination. Just as we enjoy the benefits and the bounty of sacrifices made by previous generations, we too are receiving and passing on dreams to future worlds. It is not our purpose in this place to reap the results of our investments. We are granted just enough nachat to encourage us to keep on moving and doing. To be a mere spectator in life without an active purpose is an exercise in futility and likely yields a lethal dose of frustration.

It is told that Rabbi Shelomo Hyman (a"h), the first Rosh Yeshiva of Torah V'Daat, was once giving a shiur on a snowy day. Although there were only two students present, he gave the lesson with the same thunderous enthusiasm as if the room was filled with many more. One of the students told the Rebbe, "There are only two of us here!" Rabbi Hyman answered, "I'm teaching you, your children and all your talmidim. I see thousands here." One of the students was inspired at that moment to begin a dedicated career of education. There were thousands in the room that day.

On Tu B' Shevat, we honor the vision, the process, and the endless possibility for productive living. Since, as David Hamelech says, (Tehilim 90:10) "The days of our years are seventy." We may now appreciate that question differently, "Can a person sleep for 70 years?"

ANSWER TO RIDDLE

Vowels



SHABBAT SECRETS

A Series On Shabat & Its Holiness

Learning Torah After The Meal

Part 2

Rabbi Eliezer of Paksh (a"h) once spent a Shabat in Sanz. To his surprise, absolutely nothing transpired for the first three hours of the Sanzer Rebbe's Tish Friday night. The Rebbe sat with his eyes closed, seemingly dozing off into dreamland. The Rabbi of Paksh wondered at this bizarre way of conducting the Shabat Tish. In his own home following the meal, he would sit and learn as his father and his Rabanim had done. After all, he thought, "The study of Torah is equivalent to performing the mitzvot."

Suddenly, the Sanzer Rebbe opened his eyes and cried out, "Hey, Paksher Rav! I see you are questioning our ways and you're thinking that instead of dozing off we should be learning Chumash with Ramban or learning Hilchot Shabat. Let me explain what you saw here tonight."

"When visitors saw the king sitting on his throne in all his splendor surrounded by his honor guard, they became awestruck, unable to utter a word. To acclimate his visitors to such a majestic sight, the king arranged for them to be led through a series of chambers where paintings of the king are displayed, and only then would they come into the presence of the king himself.

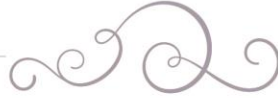
One day, the king summoned a man to appear at the royal court to discuss an important matter. Arriving at the palace, the man went through the various chambers where he gazed in amazement at the pictures of the king. Fascinated by the portraits, he lost track of time and arrived late for his meeting with the king. "Your majesty, please forgive me for being late. I was admiring the gracious expressions on your portraits, and became totally engrossed, and lost track of the time."

"In the same way, I really should conclude the meal and start studying Torah - but I'm so enthralled with the sweetness of Shabat which is a reflection of Hashem that I can't tear myself away and I lose track of time."

Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!



Candlelighting Time

**5:16pm
NY TIME**



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