



Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashdod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orotheim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hilula

14 – Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, author of
'Nefesh HaChaim'

15 – Yehuda ben Ya'akov Avinu a"l, born
and died on this date

16 – Rabbi Mordechai Menachem
Mendel Kalish

17 – Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Broide

18 – Rabbi Aharon Cohen, Rosh Yeshiva
Chevron

19 – Rabbi Shmuel Hominer, author of
'Eved Hamelech'

20 – Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Leviton,
author of 'Nechach HaShulchan'



Yitro's Greatness

A strange and fascinating argument took place between Moshe Rabbeinu a'h and his father-in-law, Yitro. Moshe Rabbeinu a'h begs Yitro not to leave Bnei Yisrael and return to his land, rather he should remain with them and accompany them to Eretz Yisrael, even promising him a portion of the Land. Yitro refuses his son-in-law's entreaties to remain with Bnei Yisrael, and states, "I shall not go; only to my land and my family shall I go" (Bamidbar 10:30).

This disagreement requires explanation. How can it be that when Yitro heard about the Splitting of the Sea and the war that Amalek instigated, he left behind his honorable position in Midian, and journeyed to the desolate wilderness to hear words of Torah and become part of Hashem's nation? Furthermore, this same Yitro, who merited a Parsha named after him and is also known as 'Chovev' because he loved (חיבב) the Torah, refused the Gadol and Leader of the generation who begged him to remain with them since he has "been as eyes for us".

Moshe Rabbeinu wanted Yitro to remain with Bnei Yisrael so as to 'be their eyes'. The implication is that as he used to be a priest in Midian yet renounced all of his idol-worship, all his honor, possessions and family for the sake of the holy Torah, he would light up their eyes and teach them a lesson about what is important in life. But how did Yitro respond? "I shall not go, only to my land and my family I shall go".

The puzzling Chazal that Rashi quotes, why did Yitro wish to return? 'Whether for my possessions, whether for my family', makes it even harder to understand. For the sake of his possessions and family, Yitro wanted to leave Bnei Yisrael and the resting place of the Shechina?

I would like to suggest the following appropriate and tasteful answer. Yitro certainly did not wish to return to Midian to delight in his family or any other material pleasure. His thoughts lay in a completely different direction. Yitro was a righteous convert and his love for Hashem and thirst for Torah was an example for Bnei Yisrael. He was not satisfied with the righteous level that he attained in the Wilderness, inside the holy camp where the Shechina rested. He simply wanted to see if he would remain in his righteousness even after he had left Bnei Yisrael behind and returned to Midian, to his land and birthplace, a place of idol worship. There too, would he remain righteous and overcome the inherent challenges, without feeling embarrassed by those who would mock him?

Due to this, Yitro was not convinced by Moshe Rabbeinu's promise to give him a portion of the inheritance in Eretz Yisrael, for he was not interested in receiving a 'free' portion from land that was destined for the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov alone. Rather he wished to strive and remain righteous especially in Midian, and fight against his evil inclination using the Torah that he already possessed, uprooting his negative traits particularly in the place where he had acquired them. Only once he has achieved this will he return to Bnei Yisrael with his entire family, and accept a portion of the land from them.

It was for a very good reason that Moshe asked Yitro to remain in the Wilderness because had he remained with Bnei Yisrael in the resting place of the Shechina, he could have achieved greater heights than by returning to Midian. Nevertheless, Yitro wished to test himself and see how he could grow and sanctify G-d's Name in Midian, and maybe even 'serve as eyes', as a guide, for his family and townsmen, for through observing his behavior they too might repent and wish to join Hashem's nation.

The reason why the Torah writes this whole episode is to teach us the rule, 'Not study but practice is the main thing' (Avot 1:17). Meaning, even if one is occupied with Torah day and night and one's entire being is surrounded by the light of one's teachers, of what value is this if he doesn't remember the main goal of putting his learning into practice, for example when he leaves the Yeshiva. For if not, he will quickly descend and forget all the inspiration that his teachers infused in him, and there will soon be no remembrance of all that he studied in the Beit Midrash.

Yitro wished to teach the people of Midian the principle 'Study that leads to practice is great' (Kiddushin 40b). That was why he left Bnei Yisrael and came to Midian to teach the people the correct path. If they would not accept his teachings, he would then leave them and return to Eretz Yisrael, the Holy Land, as indeed he did so afterwards.

If G-d forbid, a person forgets this principle of practice being fundamental, eventually, he will come to deny the Torah and the One who gave it, even if he occupies himself with Torah without cessation since his sole intention is to crown himself with Torah and benefit from its honor. This type of person is like a soldier without a uniform. Nothing will help him, for it is the uniform that reminds the soldier to obey the officer's orders.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

A Story of Divine Providence

On one of the occasions that I was in Mexico, an extremely affluent person approached me. He wished to consult with me concerning his multifarious business affairs, since he was deliberating where to invest his money and as to the most appropriate timing. I was about to return to France and did not have sufficient time to give the matter its due attention, so I asked him to leave all the documents with me and when I would get back to France I would look through them and then be able to advise him.

I took these important papers, on which enormous sums of money were documented, and placed them in my hand luggage, despite this involving a certain element of risk. If the airport tax authorities would come across them in my bag, I would likely be detained for questioning about their true nature.

Indeed, when I arrived at the airport in France, the customs authorities asked if I have anything to declare. When I answered in the negative, the official asked about the purpose of my trip to Mexico. I explained to him that I had travelled there to encourage the Jewish community. "I am a Rabbi, not a businessman, I have no connection to business affairs." This was my answer. But for some reason, the official was not satisfied with this and asked to open my hand luggage to check its contents. Those very documents that the wealthy individual had deposited with me, where huge sums were written black on white, were now in full view...

I was now most concerned for I realized that they will investigate to clarify the significance of these documents that they had found in my possession. This was something that I just did not have the strength for, especially since I had spent an extremely busy week occupied with zikui harabim and different public concerns. Besides, I planned to go straight to the hospital from the airport, to visit a sick Jew who was extremely ill, whose family members were impatiently waiting for me to come and bless him. So, I lifted my eyes heavenward in a silent prayer to the Creator of the world, that He should deliver me from this awkward situation that I had been caught up in.

Although it seemed to me like an eternity, after a few moments the tax official returned the documents to me and announced that I was free to go on my way...

This is a story of Divine Providence, one of the many that surround me at all times, where I tangibly see the extent of Hashem's assistance. Great siyata dishmaya accompanies me at every step of my way in life, and this is due to the merit of the public that stands for me. Hashem sees how much effort I put forth in bringing His children closer to Torah and mitzvot, which indeed involves great self-sacrifice. I feel that this is my entire purpose in life, to sanctify His Name in the world and spread the light of His Torah to the public. And so, He assists me in supernatural ways, for Chazal have already told us (Shabbat 104a), "One who comes to purify himself will be assisted".

The Haftarah

"Sing and be glad" (Zechariah 2)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah talks about the Menorah that the Navi Zechariah saw, while in the Parsha we are told about the command to kindle the Menorah.

Guard Your Tongue

Praising in Public

It is forbidden to praise someone in public since due to the large gathering there is bound to be someone among the audience who is jealous of this person and on hearing his praise will begin relating his shortcomings.

If the speaker presumes that the listeners will not degrade this person, for example, they are not familiar with him, it is permissible to praise him, even in public, as long as the praise is not excessive.



In Our Father's Path

Abbreviation for 'Remove Resentment'

"Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth!" (Bamidbar 12:3)

The talmidim of the pious Gaon, Rabbi Ben Tzion Abba Shaul zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Porat Yosef', testified about him that he excelled in the attribute of the pious, 'who are insulted but do not insult, who hear their disgrace but do not respond'.

The holy Gaon Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera zya"a, once told his disciples that there is no greater person than Rabbi Ben Tzion in the entire world. They asked him how he could make such a statement when his father, Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzera, the Baba Sali zya"a, was still alive? Rabbi Meir answered, "I am not referring to angels, I am talking about human beings. The 'Baba Sali' is in all respects an angel, and I am talking about human beings who live among us and see the world as we do, yet still achieve that level. This is where I see no one greater than Rabbi Ben Tzion!"

Rabbi Ben Tzion himself once revealed a small drop of his piety, when he whispered to the famous Yerushalmi mohel, Rabbi Mordechai Sasson shlita: "They say about me that my blessings heal the sick. But you should know that it is only because I do not carry a trace of resentment in my heart regarding anyone in the world!"

On that same occasion Rabbi Ben Tzion zt"l revealed another gem, concerning the terrible illness which causes tremendous suffering:

"Cancer (sartan in Hebrew) is an abbreviation for 'sar tina', remove resentment..."

In the sefer 'Or L'Tzion', Rabbi Ben Tzion's brother relates:

"One night thieves entered our home and cleared it out of anything valuable. It was a terrible feeling, to return home and find it in chaos. All the drawers had been removed and their contents spilled on the floor. The books were ripped off the shelves and piled up in heaps, the freezer was open, the closets were broken into. Strangers had invaded and left the house in total disarray. The silver display cabinet had relinquished all its beauty, the candlesticks and Kiddush cups, the Havdalah candle and spices were no longer. The jewelry had been pillaged. The awful feeling is impossible to describe. Just a short time before, my brother's home had also been the target of a break-in, and the thieves had stolen the Rabbanit's jewelry. Of course, at the time we were upset for them, but when it happens to you, the pain and feelings of affront are sevenfold sharp.

We went over to Rabbeinu's home to share our anguish. We told the Rabbanit about the chaos that the thieves had left in their wake, and that we had called the police who had taken fingerprints. The Rabbanit listened, felt our distress and responded: "Now I remember that when it happened to us, Rabbeinu's immediate reaction was to call out, "I forgive them, I forgive them! I do not want to return to this world as a transmigrated soul because of money".

We were astounded on hearing of this lofty level that he had attained! This was his instantaneous reaction!"



Pearls of the Parsha

Free of Pride

"Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person" (Bamidbar 12:3)

Rabbi Shimon Abecassiss zt"l, in his sefer 'Ach Tov L'Yisrael', points out that it would seem enough to say "now the man Moshe was humble, more than any person". The word 'מאד', exceedingly, seems to be superfluous?

He answers by quoting the Gemara (Sotah 5a), "Rav Chiyya bar Ashi said that Rav said, a Talmid Chacham must have one-eighth of one-eighth of arrogance". If so, it was appropriate that Moshe Rabbeinu, who was the Gadol Hador, should have felt at least one-eighth of one-eighth of pride.

Therefore, the Torah stresses and praises Moshe "now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person", implying that even one-eighth of one-eighth of pride he did not possess.

Speaking Good About Bnei Yisrael

"For Hashem has spoken of good for Israel" (Bamidbar 10:29)

The concept 'speaking of good' is mentioned twice in the Torah. The first time is here in Parshat Beha'alotcha, and the second time in Megillat Esther, referring to Mordechai "who spoke good for the king".

The 'Igre D'kala' tells us that here lies a wonderful hint and important principle. Namely, that if one speaks positively about Bnei Yisrael, it is considered as if he spoke positively about the king, meaning the King of the world.

And of course, the opposite is true. Anyone who speaks badly of Yisrael, it is as if, G-d forbid, he is speaking negatively about the King of the world!

In this vein, the sefer 'Ravid Hazahav' explains the verse "just as he will have inflicted a wound on a person, so shall be inflicted upon him". Meaning, if one inflicts a wound on a person, it is as if he has inflicted a wound on Hashem.

Therefore, it is incumbent on each person to judge his friend favorably and not be quick to judge that his friend intended to taunt him or speak negatively about him and in this way it will cause him to speak positively.

There is Crying and Crying

"For you have wept in the ears of Hashem, saying: Who will feed us meat? for it was better for us in Egypt! So, Hashem will give you meat and you will eat" (Bamidbar 11:18)

The Ohr Hachaim HaKadosh zya"a asks, surely this is the way that when a person is faced with troubles he cries to Hashem, so why were they punished for crying?

He answers that there is crying and there is crying. There is crying out of hope and entreating for mercy, crying with faith that Hashem will come to his aid. On the other hand, a person may cry out of despair, as if he has no hope, G-d forbid.

This was the claim on Bnei Yisrael, that they cried out of despair and a lack of faith. They said in a definite fashion, "Who will feed us meat?", there is no one who can help us! They did not pray and cry out of hope and faith, so their question was considered as heresy and a profanation of G-d's Name. This is why Hashem punished them.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



Habit is a Great Detriment in Avodat Hashem

The verse tells us (Bamidbar 11:5-6) "We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt free of charge; the cucumbers, melons... But now, our life is parched, there is nothing; we have nothing to anticipate but the manna!".

This is very perplexing. Why would Bnei Yisrael prefer to eat cucumbers and melons rather than the manna? Do not Chazal tell us (Yoma 75a) that the manna contained every type of taste? Chazal also say (ibid), that women's jewelry, precious stones and pearls also came down together with the manna.

In addition, the manna was spiritual food that the Angels ate, as it says (Te-hillim 78:25), "Humans ate the bread of angels". If so how come Bnei Yisrael did not marvel at the manna, and even spoke evil of it?

The answer lies in the power of habit. Even though one cannot describe Bnei Yisrael's great amazement when they experienced the miracle of the manna falling for the first time, and when they ate it and could taste any taste that they wished, they were certainly most enthused. But slowly the power of habit captured the place of the miraculous, which is why they started becoming oblivious to the great good that it contained.

A person should learn from His Creator's attributes. In the Shacharit prayer, we say in the blessing of 'Yotzer Or', "In His goodness He renews daily, perpetually, the work of creation". Every single day Hashem renews the remarkable creation and breathes the spirit of life into it. So too it is incumbent on man when performing mitzvot and studying Torah, to rekindle his enthusiasm in the service of Hashem, as if it is his first time performing this holy service.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

"Why did you not fear to speak against My servant Moshe?"

(Bamidbar 12:8)

Miriam was disgraced in front of all Bnei Yisrael for speaking disparagingly about Moshe Rabbeinu a"h, even though Moshe, out of his great modesty, did not hold it against her. The extent of his modesty is demonstrated in this week's Parsha, with the incident of Eldad and Medad who prophesied in the camp. What was Moshe's response? "Would that the entire people of Hashem could be prophets!"

Chazal have instructed us as to the appropriate behavior with Talmidei Chachamim, by saying (Avot 2:10) "but beware of their glowing coal lest you be burnt – for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like fiery coals".

Concerning this directive 'beware of their glowing coal', a horrific story is related about the owners of the Slavita printing press. Rabbi Moshe, son of Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz, and his sons, trained and specialized in the printing profession, were advised to establish a printing press in the city of Slavita, where they could print an impressive edition of the entire Talmud.

At the outset of this holy endeavor, Rabbi Moshe and his sons turned to the Gedolei Hador asking for a written agreement that for ten years from the day they finish printing the Talmud in the Slavita printing press, no other person would be granted permission to print the Shas, in line with the prohibition of overstepping someone else's livelihood.

The Gedolim agreed, among them the Chatam Sofer, the Gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger, and other Rabbanim. And so, over the next five years, Rabbi Moshe and his sons merited printing the entire Talmud in great splendor. On its completion, many people quickly bought the Shas, and within a few years, nearly all the copies were sold. Rabbi Moshe, and his sons who were

his partners in the business, deliberated printing another edition of the Talmud. But they were told that Rabbi Menachem Man Rohm of Vilna, had also decided to print the Talmud in Vilna, even though ten years had not yet elapsed from when they had finished printing the Talmud in Slavita.

They turned to the Gedolim, among them the Gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger, demanding that they declare their disagreement, despite their initial consent to the Vilna printing.

After Rabbi Akiva Eiger heard the claims of both sides, he ruled that since the Slavita printers had sold almost all their printed copies, and since the Vilna printers had expressed their willingness to buy all remaining copies at a said price, the Slavita printers cannot detain the Vilna printing, and the Rohm family have permission to print a new edition of the Talmud in Vilna. Even though there were several Rabbanim who defended the Slavita printers, the ruling of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, in favor of the Vilna printers, was the accepted ruling.

But Rabbi Moshe and his sons, noting that there were some Rabbanim who justified their stance, erred and listened to the advice of unscrupulous people. They announced publicly that one should not rely on Rabbi Akiva Eiger's ruling since he is already elderly and it is his son Rabbi Shlomo Eiger who directs all his actions. This statement greatly angered Rabbi Akiva Eiger and despite his typical humility, he stood facing the holy heichal and out of pain and aggravation declared, "Master of the world, I learn Your Torah, and according to Your Torah I rule. Even if I am prepared to forgo my honor, do not forgo the honor of Your Torah!" and these people should be punished.

At that time a terrible thing occurred. One of the workers of the Slavita press, a professional bookbinder who bound the Talmud, hung himself in the printing house in a state of drunkenness and recklessness and died. The maskilim used this incident to inform on the Jews, and reported to the authorities that this worker was hung by the owners of the printing press.

Out of their great hatred for the Jews which bubbled in their blood, the Russian government fell on this opportunity and imprisoned the brothers. Day after day, for three long years, they were subjected to exhaustive interrogations, while they

languished in prison with robbers and murderers, amid terrible afflictions. In the end, the cruel verdict was laid forth: The brothers would have to pass between two rows of Russian soldiers, each of whom would hold a whip in his hand, and each of the brothers would receive one thousand five hundred lashes. If they would remain alive after suffering through this torture, they will be exiled to Siberia for the rest of their lives.

On Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul 5599, the cruel verdict was carried out. In the town square two rows of soldiers, one opposite the other, stood to attention, brandishing whips in their hands. Each row numbered two hundred and fifty soldiers and each brother had to pass between the narrow passageway three times while absorbing the whips and lashes. The soldiers approached the first brother and undressed him completely. Only his white kippah remained on his head, this was the only request that the Russian authorities had agreed to fulfil. Quietly, he placed his spirit in G-d's hand, and with his hands tied and body naked, he offered his back...

Three times he walked up and down between the rows of soldiers and remained alive. After taking him to the hospital, it was the second brother's turn. He too received one thousand five hundred lashes. This cruel decree hastened the end of their father's life, and in the year 5600 he passed away. After much effort and bribing on the part of the Chassidim of Koritz and Slavita, Nikolai the tyrant agreed to pardon the brothers, and their Siberian exile was exchanged for life imprisonment in Moscow. Only after Nikolai's death were the brothers freed.

These brothers accepted the decree upon themselves, realizing that it was a punishment for insulting the honor of the Gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger. They would repeat the Mishna, "Warm yourselves by the fire of the Sages, but beware of their glowing coal lest you be burnt – for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like fiery coals".