

זכור את־יום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל־מלאכתך,
יום השביעי שבת לה'

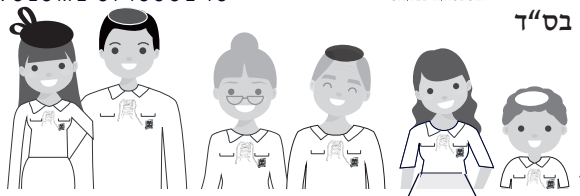
SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

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בס"ד



TORAH AS A GUIDE

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SHEVET MORASHA

Parashat Yitro is one of those Parshiot which truly embodies everything we stand for as Jews. It's in this week's Sedra where G-d reveals Himself to the entire Jewish nation on Har Sinai and the entire Jewish nation hear G-d's voice as we experience Matan Torah, something which we still celebrate today. Whilst we learn that G-d taught Moshe the entire Torah and all 613 mitzvot, not all of these commandments, or mitzvot apply to all Jews. Many can only be performed in Israel. Nonetheless, there are still mitzvot which apply to all of us, mitzvot that we can still carry out and perform.

The question which bothers many people is: "Is this what G-d wanted from us, that we should be a bunch of robots just following directions, without any feeling or participation in our decision process? Is there even such a thing as individualism?"

The Midrash Tanchuma states "the mitzvot were not given as a set of rules but to refine people through them." In other words, G-d is challenging us to grow through our behaviour and how we conduct ourselves. It is a goal that has been set for us to fulfil our potential which is the greatest form of individualism. Therefore, rather than the commandments and mitzvot being perceived as a burden and a set of responsibilities on us, they are really opportunities

to enable us to reach our true potential.

Rav Sampson Raphael Hirsch writes that the word תורה comes from the word which means to conceive (הרה). Rav Hirsch expounds on this by saying that the goal of the Torah is to plant G-d's thoughts into our minds and hearts. They need to become a part of us; part of how we think and behave. Rav Hirsch elaborates further, saying that whilst we need to engage in our own feelings and emotions, we also need to specifically concentrate on our own feelings of uniqueness and individuality on a personal level in terms of how we engage with the Torah. After all, one who embraces the teachings of the Torah in thought and deed, becomes an instrument of G-d's will, and a messenger of G-d.

To conclude, adhering to the mitzvot is a choice that we make. Its not G-d programming us on how we should behave and what we should and should not do, but rather G-d nurturing us in how we should conduct ourselves on both a personal and community level. Its a guide on how we should navigate our way through challenges and therefore advise us on the decisions we should and shouldn't make. The Torah was given to the entire Jewish people. It is G-d's way of challenging us to make the best of our own unique selves. As the Jewish Nation, we have risen to the challenge, and that is why with G-d's help, we are still here going strong as a people.

JOEL IS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF EDGWARE SVIVA 5781.

London	In: 16:42 Out: 17:52	Oxford	In: 16:43 Out: 17:56	Leeds	In: 16:38 Out: 17:54
Manchester	In: 16:45 Out: 17:57	Bristol	In: 16:49 Out: 18:02	Liverpool	In: 16:45 Out: 18:01
Cambridge	In: 16:36 Out: 17:50	Birmingham	In: 16:43 Out: 17:58	Jerusalem	In: 16:41 Out: 17:56

HEARING AND ACTING

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



Before being told of the most significant event in Jewish history, we are introduced to an outsider, Yitro, who decided to join the Jewish people. The Torah tells us that Yitro came upon hearing

all that Hashem had done for the Jewish people by taking them out of Egypt. Rashi's question of "מה שמועה שמע וּבֵא" (What did he hear that caused him to come?) seems a bit strange. The verse explicitly states that Yitro heard that Hashem had taken the Jews out of Egypt! Many have explained that Rashi is not simply questioning what it was that Yitro heard, but rather what it was that he heard that caused him to act. The answer he gives is the splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek.

At first glance, this doesn't seem to answer the question. Yitro was not alone in learning of these events. The splitting of the sea was known everywhere throughout the world. Chazal say that when the sea split for Bnei Yisrael, all the waters in the world split at the same time. The depth of Chazal's statement is that even in an age before social media, the news of this particular miracle reached everyone the world over.

Regarding Amalek, Chazal compare their attack to one who jumps into a scalding bath. Although they themselves are burned, the bath is cooled for others. So too after the miraculous exodus from Egypt and all that accompanied it, it was obvious to all that the Jewish people were untouchable. Yet once Amalek attacked, the nations of the world

felt that maybe they had a chance in battle after all, (and in fact the years in the desert were accompanied by wars with Sichon and Og. Once again, this was an event that left an indelible imprint on world consciousness. How could we say that only Yitro heard about it?

The Netivot Shalom explains the depth behind Rashi's answer. The splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek were not two isolated events that led Yitro to his conclusions. Rather it was the fact that these two events could

follow one another that caused him to get up and act. After the splitting of the sea the entire world was inspired. We read last week how the nations heard and trembled, how they were gripped by fear. At that moment it would have been unthinkable for Amalek or anyone else to attack the Jewish people.

Yet attack they did. The fear had subsided, the inspiration had

disappeared and it was back to business as usual. The knowledge that after such a powerful and awe-inspiring moment one could slip back into one's preconceived notions as if nothing had ever happened was what forced Yitro to act. He was determined not to fall into that trap, and he succeeded.

The lesson to learn from Yitro is that inspiration needs to be seized and acted upon. Powerful experiences can remain just that: experiences, forgotten as quickly as they came. But if we follow Yitro's example, we have the potential to change them into truly life-changing moments.

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A TASTE FROM THE ARCHIVES: NEVER FEAR, YITRO'S HERE 5775

MITCHELL COHEN | SHEVET DVIR

According to The Talmud (Sotah 11a), Pharaoh had three advisors: Yitro, Iyov and Bilaam. When Pharaoh was deciding the most prudent method to exterminate the Jewish people, he sought the opinion of each of them. This is our first encounter with Yitro. Unlike the other two advisors, he vocally rejected Pharaoh's idea of exterminating the Jewish people. Yitro believed it was wrong to make people suffer for no crime other than being Jewish. Yitro's loud protests angered Pharaoh and he had to flee Egypt in order to save his life. This is how he and Moshe met in Midian, where he was an idol-worshipping priest.

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A question we must ask is, why did Yitro join the Jewish people? He lived a very comfortable life in Midian. Why would he leave that in order to walk through the desert with a group who had just escaped Egypt?

Rashi explains the opening words of this week's parasha, "וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ" and Yitro heard," (Shemot 18:1) to refer to Yitro's hearing the news of the miraculous splitting of the Reed Sea and the victory in the war against Amalek.

Despite the fact that the miracles Hashem performed for the Jewish people became widely known, it is remarkable that Yitro was the only one from Midian who left the pleasures of idolatrous life to follow Hashem. Everyone around him continued to sin, and only he could not tolerate their behaviour any longer. He was able to overcome the influence of the society around him and map out his own course.

This may be why this week's parasha is named after Yitro, and a reason why he plays such a prominent role so close to the giving of the Torah. We can see that Yitro had no fear of standing up for what he believed

in, whether it was standing up to Pharaoh - the most powerful man, or standing up to his society and leaving material comforts to join the Jewish people.

What made his action even more powerful was that he did it on his own. It can teach us not to be afraid to keep our commandments, and stand up for them even in difficult times. If Yitro can do it then so can we.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Applications are open for **Summer Machane 5781!** Join us from **2nd-15th August** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- **Svivot are continuing!** Look out for updates and virtual events from your local sviva or visit www.bauk.org/svivot.

- **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Coronavirus has hit Bnei Akiva hard, costing us over £150,000. Our Mazkirut, Bogrim and Madrichim have been working tirelessly to put on a range of fantastic programming for our youth, from Machane Aviv last Spring, to a celebration of Israel like no other on Yom Ha'atzmaut, a packed summer of programming for over 400 children, and Winter Machane. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign**. Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Keep an eye out for **exciting virtual events** for all ages! **Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA**

- **Join over 100 Chaverim at our National Shabbat Ha'Irgun!!** Each Sviva across all our local communities will be running a special Shabbat Ha'Irgun this year. Open to all children in **Years 1-10**, you can join your Madrichim for a weekend full of **activities, Tochniot, Ruach and more** on the **19th-21st February!** Every child will receive a **special Shabbat**

Ha'Irgun activity pack delivered straight to your door with games, presents, challenges and messages from the Bnei Akiva community. Whilst you'll sign up with your local Sviva and have activities with your favourite Madrichim, you'll also get to join in with the whole country for some awesome National events throughout the weekend. **Sign up today for just £5 a person at bauk.org/shabbat-hairgun.**

- We're delighted to announce **Limmud Mercazi 5781!!** Join us for an evening where we unite through learning in memory of the victims of the Mercaz haRav 5768 terror attack, and all other terror attacks on the Jewish people, as we hear from leading speakers in the Jewish community. Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/limmud-mercazi>.

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiaktivauk)** to stay informed of our online content!

- To receive weekly copies of **Shabbat Lashem**, sign up for our mailing list at bauk.org/contact.

- Visit bauk.org/feedback for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!

SHABBAT SHALOM!!!



Limmud Mercazi

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FEATURING LEADING SPEAKERS FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

14/02/2021 | 8:30-10:15 PM

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