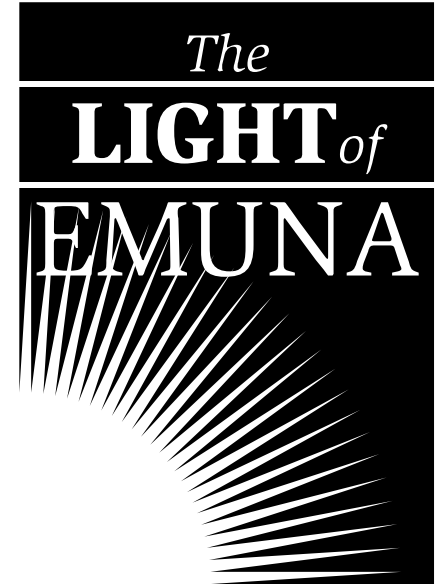


פרשת יתרו

This week's adaptation is dedicated in memory of:
our dear grandfather - R' Yankel Zimmer a"h
לז"נ ר' אברהם יעקב ב"ר אהרון אליעזר זימער ז"ל
נפטר כ' שבט תשמ"ג תנצב"ה - February 3, 1983



Based on Harav Menachem Azolai's "Ohr Ha'Emuna"

"וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה את כל אשר
עשה אלקים" (יח, א)

"Yisro, the minister of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard everything that Hashem did."

Originally, he was called Yeser (יתר) as it states in the *pasuk*, "So Moshe went and returned to Yeser, his father-in-law."¹ As his actions became more refined, an additional letter was added to his name, just as we witnessed with Avram becoming Avraham, Sarai becoming Sarah and Hoshea becoming Yehoshua. Due to the improved nature of their behavior, a letter was added. By contrast, when people perform evil deeds, a letter is removed from their names - אהאב became אהב, עפרון became עפר, יהונדב became יונדב and אהאב became אהב.²

"אני חתנך יתרו, בא אליך" (יח, ו)
"I, your father-in-law, Yisro, have come to you."

This week's *parsha* contains the Revelation at Sinai - a one-of-a-kind revelation before the entire nation. Hashem revealed Himself, personally, in His Glory, to each and every Jew - each one hearing and seeing His words. Chazal tell us that the souls of every Jew of all future generations were in attendance at this monumental assembly.

How did Yisro merit that this incomparable

¹ וילך משה וישב אל יתרו חתנו (ד, יח)
² מדרש הגדול

parsha bears his name? He earned it by way of his absolute submissiveness to Hashem. He heard everything that Hashem did and immediately abandoned his family and all of his idols - he quickly converted and proceeded to take refuge in the shadow of the wings of the Shechina. What did Yisro hear that caused him to upend his life so dramatically? Rashi quotes the *Gemara* and tells us that he heard about the splitting of the Sea and the battles with Amalek. The entire world heard of these events and yet they did not join the Jewish people. Chazal teach us that at the moment of the splitting of the Sea, all water in the world split, even the water in one's glass. During the battle with Amalek, Moshe stopped the sun and it did not set - everyone witnessed this feat. Similarly, for the duration of the giving of the Torah, no ox bleated, no bird chirped, the world was silent and all heard the voice of Hashem that pervaded the entire world from end to end. Everyone heard but did not defer, Yisro heard and accepted.

Submissiveness is one of the great secrets of life. Knowing how to forego, to bow one's head, to abstain even when spoken to harshly, to remain silent and proceed, learning not to clash with anyone, remembering that Hashem conducts the world and when things contrary to our desires occur - to bow our heads and accept them compliantly. We must remember that everything is from Hashem and is for the best. Silence is often worth gold. We need not always respond.

Often, additional words are superfluous and even damaging. Leave things unsaid and thereby receive answers. Silence often brings clarity and can uncover a way to fix what we thought to be beyond repair. Quiet is sweet – it can extract us from a black hole, from horrible suffering. Most of our misery in life stems from words spoken and regretted – the cure is to refrain. Eventually, Heaven will guide us toward the proper phrases at the appropriate times to best correct the harm that we have caused. Silence is humbleness. I will desist from responding, I will not argue. Let them think I am a mannequin, that I do not comprehend – when I am silent, I am with Hashem.

We can learn from the story of “Hersh the Servant.” When he was young, he served the holy Reb Mendel of Riminov zy”a. Everyone referred to him as “Hersh the Servant.” In the Rebbe’s house, he cleaned the ovens, clearing them and monitoring their heat. He did so with great love, feeling as though he were the Kohen Gadol clearing the coals from the Mizbeach. When he completed his chores, he would *daven* with tenacity and learn with tremendous diligence. The Rebbe observed Hersh’s elevated soul and formed a close bond with him, establishing him as the administrator of his home. Many of the Rebbe’s disciples were annoyed by this because Hersh appeared to be a simple man. They could not understand why the Rebbe held him in such high regard. One day, the Rebbe sent Hersh and another person to inspect the weights and measures of the local shops. They discovered a defective weight in the shop of one of the wealthy townspeople. The man explained that he never used that particular weight and so it was of no consequence. Hersh responded that even if it was unused, the *Gemara* forbids one from owning such a weight. The man burst into laughter, “since when did Hersh the Servant become a *halachic* adjudicator.” Reb Hersh remained silent and did not even relate the matter to his Rebbe. When his escort related what had happened, Reb Mendele gathered the entire town except for that particular wealthy shopkeeper and advised them about the *Halachos* of weights and measures and how one

man who had violated the *Halacha* had ridiculed Reb Hersh for correcting him. Throughout the Rebbe’s lecture, Reb Hersh stood by and wept. Eventually, the wealthy man learned of the gathering, hurried to the Rebbe’s house and begged for forgiveness. The Rebbe fined him a handsome sum to be distributed to the local paupers and then told him, “you mocked Reb Hersh the Servant regarding his abilities to decide *halachic* matters – I am not at all certain that the Rebbe who taught you Torah is as learned as Rebbe Hersh.” When the Chassidim inquired of Reb Hersh as to why he had cried during the Rebbe’s lecture, he explained that he had been *davening* to Hashem not to punish the wealthy man before he had a chance to appease Reb Mendele.”³

Silence is *emuna*.

When Moshe Rabbeinu ascended on high and saw what he saw, he asked Hashem why He did not give the Torah through R’ Akiva who was worthier than he. Hashem told him to be quiet – such is My will. When Moshe inquired as to R’ Akiva’s reward and was shown his flesh being flayed with iron combs, he asked if this was Torah and its reward. Again, Hashem commanded him to be silent. It seems as if Hashem was telling Moshe to stop asking questions, but, in reality, the explanation of this silence is that it is exactly what is called for under certain circumstances. This is a higher silence – a situation in which words are inappropriate – an amazing, sweet silence – words are unnecessary – feel rather than speak. Have *emuna* and suddenly there is a melody – Moshe sang. Come and sing from the pinnacle of *emuna* – a melody of *emuna*, a melody of the infinite light.⁴

This *parsha* is filled with humility, gentleness and self-nullification. When Yisro offers Moshe advice in appointing judges to help him – Moshe, the humblest of all men, lowers his head and accepts his father-in-law’s advice.

³

⁴

מרוה לצמא
באור פני מלך חיים

The nations of the world have all sorts of wise men and philosophers whose goal is to exhibit their wisdom and stand out – to prove that they are the wisest, most beautiful, most successful. This is the exact opposite of the Jewish people. Was there ever a wiser man than Moshe Rabbeinu, a more righteous man, a superior genius – anyone greater than Moshe Rabbeinu who ascended to heaven and returned? Yet, he received the Torah as a gift, not via his own intellect or wisdom. For forty days he learned the Torah each day and promptly forgot it until, finally, Hashem gave it to him as a gift. That is the essential difference between Yaakov and Eisav. The name Eisav comes from the word for action (עשייה) – he acts impulsively. Yaakov comes from the word for delay (מעכב) – he contemplates first, he deliberates. Yaakov is not looking to conquer the world - he does not believe that he can do everything at once. He acts slowly, deliberately – first he weeps, prays, meditates, yearns and begs – he pauses. He tells Eisav, “I will meet you later.” I cannot act impetuously. Yaakov, our father, whose path we emulate, taught us to act purposefully – we need not act hastily, jump in. We must act only after illuminating our will, with weeping, with tears, with contemplation – then Hashem completes our goals for us.⁵

Our most righteous and greatest people nullify themselves, are deferential. When Moshe and Yisro meet, the first thing they do is exchange greetings as equals.⁶ Amazing! Moshe, who received the Torah directly from Hashem, and Yisro, who came from the most distant and impure place, are referred to as “friends” – as if they were equals. Rebbe Nachman taught that this is the way of the *tzaddik* – he lowers himself and draws close anyone who has any desire for truth – as if they were true friends.

A person’s task is to consider all others to be superior to him. We are here to reveal Hashem’s Glory – G-d forbid if we misappropriate it for

⁵ באור פני מלך חיים
⁶ וישאלו איש לרעהו לשלום (יח, ז)

ourselves. We must constantly seek to transform all good feelings over our accomplishments into Hashem’s honor.

Arrogance is the belief that we accomplished, we performed – independent of Hashem. We must recognize that we are incapable without Hashem. It is uncomfortable to realize our dependency – but such is our obligation.

When we believe that things are coming to us, we experience much disappointment. We must understand that we are due nothing - we are no more deserving than anyone else. We must consider that others may have overcome much greater challenges than we have ever faced. We must deride our illusions of grandeur. Haughtiness is despicable to Hashem. All of our difficulties are designed to bring us back to reality. Hashem is always talking to us, reminding us.

Humility is in prayer. We must feel as if we are incapable without Hashem. We tend to think that we can manage alone. We believe that everything is alright, we work, we earn a living, we learn Torah, our children are okay – we don’t feel like we need Hashem. We must train ourselves to persistently ask Hashem for His assistance – then, everything changes. We must accustom ourselves to talk to Hashem throughout the day – to ask for help and to thank for every little thing. This takes time to perfect, to habituate ourselves – we can never stop. We cannot venture to do anything without Hashem.

Rav Eliezer Berland Shlita: If a person wishes to alter nature, to perform miracles, he must *daven* with humility and modesty, dutifully – to grasp that he is but a small person, smaller than any other Jew – then, he can accomplish anything with his *tefillos*.

Rebbe Nachman taught that with the power of *tefilla* we can achieve anything. Any Jew can perform miracles and wonders. Before the world was created, Hashem prepared all sorts of miracles, we need only ask for them. There is nothing more powerful than prayer, no gates are

sealed before it and nothing can stop it. All of our salvations are waiting, only our entreaties are absent.

Hashem is prepared to give us whatever we want but we must request them. Humility means knowing that there is nothing aside from Hashem – only He can help us. We should never feel like we are “bothering” Hashem – He does not want us to have “mercy” on Him – He wants us to ask. He does not want a person to ask for a month to live or a little bit of income – He wants us to ask for everything we need and want – for our spouses, for our children, for *shidduchim*, for livelihood, for long life – EVERYTHING. Hashem created the world to perform miracles for us.

A humble person, who does not live with expectations, can relate to others graciously, pleasantly – he loves others. The Jewish people

received the Torah “as one person, with one heart.” *Yiddishkeit* is love, peace and unity. To receive the Torah, there must be *achdus*.

Love is an obligation. There is no greater duty. We must use words that gladden the heart – between parents and children, between spouses, between friends. Unconditional love is the primary requirement for redemption. The entire Torah is summarized by “love your fellow as yourself.”

Reb Doyv's Corner⁷

“We have nothing but the moment at hand – the past is gone and the future is not here yet. Therefore, when we squander the moment at hand, we squander life itself. Any time we use for anything other than our purpose in life is wasted.” Garden of Wisdom - R' Shalom Arush

תפילה

Master of the World! Help me feel that I am a simple person, smaller than any other Jew, for this is difficult for me. I always focus on that one person who seems inferior, who I cannot help but feel superior to. Help me remember that I do not know what challenges he faces and how I would perform in his situation.

Help me, Father, to stop feeling more successful than others – that I am less superficial, more honest, more spiritual and all the other silliness that enters my mind. Help me understand that I know nothing about another and what appears on the outside has little to do with his true inner self. Help me, Father, to remember those times when people have completely surprised me and turned out to be so different than they first appeared.

Help me, Father, to conceal what I do and stop seeking other people's acknowledgment. For instance, when I give a respectable amount to a charity collector and he does not notice how much I gave. Help me be happy for whatever I can hide, for this is so difficult for me.

Help me, Father, not to be jealous of others' successes, but to be happy for them. Help me, Father, to accept humiliations passively, silently, without anger, without complaint, without exasperation – remembering that every time I am saddened by events, it is a sign that I am far from holy *emuna*.

Master of the World! Thank You for allowing me to feel like Your only child. Just help me remember that You have many only children like me.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

Do

Notice: The foregoing is based on my limited understanding of the Parsha Sheet, *Ohr Ha'Emuna*, disseminated by Harav Menachem Azolai *Shlita* and is not a complete or exact adaptation of *Ohr Ha'Emuna* and is not necessarily even a reliable interpretation of the ideas presented therein. *Ohr Ha'Emuna* is published in Hebrew; in translation, accuracy is always compromised. Rav Azolai has not reviewed this material - any inaccuracies, omissions or confusion should be attributed exclusively to me. I still hope you enjoy and it provides some *chizuk*.

©Dov Elias 5773.

To receive this adaptation by weekly email, email me at LightofEmuna@doveliass.com

⁷ From www.emunadaily.com.