



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH

ISSUE 17

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YITHRO

18th Shevat 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 18, verses 1 - 12

- ✚ When Yithro (Jethro), the priest of Midian and Moshe's father in law heard about all the miracles Hashem had done for Bnai Yisrael; he left Midian along with Moshe's wife and two children to meet up with Moshe.
- ✚ Upon hearing the account of how Hashem had delivered Bnai Yisrael out of Mitzraim (Egypt), Yithro offered up korbanos (sacrifices) to show his gratitude and acceptance that Hashem is truly the one and only G-d.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 18, verses 13 - 23

- ✚ Yithro observed how Moshe spent the majority of his days, judging all the people. So he advises him to create a judicial system for the menial disputes, so Moshe can concentrate and deal exclusively with the more difficult problems.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 18, verses 24 - 27

- ✚ Moshe heeded Yithro's advice and chose the most qualified men to assist him with his new service to judge the people.
- ✚ Yithro says farewell to Moshe and heads back to his homeland alone.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 19, verses 1 - 6

- ✚ Three months after leaving Mitzraim, Bnai Yisrael arrive at the base of Mount Sinai.
- ✚ Moshe ascends the mountain where Hashem tells him, if his people will obey his commandments they will become a kingdom of Kohanim (Cohen's) and henceforth be known as Hashem's holy nation.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 19, verses 7 - 19

- ✚ Moshe repeats Hashem's words to the Bnai Yisrael and they all cry out in unison, 'Naaseh Vnishma' (We will do and we will listen).
- ✚ Moshe tells the people to purify themselves and commands them not to touch the mountain because in three days' time, Hashem is going to descend onto the mountain to address them all personally.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 19, verse 20 – Chapter 20, verse 14

- ✚ With the sound of a Shofar (ram's horn) loudly ringing out, thunder and lightning enveloped the whole mountain as Hashem descended down immersed in a huge fiery cloud.
- ✚ For the first time ever Hashem's voice is heard in full clarity by every single person present, as Hashem recites the Ten Statements. (ten commandments) to them.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 20, verses 15 - 23

- ✚ Bnai Yisrael tremble in fear, as they witness the greatest ever event in Jewish history.
- ✚ They request Moshe to address them instead of Hashem as they feared they might die if Hashem continued speaking to them.
- ✚ Moshe enters the smoking cloud where the divine presence is waiting for him to receive two stone tablets for which the ten statements were inscribed in written form.
- ✚ Hashem relates to Moshe additional laws, which correlates into the 613 mitzvahs we know of today.

Haftorah –

YISHAYAH (ISAIAH) Chapter 6, verse 1 to Chapter 7, verse 6 and Chapter 9, verses 5 & 6

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ This week's Haftorah recounts the famed vision known as Maaseh Hamerkavah - the vision of Hashem as he sits upon his throne of glory.
- ✚ Yishayah prophesises the eventual destruction of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) and goes to King Achaz, to warn him and not to fear because the enemy alliance will not win the upcoming battle.
- ✚ Yishayah's prophecy continues that Chizkiyahu, will succeed the throne and will be crowned as "The Prince of Peace," returning the Jewish people back to an unprecedented devotion and commitment to Torah observance.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ In our Parsha Bnai Yisrael, upon receiving the torah became a kingdom of Kohanim meaning they are now Hashem's holy population.
- ✚ The Haftorah enforces this, making it clear that Hashem still expects the Jewish people to continue being that holy nation despite the fact they are not living as one at that time because they had rejected Hashem and his torah. Luckily Chizkiyahu succeeds in turning the situation around and their total annihilation is averted.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Engaging with heavy issues can really tax the mind. Sometimes we become so involved with the pursuit of an ideal, we can easily lose track of what it is going on around us. Sometimes all we need is to take some good advice from a friend or family member to help with lightening the load.

This is exactly what was happening with Moshe in this week's sedra. He was so engaged with the applications of Halacha, teaching Hashem's laws and resolving disputes, He did not realise it was actually affecting him in a negative way. Witnessing Moshe's burden, Yithro approaches him and offers advice on how to ease the situation.

Moshe's, acceptance of Yithro's recommendations shows the unparalleled greatness of his leadership and management style. How easy would it have been for him to say, "Look Here! I know you are my father-in-law and you mean well but who are you exactly to tell me what I should be doing. I'm in constant communication with Hashem and if he's upset with the way I'm doing things, He would tell me." However the Torah tells us, that didn't occur. To Moshe's credit, he gladly accepts Yithro's words of wisdom and changed the way he was governing his people accordingly.

Ben Zoma teaches us in the first line of chapter four in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the fathers), "Who is Wise? He who learns from every person", and there's no better example than this.

Moshe illustrates here two cases of his great leadership; firstly, the willingness to listen to advice, even when we are very busy and think we know what we are doing. Secondly, that at the end of the day, constructive criticism and useful advice is good advice, and that it can come from anyone. This is not an easy teaching to grasp as sometimes our ego likes to get in the way.

I personally feel strongly that this lesson has wide-reaching applications and can easily be applied in our daily life. There are so many people and professions we generally should give respect to but don't because they don't seem to listen. Politicians are a classic example.

I pray, especially with the Elections coming up, that everyone should take time out listen and heed to the good advice given. We all have the opportunity to learn and grow to become better and wiser people and just like Moshe, have the humbleness to accept and act upon the teaching.

