



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Yisro

January 21, 2022

A Taste of Torah

Rush to Judgement

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Some might argue that Yisro behaved like the quintessential father-in-law: He came to visit Moshe, and, upon arriving, began offering his illustrious son-in-law advice. The reality, however, is that Yisro's counsel was spot-on, so accurate that G-d Himself agreed.

By now you might be wondering as to the nature of Yisro's recommendation. (Perhaps you'd like to offer it to your own son-in-law.) Well, Yisro observed that Moshe was the sole individual judging and providing rulings for the Jewish People. Having one person dealing with all litigation and other Torah law-related issues of a nation some three million strong was not working out well, as Moshe was getting worn out, and anyone with an issue had to wait on line for extended periods of time. Yisro informed Moshe that, in his opinion, if a larger justice system comprised of multiple levels of judges was not created, neither Moshe nor the Jewish People could sustain the current arrangement.

Moshe presents Yisro's proposal to Hashem, and Hashem approves of the idea. The Torah thus has an entire section, that of Yisro's idea for a justice system and its implementation, added to it. Rashi notes that Yisro had a number of different names, one of which was Yeser, which means "extra," as a result of this new section of Torah that he brought about.

All this indicates that the creation of Yisro's justice system was an important and positive achievement. It is very strange, then, that Moshe, some forty years later, criticizes the Jewish People for enthusiastically embracing Yisro's idea. In the beginning of the Book of Devarim, Rashi (Devarim 1:14) tells us

that Moshe told the Jewish People, "You immediately agreed to this plan! You should have said, 'Our teacher Moshe, from whom is it better to learn Torah? From you or from your student?' Is it not from you, for you strained yourself over the Torah?"

Moshe's comments indicate that the very idea of learning from someone else besides Moshe was problematic. Ergo, Rashi continues that Moshe concluded that the Jewish People embraced the plan because they believed they could influence the other judges, something unthinkable with Moshe. However, it is clear that Moshe had an issue with the very idea of others going to anyone besides himself, for Moshe was a better source of Torah than his students. This is clearly at odds with Hashem's approval of Yisro's idea to appoint judges who would instruct the nation regarding the Torah's dictates.

In living a Torah life, we are often faced with contradictory needs, and creating a balance between them is absolutely imperative. Part of that balance is appreciating the importance of each side of the dilemma. You need to study Torah, but you also need to spend a great deal of time earning a livelihood. A balance must be created to provide ample time for both. Do you truly appreciate the importance of Torah study, or is it a distant second to your professional career, an afterthought at the end of your fulfilling, money-making day at work? Public prayer was shut down during the height of COVID to save lives, but did you truly feel a void in your daily life when you had to pray at home and do your utmost to recreate that elevated atmosphere of a synagogue?

Stories for the Soul

Whom Can You Trust?

Three community members came to Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik (1853-1918), outraged that their Rabbi had been caught taking funds from the community fund he oversaw. "If we can't trust the rabbi," they exclaimed, "whom can we trust!?"

Rav Chaim replied with a story: There was once a wealthy man who would regularly withdraw large sums of money from his bank account and store it in a safe at his home. One evening, three government officials appeared at his home and soberly informed him that they had reason to believe the bank was deceiving him, giving him counterfeit money. If it was indeed counterfeit, they needed to confiscate the money. Nervous, the wealthy man asked the officials what to do. "Well," they replied, "we need to check the money." Upon examining the money, though, they calmed down. "This looks like it may be real after all!" they said. "We just need to take it back to headquarters to confirm that it's not fake. Here's a receipt for the bills, and tomorrow morning, come to the government offices to reclaim your money." The fellow, relieved, allowed them to take the money.

But alas! When he arrived at the government offices the next morning, he was informed that he had been tricked by impostors posing as officials; three men had made off with his money!

The wealthy man was furious. "If you can't trust the government with your money, then who can you trust," he raged. The government clerk looked at him sympathetically. "You can certainly trust the government," he

continued on back

continued on back

Kollel Happenings

RABBI YOSSI EPHRATHI NOW TEACHING LEARN 2 LEARN GESHMAK

You may have limited experience learning Talmud. You may think that you don't enjoy serious Talmud study, that it's just not for you. But you haven't tried Learn 2 Learn Geshmak. A Gemara program crafted to give you the satisfaction and joy of learning, Learn 2 Learn Geshmak is taught by Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Ephrathi. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights at the Southeast Kollel Torah center, 8-9 pm, for men and women.

TALMUDO BIYADO GEMARA CLUB FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Learn, review, and acquire a masechta! Boys in grades 6-8 are invited to join Rabbi Chaim Gross at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochor weeknights Mon.-Thu. from 8-8:30 pm for a Gemara shiur followed by review. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

Halacha Riddles

Last week's question: How does the number of people in the *zimmin* affect the need to sit instead of being able to stand?

Answer: If a group of three men ate together and wish to *bentch*, but one of the group left the table, he may respond to the *zimmin* from his current location, even if he is outside the house (though he should be standing opposite the

doorway). However, for a group of ten, since Hashem's Name is mentioned, all ten must be seated with the group (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 194:2 with Mishna Berura 8).

This week's question: Two can force one, but one cannot force two. What is this referring to in the context of *zimmin*?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XXXV

Mr. Eichenbaum asked for some time to think over Rabbi Shapiro's request for land. The next day, he returned to Rabbi Shapiro and told him that he was going to decline acceding to

Rabbi Shapiro's request of providing a piece of the land. Rather, continued Mr. Eichenbaum, he was going to give the *entire* plot of land for the future yeshiva!

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

Moshe recognized and understood the great need to create a multi-tiered system of knowledgeable individuals who could serve as judges and teachers for the large nation. But the inevitability of moving away from hearing Torah straight from Moshe should have been cause for anguish among the Jewish People, not eagerness. Yes, we must move on, but we will look longingly over our collective shoulder as we step away from that close, intimate connection to Hashem that we now enjoy thanks to learning Torah straight from Moshe. When Moshe beheld the fervor of the people in setting up this new justice system, he realized

that something was amiss; they must not really care that much about losing this great opportunity. And so Moshe determined that they had other motives, that they wished to have judges whom they could influence. This, indeed, was a shortcoming worthy of rebuke.

Judaism demands that we take all priorities into account and make decisions that will satisfy all of the different needs that are present. It is the responsibility of each individual to chart an objective course that successfully navigates the many demands life throws one's way, and to maintain the proper perspective, as well.

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

replied. "The problem is with those who claim to be from the government, but aren't!"

"So, too," concluded Rav Chaim, "Rabbis are completely trustworthy. It is those who pretend to be rabbis who are the problem!"

In this week's parsha, Moshe appoints people to judge the nation at Yisro's behest. But, said Yisro, only those of impeccable character and sterling reputation may be appointed. Otherwise, their integrity cannot be relied upon.

To sponsor Torah Weekly, delivered weekly in print and via email to thousands of Jews worldwide, email info@denverkollel.org
Denver Community Kollel | 5080 W. 14th Ave., Denver, CO 80204 | 303-820-2855
info@denverkollel.org | www.denverkollel.org

To receive Torah Weekly by email, email to info@denverkollel.org