

Yisro 2015

1.

### Unity and Humility

“They journeyed from Rephidim and arrived at the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness; and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain.” (19, 2)

"ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחנו במדבר ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר."

Nachalas Tzvi pages 192-193:

Why does the pasuk say they *came* to Midbar Sinai instead they *went* to Midbar Sinai? Furthermore, why, when the pasuk relates that the Jews encamped by the mountain, does it use lashon yachid/singular tense? (After all there were approximately 3,000,000 people) Rashi quotes the Mechilta that explains that lashon yachid was used to tell us that the Jews were ‘like one man with one heart.’ During other encampments they argued or complained. They therefore were considered like many people in a group. Conversely, at this juncture they came and lived with complete achdus (unity) and were therefore viewed as one.

How does one obtain this achdus? Achdus is attained through humility; by everyone lowering themselves. With this idea we can explain the first Mishna in Avos (perik alef) that states ‘Moshe received the Torah from Sinai.’ Wouldn’t it make more sense to say Moshe received the Torah from Hashem? Rather it is coming to teach us that Moshe learned from Har Sinai the importance of being humble. For this reason Moshe merited to be the intermediary between Hashem and the Jews and to be the one to transmit the Torah.

This is what the pasuk means when it says they traveled from Rephidim and they came to Sinai. It’s saying that **they left the arrogance and arguments that they were involved with at Rephidim and came to the level of Sinai’s humility. They arrived as one nation and came together, at Har Sinai, with a renewed and strengthened level of humility and achdus.** (This coincides perfectly with first piece of Yisro 2014 where we discussed why the Ten Commandments are in the singular tense)

2.

### The Jews are a segulah/precious treasure

“And now, if you hearken well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for Mine is the entire world.” (19, 5)

"ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקלי ושמרתם את בריתי והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ."

Kemotzei Shlal Rav pages 243-344:

Rashi explains that the word ‘segulah’ in this pasuk means ‘a dear treasure chest’. In Birchas Hatorah we say ‘Hashem chose us from all the nations and gave us the Torah.’

Rav Dovid Shlomo Slokoch explains we are saying that we didn't just receive the Torah because all the other nations rejected it. Rather, Hashem chose us instead of the other nations. If that wasn't the case why would we be glorifying the fact that Hashem 'chose' us and gave us the Torah? You can compare it to a person who has many items placed before him and he is told to choose one of them; surely he is going to pick the best one. That is, how Hashem chose us. He had all the nations in front of Him, so to say, and He decided to choose us.

That being so, the question arises; why did Hashem go to all the other nations and ask them if they wanted the Torah? It's clear that Hashem never intended to actually give the Torah to the other nations. The Yalkut Shemoni (See also beginning of Mesechas Avoda Zara) tells us that when Hashem went to Esav's descendants, He told them that the Torah says don't kill, so they didn't want to accept the Torah. Hashem then went to Amon's descendants and told them that the Torah says don't commit adultery and they rejected it as well. Hashem went to Yishmael's descendants and told them that the Torah says don't steal and they didn't want it. We see that Hashem clearly didn't want the other nations to accept the Torah. If He did, He wouldn't have specifically told each nation something that would force them stop doing whatever it was that they loved to do the most. Hashem knew by telling Esav not to kill and Yishmael not to steal etc., that they would refuse to accept the Torah.

Why did Hashem go to the other nations at all if He knew they weren't going to accept it?

The Kemotzei Shlal Rav quotes a mashal from the Dubno Maggid to explain. A prince was once a guest in by a Jew in a small village. The prince took a liking to his host and became a fan of this Jew and as a result stayed for a long time with his whole entourage. Since the prince liked the Jew so much, he would always overpay him. Interestingly, though, he would not only overpay the Jew but he would pay extra for everything he purchased in the village. The Jew asked the prince why he also spent extra money when paying all the other townspeople with whom he didn't have any connection. The prince responded that he's giving them a lot of money because in the end it will eventually come to you; they are just the 'middlemen'. Ultimately, they will give you the money. You have the best wine and the best storage places. They will therefore use your services and all the money will be yours.

So too, Hashem prepared the main portions of the Torah exclusively for the Jews. However, a small portion went to the non-Jews as well. Why? Because **Hashem's intent was that when the nations would refuse the Torah, the Jews would receive reward, not only for accepting their portion of the Torah, but for accepting the parts that the other nations rejected, as well!**

All the Jews in the world amount to less than one percent of the world population. Amongst this small percentage; a small amount are actually 'religious.' Even within these 'religious' Jews only a small percentage are truly learning and keeping Torah and mitzvos. We must realize how chashuv (important) we are in the eyes of Hashem and what we represent.

Thank you Yair Moshe Ausabel for typing this up.

Thank you Ari Zaslowsky for editing this.