

פרשת יתרו הרב בערל וויסברד

In this shiur, we will discuss three aspects of *Parshas Yisro*.

The Rosh Yeshiva *zt"l*, HaRav Weinberg, used to say that when we discuss the *eitzah* of Yisro to establish a system to deal with all of Bnai Yisroel's questions, we are in somewhat of a quandary. When Yisro joined *Machane Yisroel* and saw the situation of the people asking Moshe their *shaylos* all day long, he told Moshe it was untenable. He suggested the change, to have somewhat of a pyramid court system, as it were, and told Moshe to ask Hashem. If Hashem agreed that it was a good idea, then Moshe should implement it. This would ease the burden of Moshe and allow most people to have their questions dealt with in a timely matter. Only the hardest, most difficult cases would be brought before Moshe Rabbeinu himself. This would be a far more effective and streamlined system for Klal Yisroel.

Rashi cites the *Mechilta* which explains that Yisro told Moshe to ask Hashem for *reshus* to implement such a system, and only do so if He gave the *reshus*. From the fact that Moshe did in fact institute it shows that the Ribono Shel Olam was *maskim*. The Rosh Yeshiva used to ask all the time that in *Parshas Devorim* it seems to be different. Moshe Rabbeinu (דברים א: יב-יד) recounts that he took Yisro's suggestion to Bnai Yisroel and they were *maskim* to it. Rashi explains that Bnai Yisroel agreed for their own benefit, but they should really have had a different response. They should have insisted on learning directly from Moshe Rabbeinu, who went through forty days and nights of deprivation in *Shomayim* to receive the Torah from the Ribono Shel Olam, instead of agreeing to learn from his *talmidim*.

The question is, why should Klal Yisroel not have been *maskim* to the suggestion if the Ribono Shel Olam Himself was *maskim* to it? If I remember correctly, the Rosh Yeshiva used to say the following: While it is true the Ribono Shel Olam was *maskim* to it, He was only *maskim* to it because Klal Yisroel was not holding by appreciating the difference between Moshe and his *talmidim*. Had they been holding by realizing that learning from Moshe Rabbeinu was much more pristine and special, the Ribono Shel Olam would not have been *maskim* to Yisro's suggestion. This is how the Rosh Yeshiva learned this *inyan*.

The next *inyan* in our *parsha* following Yisro's institution is Bnai Yisroel arrival to Har Sinai. [The *Or HaChaim Hakadosh* has a beautiful *mehalech* in these *pesukim*, with all the *diyukim* in the different phrases.] The Rosh Yeshiva focused on what Hashem told Moshe to tell Bnai Yisroel. Rashi explains that Hashem was *makpid* for Moshe to deliver "אלה הדברים", these specific words (שמות יט: ד-ו) – no more and no less. The Rosh Yeshiva pointed out that there is absolutely no mention of the Torah in the message. All it says is that you [Bnai Yisroel] know and saw that I, Hashem, took you out of Mitzrayim and now I'm offering you to accept my *bris* and if you do I will make you "ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש".

How is this an offer to receive the Torah? The Rosh Yeshiva always used to say that the Ribono Shel Olam was offering Klal Yisroel much more than just *mitzvos* and *kiyum haTorah*. The Ribono Shel Olam was offering them a relationship. He was offering an opportunity to reciprocate, *kaviyachol*, in the relationship which He initiated with them. Rashi comments that Hakadosh Boruch Hu was telling them that He had a long laundry list of reasons to strike down Mitzrayim but He did not start until they started up with Klal Yisroel. This shows that Hakadosh Boruch Hu wanted to show Klal Yisroel that He was initiated and investing in a relationship with them, without looking for anything in return. He protected and took care of Klal Yisroel before they were aware of it.

Now, by offering Klal Yisroel the Torah, the Ribono Shel Olam was presenting them with the opportunity to "give back" and return something in the relationship. Becoming partners in a *bris* with the

Ribono Shel Olam is the highest level of connection Klal Yisroel could obtain. Obviously, when we do *mitzvos* and *ratzon Hashem* we are doing it for our own benefit, but the Ribono Shel Olam said that He will consider it to be a reciprocal relationship for us to give to Him by accepting and keeping the Torah.

The *meforshim* give a *moshol* of a blind person walking with someone helping to guide him and leading the way. When they walked into the house, the *pikay'ach* asked the blind one to turn on the light for him so he could see. The blind person asked, "why do you need me to put the light on if I'm the blind one and you were leading me this whole time?" His friend replied, "That is true, but here we are both equal. In the dark, I am just as blind as you and now you have the opportunity to help me just like I helped you. I want you to return the favor because I don't want to be in the situation where you are completely beholden to me. I want the relationship to be reciprocal because that is the closest, highest relationship we can have."

The loftiest relationship is when both sides are equally beholden and giving to one another, and that is what the Ribono Shel Olam was offering us when he sent this message to Klal Yisroel through Moshe Rabbeinu. This is why He left out anything about any of the *mitzvos* or content of the Torah. The more important point is what was underlying giving Klal Yisroel the Torah and what it meant – the relationship forged and reciprocated.

The third *cheilek* I would like to discuss is when the Ribono Shel Olam told Moshe to tell Klal Yisroel that He would tell Moshe the entire Torah while they stand present and overhear Him giving the Torah. But then the *posuk* says, "ויגד משה את דברי העם אל ה'". What *divrei ho'om* did he need to tell Hashem? They weren't being asked anything, they were being informed of what the Ribono Shel Olam was going to do and what their own part was to be- to stand by and overhear it.

Rashi explains that Moshe relayed to Hashem that Klal Yisroel, when informed of the plan, responded. They insisted and were adamant to receive the Torah through Hashem talking directly to them. There is no comparison between receiving a message from the king himself as opposed to hearing it from a messenger. Klal Yisroel said, "רצוננו לראות את מלכנו".

The first question is, what makes Klal Yisroel *balei batim* to dictate what they want to have? The Ribono Shel Olam just told them what they are going to have. *Lichorah*, Klal Yisroel felt that they had the right to make this request and insist on receiving the Torah directly from Hashem. To push for a greater *dveykus* than what the Ribono Shel Olam was offering them. Not only did they have a right to, but *veist ois* they were right because Ribono Shel Olam acquiesced, as the *pesukim* continue with His instructions for how they must prepare for it.

We see that Klal Yisroel has a right to petition for a greater *shaychus* and more intimate *dveykus* to the Ribono Shel Olam. So long as it's coming from the right place. If its sincere, then the Ribono Shel Olam gives us the ability to push for a greater connection than what is in front of us.

He even gives us *reshus* to the extent that we won't be able to handle that greater, closer connection. Hakadosh Boruch Hu knew the whole time that Klal Yisroel would not be able to be *sovel*, and they *taka* died after each of the first two Commandments. He performed *techiyas hameisim* both times, because they persisted on having an elevated interaction and connection to Him. The Ribono Shel Olam knew the whole time that this was suicidal on Klal Yisroel's part, and still He did not stop it and in fact He made *nisim giluyim* to facilitate it and satisfy their desire for the closure connection.

We need to understand that we have the right and opportunity to ask the Ribono Shel Olam for a greater *kesher* than what He offers us. But it has to be coming from the right place. It has to be from a sincere, honest desire to be come as close to the Ribono Shel Olam as humanly possible – *l'sheim Shomayim*. It cannot be for *kavod*, nor *ga'avo*, or any other selfish reason.

The Ribono Shel Olam *zol helfen* that we should be able to come to that *madreiga* – to be able to want to have the greatest *kesher* and *dveykus* to Him that we can have. In this way, we will become totally dedicated and devoted to the Ribono Shel Olam and bring *nachas ruach* to Him.