

Parshas Yisro in a Nutshell

(Exodus 18:1-20:23)

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, hears of the great miracles which G-d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The children of Israel camp opposite Mount Sinai, where they are told that G-d has chosen them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall do."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the Exodus, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai for the Giving of the Torah. G-d descends on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the shofar, and summons Moses to ascend.

(continued next column)



The Torah gives us an opportunity to relate to G-d through our minds. Through the mitzvos, not only our feelings and our thoughts, but also our deeds can be brought into connection with Him.

-- The Lubavitcher Rebbe

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G-d proclaims the Ten Commandments, commanding the people of Israel to believe in G-d, not to worship idols or take G-d's name in vain, to keep the Shabbat, honor their parents, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, and not to bear false witness or covet another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the Torah from G-d and convey it to them. ❖

תהילים
Tehillim - Psalms
Join us this Shabbos morning
February 6 at 8:00 AM for
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.
This week's Tehillim reading is
dedicated to
a refuah sh'laima
for
Elimelech ben Leah
Shoshana Miriam bas Mindel
Marsha Bas Mindel
Yaakov ben Malia Feiga

*Thank You to:
The Baal Korei,
and the
Security Volunteers*

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, February 6
Eastern Standard Time
Earliest Tallis.....6:03 AM
Latest Morning Shema9:33 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:37 PM
Plag Hamincha 4:20 PM
Earliest Evening Shema5:49 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation
Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:
Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:
Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Feb 5 / Shevat 23
Candle Lighting.....5:01 pm
Mincha5:05 pm

Shabbos Day – Feb 6 / Shevat 24
Shacharis..... 9:30 am*
Torah Reading 10:30 am
Rabbi Drasha 11:05 am

Mincha5:05 pm
Rabbi's Drasha.....5:25 pm
Shabbos Ends6:03 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:33 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

**Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):
Minyan**

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am
Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am
Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm
Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin
*This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
The Berman Law Office.*

Chassidic Masters

"Powerful Insights From the Rebbe"

Compiled by Mordechai Rubin

1. Reaching Infinity

How can a limited mortal relate to an unlimited G-d? G-d, is by definition, infinite and unbounded, and thus above our comprehension.

The Midrash states, that before the giving of the Torah, the spiritual status of the world could be described by the verse "The heavens are the heavens of G-d, but the earth He gave to man." The heavens, the spiritual realms, were self-contained; they had no influence on the material realm. And mankind, living as we do in the earthly realm, had no way of tapping into the spiritual.

At the Giving of the Torah, this changed. G-d allowed for communication between the two realms. Thus it is written: "And G-d descended on Mt. Sinai." G-d made Himself manifest and accessible to mankind. We were given the opportunity to elevate ourselves and our surrounding environment and endow it with spiritual content.

At Sinai, G-d gave us the Torah to immortalize this experience. Sinai thus became not a one-time event, but rather the establishment of a channel that continues to enable man and G-d to relate to each other.

When a person studies a law from the Talmud, what he is in effect doing is understanding G-d's essence. That infinite dimension which no mortal can grasp has been concentrated within the Torah's teachings. ❖

2. Turning Point

The revelation at Sinai represented a turning point in the world's spiritual history. When G-d descended on Mount Sinai, the nature of the world changed. As the Midrash states, at that time, G-d said: "I came into My garden." G-dliness returned to the world and the world became His garden, the place where He luxuriates and from which He receives pleasure and satisfaction.

True, directly afterwards, the people sinned — they made a Golden Calf and, in that way, prevented G-dliness from being revealed in our ordinary material framework of reference. Nevertheless, the essential bond, the fundamental connection between G-d and this world remained. The issue is that at Sinai, the connection was open and apparent. Mankind could appreciate G-dliness. After the sin, He was hidden from man's consciousness and the challenge of relating to Him became man's responsibility and mission.

But that is precisely the advantage of this phase of our existence. G-d is waiting for man to make Him part of his life; it is all dependent on man. There are no restraints from Above. If we truly desire, we can make Him part of our lives and make the age of Mashiach a tangible reality.

3. No Echo

At Sinai we were charged to serve as "a light unto the nations" — to actualize in our own lives, and to teach all of humanity, that no matter what the conditions of a particular time, place or society may be, there is an all-transcendent, unequivocal, divinely ordained truth and moral code of behavior to which to adhere.

At times, we might be confronted with a seemingly unresponsive and even resisting world. It may appear that one or another of the Torah's precepts does not fit in with the prevalent reality. So the Torah tells us that the voice which sounded G-d's message to the world had no echo.

The voice of the Ten Commandments permeated every object and reality in the universe. So any resistance we may possibly meet in implementing them is superficial and temporary. For at Sinai, the essence of every created being was made consistent with, and wholly receptive to, the goodness and perfection which G-d desires of it. ❖

**Join us each
weekday morning
Mon-Fri as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

From Our Sages

Jethro took Tzipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back (Exodus 18:2)

When G-d said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt" (Exodus 4:19), "Moses took his wife and sons" (ibid., v. 20). When Aaron later met with him "at the mountain of G-d" (v. 27), he said to him: "Who are these?" Said Moses: "This is my wife, whom I married in Midian, and these are my children." "Where are you taking them?" asked Aaron. "To Egypt," said Moses. Said Aaron to Moses: "We are grieving over the ones already in Egypt, and you propose to add to their number!" So Moses said to Tzipporah, "Return to your father's house," and she took her two sons and went away.

-- (Mechilta; Rashi)

Now I know that G-d is greater than all gods (Exodus 18:11)

This tells us that he had full knowledge of every idol in the world, for he had worshipped them all.

-- (Mechilta; Rashi)

The Torah could not be given to Israel until Jethro, the great and supreme priest of the all pagan world, and confessed his faith in the Holy One, saying, "Now I know that G-d is greater than all the gods."

-- (Zohar)

There Israel camped opposite the mountain (Exodus 19:2)

At all their other encampments, the verse says *vayachanu* ("they camped," in the plural); here it says *vayichan* ("he camped," in the singular). For all other encampments were in argument and dissent, whereas here they camped as one man, with one heart.

-- (Mechilta; Rashi)

All the people saw the voices (20:15)

They saw what is ordinarily heard, and they heard what is ordinarily seen.

-- (Midrash Lekach Tov; Rashi)



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Haftorah for Yisro in a Nutshell

Isaiah 6:1–13

This week's haftorah discusses Isaiah's vision of the Heavenly Chariot (the merkavah), a revelation that was experienced by all the Israelites when G-d spoke the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai—an event recounted in this week's Torah reading.

Isaiah perceives G-d sitting on a throne surrounded by angels. Isaiah vividly describes the angels and their behavior (in anthropomorphic terms). During the course of this vision, Isaiah volunteers to be G-d's emissary to transmit His message to the Israelites. He is immediately given a depressing prophecy regarding the exile the nation will suffer as punishment for their many sins—and the Land of Israel will be left empty and desolate, though there will be left a “trunk” of the Jewish people that eventually will regrow. ❖

A most puzzling thing in the Talmud's account is the fact that on the first day of Sivan—the day on which the people of Israel arrived at the place where they would receive the Torah—“Moses did not say anything at all to them, on account of their exhaustion from the journey.” For six weeks the children of Israel had been eagerly awaiting the most important event in their history—their receiving of the Torah from Gd. Our sages tell us that they literally counted the days (hence our annual practice of “counting the Omer” during the weeks that connect Passover to Shavuot). Does it make sense that on the very day they arrived at Mount Sinai they would do nothing at all in preparation for the great day?

At Sinai, the divine wisdom was revealed to man. Obviously, the human mind cannot attain the divine wisdom on its own—that must be given to it by Gd Himself. So although Gd instructed us to study His Torah, desiring that human intellect should serve as the vehicle by which we apprehend His truth, a crucial prerequisite to Torah study is the mind's total abnegation of its ego. Only after it has voided itself of all pretension that it is capable of attaining the truth of truths on its own, can the mind become a “fit vessel” to receive it. In the words of the sages, “An empty vessel can receive; a full vessel cannot receive.”

So the day on which “Moses did not say anything at all to them” was an integral part of their preparations for receiving the Torah. This was the day on which they undertook the most “exhausting journey” of emptying their souls of intellectual vanity and making themselves fit receptacles for the divine truth.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

