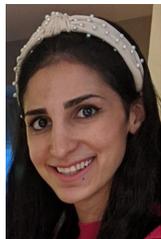


Shabbat Spice

PARSHAT YITRO



Everyone Needs Help,
Even Moshe
By Talia Cohen

This week's parasha contains perhaps the most monumental moment in Jewish history: Matan Torah. And yet it is named after Yitro, Moshe's father in law, a Midianite priest who had come to recognize Hashem and embrace the Jewish people. His appearance and contribution in the beginning of the parasha teach us an essential lesson.

Yitro meets Moshe and the rest of the nation by Har Sinai, just before Matan Torah (or according to some opinions, right after). He observes Moshe doing his job, judging the people *"from morning until evening"* (Shemot 18:14). When people had disputes, they would go to Moshe, who was the most knowledgeable in Torah and had a direct line to Hashem. And Moshe, out of his unending love for the people, would sit all day and settle their disputes like a judge or a king. Yitro did not like what he saw, and he told Moshe exactly what he thought: *"What you are doing is not right. You are going to wear yourself and the people out, because this task is too heavy for you -- you can not do it alone."* (18:17-18).

And then Yitro went on to suggest that Moshe put a system in place in which there is a hierarchy of judges to spread out the burden, and only the most difficult cases to adjudicate will go to Moshe.

This suggestion was not only adopted by Moshe on that very day, it became the basis for the entire justice system in the Torah. This is a strange and surprising interaction, and there are many opinions about what it was all about. But to me, what sticks out is the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu - the greatest, most capable, holiest leader who literally spoke to G-d - could not do it alone. It was too much for him to handle on his own, and he was worn out. And it's not just Yitro speculating here - Moshe himself later on expresses the fact that he could not bear the burden of the entire nation by himself, in Devarim (1:9-12).

There are not many moments in which I can relate to Moshe Rabbeinu. But in this moment, I feel validated in sometimes feeling overwhelmed, tired, and like some things are just too much to handle on my own (although my tasks are much less important and burdensome than Moshe's). I feel encouraged to keep asking for help when I need it, and grateful that I have people around me who can and want to provide that support. Those of us who are blessed enough to have any kind of support system should utilize it and appreciate it the way Moshe did. Moshe's strong and loving support system - his wife Tzipora, father-in-law Yitro, siblings Aharon and Miriam, and the elders and judges who were appointed to help him out (and, of course, Hashem) - allowed him to successfully continue leading the people out of love every day for the next 40 years.

CANDLE LIGHTING 4:41PM | SHABBAT ENDS 5:50PM

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Shabbat Spice

PARSHAT YITRO



Living the Commandments

By Kayla Carmili

In this week's Parsha, we are given the Ten Commandments from Hashem. I heard a story last week from Rabbi Paysach Krohn that really exemplifies what it is to not just *keep* the commandments, but to *live* the commandments.

There was a family in Har Nof, Israel with not much money. Once a year, they would rent a van with their seven kids and travel to all different cities in Israel. Before the trip, the parents gathered the kids and told them all the places they would be going and the amount of money allowed to be spent in each city. The parents explained how they won't be buying any food on the trip and will be packing the food they needed in advance.

On the first day, as they were driving up North, the younger son began to nag that he really needed the bathroom. The parents looked around for a rest stop, but the only place in sight was one kosher restaurant. The father felt bad and hesitated because he wasn't going to be buying anything from this expensive restaurant. With no other choice, the father ran in with his son and asked the young waitress by the door, "I know I won't be eating here, but is there any way that my son can just use the bathroom?" The young waitress looked both ways and said, "Quickly... the bathroom is right there." The son went to the bathroom and on their way out, the manager of the restaurant spotted them.

Suddenly, the manager went completely crazy! He began to yell, "What do you think you're doing?!? This isn't a public lavatory! You people always do this! You can't use something that's not yours! Who gave you permission to come in here?!" The entire restaurant stopped eating and was watching the scene. From the corner of his eye, the father saw the young waitress standing there completely terrified. The father realized that if he says that she was the one that gave him permission, the young waitress would not only be embarrassed, but get in big trouble.

The father waits for the man to finish yelling and responds, "Wait Sir, you've got it all wrong. You didn't give me a chance to finish... We are planning to eat here, I just came in here with my son to use the bathroom but my entire family is coming in from the car to eat." The manager, quite embarrassed, responds, "I'm so sorry! I didn't know you would be eating here! I'll set a table right away." The manager quickly sets the table as the father sends his son to get the rest of the family from the car.

As his wife and kids were sitting down, they were amazed, they've never eaten in a fancy restaurant before. The father and mother told the kid they're each allowed one food and one drink, nothing more. As the meal was coming to an end, out of nowhere, seven waiters exit the kitchen with seven cakes topped with ice cream sparkler candles and put one in front of each child. The kids were ecstatic! The father was confused as he didn't order such a thing, he could barely afford the meal itself. He approached the manager and said, "I'm a little bit confused... I did not order this dessert, I think there has been a mistake." The manager then explains, "After I yelled at you I went into the kitchen and I saw one of my waitresses crying. In tears, she explained how she just experienced something unlike ever before. She explained how you came in with no intention of buying anything, but when you saw she would get in trouble, you immediately made it seem like you were dining here to save her from the consequences. You came in with your entire family for an expensive meal just for one person." The manager says, "We brought you the dessert as we wanted to do something special for special people."

A few minutes later, when the bill came to the table, it was blank. The father, confused, approaches the manager and says, "Thank you for the dessert, but what happened to the bill?" The manager then responds, "In this restaurant, we have a policy, we only charge people... we don't charge מלכים."

From the story, I learned what it is to be a Jew, to be an עבד ה', to be part of our holy nation. May we all be blessed from Hashem to not only keep the commandments, but live them as well.

THANK YOU TO THE SHABBAT SPICE TEAM

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