

ISSUE #20

כ"ד שבט תשפ"ד  
03/02/24



## A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

### פרשת יתרו

אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים. (שמות כ, ב)

*I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Mitzrayim. (Shemos 20:2)*

This week's *parshah* recounts the most significant event in history. Klal Yisroel received the Torah at Har Sinai, along with the Aseres HaDibros. In His initial address, Hashem introduced Himself as the One who had redeemed Klal Yisroel from slavery in Mitzrayim and commanded them to believe in Him.

The Ibn Ezra raises the well-known question of the Kuzari, who wonders why Hashem chose to identify Himself as our Redeemer from Mitzrayim. Wouldn't it have been more appropriate for Hashem to introduce Himself as the Creator of the Universe or, at the very least, as their Creator, a title that is more comprehensive and awe-inspiring?

The Kuzari explains that Hashem spoke of the Yetzias Mitzrayim because it was a phenomenon that the entire nation had witnessed. Although they knew that there had been a Creation, no one had been present to witness it. However, at Sinai, all the people had experienced the majesty of the One who had liberated them from Mitzrayim in such a remarkable and miraculous way. This idea is also evident earlier (*Shemos 5:3*) when Moshe introduced himself to Pharaoh as אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים נִקְרָא עָלֵינוּ *the G-d of the Hebrews happened upon us*, instead of "My and your Creator has sent me." This was because Moshe wanted to refer to something more relatable to Pharaoh, and it was public knowledge, even among non-Jews, how Hashem had guided the Avos.

The Ibn Ezra answers that Hashem wanted to provide a reason Klal Yisroel should serve Him with all their special responsibilities even more than the rest of humanity, whom He also created. By emphasizing the exceptional and unparalleled treatment that Hashem gave to the Yidden in Mitzrayim, He earned the right to impose His servitude upon them. After freeing Klal Yisroel from the slavery and bondage of Pharaoh, it was fitting for them to serve Hashem out of gratitude.

With this understanding, the Ibn Ezra provides insight into the *pessukim* in Vaeschanan (*Devorim 6:20-25*). The *possuk* states, כִּי יִשְׁאַלְךָ בְּנֶךְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר, מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָכֶם *If your child asks you tomorrow, saying, "What are the testimonies and the decrees and ordinances that Hashem, our G-d has commanded you?"*. The Ibn Ezra explains that the child is asking why the Yidden are more obligated to fulfil Hashem's will than the rest of the world. In response, we give three answers. First and foremost, we tell him מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה ה' מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ ה' *We were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim, and Hashem took us out with a strong hand*. We teach the next generation about the great kindnesses that Hashem has done for us, and how we are obliged to keep His commandments, even without understanding them, due to our immense gratitude. With this, we explain how we are obligated to keep His commandments, even without understanding them, because of our great debt of gratitude. Secondly, we mention that fulfilling the *mitzvos* is for our own benefit - לְטוֹב לָנוּ כָּל הַיָּמִים לְחַיֵּינוּ כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה - *for our good, all the days, to give us life, as this very*

day, and not for Hashem's sake. Finally, וְצִדְקָה תִּהְיֶה לָּנוּ, *it will be a merit for us*, as through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos* we will be considered as *tzaddikim* and merit a place in Olam Habah.

In Parshas Haazinu (*Devorim* 32:6) Moshe criticized Klal Yisroel by saying, הֲלֹהִים תִּגְמְלוּ זֹאת, עִם נְבִלִים, *Is it to Hashem that you do this, O vile and unwise people? Is He not your Father, your Master? Has He not created you and firmed you?* The Yidden were branded as נְבִילִים, *vile*, for being ungrateful and not acknowledging the blessings they received from Hashem in the past, and לֹא חֲכָמִים, *unwise*, for failing to realise their dependence on Him for future provisions. R' Elyah Lopian in Lev Eliyohu recurrently stresses that the lack of the *middah* of *hakoras hatov* is the main demand for which we shall be held accountable. He further emphasises that *hakoras hatov* is the foundation for fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos*.

In the Gemara (*Shabbos* 88b), we find the concept of how indebtedness to Hashem obligates us. The Gemara recounts Hashem's reply to the *malochim* when they opposed Klal Yisroel taking possession of the Torah. Hashem said to them, "Did you go down to Mitzrayim? Were you subservient to Pharaoh? Why should the Torah be for you?" Hashem was explaining to the *malochim* how the foundation for the Torah is based upon servitude originating from *hakoras hatov*. This servitude developed only when Hashem saved us from slavery in Mitzrayim, something with which the *malochim* had no connection.

As we reflect on the miracles and wonders that Hashem performed during the time of Yetzias Mitzrayim and continues to do for us every day, it is essential to feel grateful to Him. We must internalize this feeling of appreciation and use it as a motivation to follow His Torah and *mitzvos* to the best of our abilities!

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל עה"ת and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to [parshasheet@gyalumni.org](mailto:parshasheet@gyalumni.org).