



Parshas Yisro 2021, united to connect with G-d

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose Yahrzeit is the 22nd of Shevet.

Our Parsha has the Aseres Hadibros, the Ten Commandments, making it one of the most significant portions of the Torah. G-d, Himself came down to the mountain and said the Ten Commandments and confirmed that we are His chosen nation.

Just six weeks after leaving Egypt, the Jewish nation arrived at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Moshe instructs them to purify themselves for three days in preparation for the giving of the Torah. They must not approach or touch the mountain, for it is holy and pure; only Moshe and Aaron were allowed to be on it.

Heavy thunder and lightning appeared on the third morning as G-d descended the mountain. G-d said the Ten Commandments to the frightened and terrified Jewish nation.

They turned to Moshe and begged him to act as an intermediary, for G-d's holy and divine words were more than they could physically handle. Moshe responded (20:17), *"don't fear G-d, for He has shown Himself to you so that you fear Him and not sin."*

However, a question comes to mind: When the Jewish nation arrived in the Sinai desert, the Pasuk writes (9:1), *"On the third month after the Jewish nation left Egypt, on this day, they entered the Sinai desert."* The words *"on this day"* imply the current date.

Instead, the Pasuk should have written “*on that day*,” implying a date in the past tense. Why does the Torah use a word that can be misunderstood for the present tense?

The Chizkuni (*the famous French Rabbi, Chezekiah ben Manoah*) explains that the reason the Torah writes “*Hazeh*” instead of “*Hahu*” is to teach us that it was the 1st of Sivan. When the Torah writes “*Hazeh*” in conjunction with a month, it usually refers to the first of that month.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh adds that the Torah details this specific day, for it is when the Jewish nation began to purify themselves for the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. This is significant because now the Jewish people will receive the Torah and learn how to act as G-d’s chosen nation.

However, the Ramban (*Rav Moshe ben Nachman*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He quotes Rashi, who writes that the Torah wrote “*Bayom Hazeh - on this day*” rather than “*Bayom Hahu - on that day*” because we receive the Torah anew each day.

That each morning we should wake up with the same passion and enthusiasm as the Jewish nation did by Mt. Sinai. And just like they answered Hashem, “*Naaseh V’nishma - first we will do and then we will listen*”.

We have a similar concept in the second blessing of the Menorah during Chanukah. We say, “*Sheahsah Neesim Lahvohsayno Bahyahmim Hahhaym Bizmahn Hazeh - He who has performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.*”

The Ramban writes that the way we must prepare to receive the Torah each day is through loving your fellow Jew. The Torah details that the Jewish nation was united as they encamped at the foot of Mt. Sinai to prepare for the giving of the Torah.

As the Pasuk (19:2) first writes a plural term, *“Vayachanu - and they camped in the desert.”* However, the end of the Pasuk switches to a singular term, *“Vayichan - and he camped at the foot of the mountain.”* Rashi famously writes that they were *“Keish Echad Belev Echad - one person with one heart by Har Sinai.”*

It is my understanding that when we say each morning, ***“I hereby take upon myself to fulfill the Mitzvah of loving your fellow as yourself,”*** we are preparing as they did by Har Sinai. It is only then fitting and appropriate to say the Shema, where we proclaim and declare the Oneness of Hashem, the first of the Aseres Hadibros.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that the Jewish nation is inherently connected. Hence, the physical and spiritual future of the Jewish people lies in every person’s hands. We are at our strongest when we are together and united.

Therefore, we must be kind and compassionate towards one another, even if the other person does not deserve such kindness. We can not stand still when we know a person requires assistance, for that is the true way of connecting with Hashem, bringing closer the ultimate redemption.

“The Jewish nation composes a single soul.

Only the bodies are separate.”

-The Alter Rebbe in Tanya chapter 32

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*