



Parshas Yisro 2023, for all of time,

This week's episode is in honor of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The Rebbetzin's Yahrtzeit is on the 22nd of Shevet, which is this upcoming Monday.

This week's Parsha Perspective honors the birthdays of Yoram and Yael Cohen. May bless them and their entire family with a year of happiness, health, and success!

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Shaul Ben Berta and Lior Gabay Ben Michal and in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.

Our Parsha has the Aseres Hadibros, the Ten Commandments, making it one of the most significant portions of the Torah. G-d came down to the mountain and said the Ten Commandments, confirming 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 can't approach or touch the mountain, for it is holy and pure; only Moshe and Aaron were allowed to be on it.

On the third morning, the shofar's piercing sound grew louder as smoke, thunder and lightning covered the mountaintop. G-d descended upon Mt. Sinai as the terrified and frightening Jewish people gathered around its base. G-d

then said the Aseres Hadibros, the Ten Commandments, to the trembling and traumatized Jewish nation.

So overwhelmed, 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 agreed but 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: The first Pasuk of Perek 20 prepares us for the Aseres Hadibros, the ten commandments. (20:1) *וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֵת כָּל-תְּהִלָּתוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה* - *G-d spoke all these words, saying.*" The term *"לְאָמַר"* usually is translated as *"saying."* It was an indicator to Moshe that he was allowed to repeat what G-d was telling him to the rest of the nation. But here, it was G-d, himself speaking to the Jewish people, so why *לְאָמַר*? What does it add to the introduction of the Ten Commandments?!

Rashi, *Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki*, the leading Torah commentator, gives a powerful answer. He quotes the Mechilta (*a Midrash written by Rabbi Yishmael*) that *לְאָמַר* denotes that G-d said the Ten Commandments in one utterance. Meaning that G-d spoke once but said all the Ten Commandments simultaneously.

Although humanly impossible, the Mechilta explains that even in G-d's physical expression, there was an element of His divinity. As we pray and sing in the Lecha Dodi on Friday nights, *"שָׁמֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד - Observe and remember - two words in one."*

The Rambam, *Rav Moshe Ben Maimon*, explains in Moreh Nevuchim (2:33) that this was a one-time phenomenon where sound limits were expanded. G-d's sacred and holy words were actually understood and absorbed by the physical Jewish people.

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He answers that לְאֶמְרָה does not only mean that G-d said all Ten Commandments with one utterance. But also that the Torah and Mitzvahs are given anew every day. **Each day, a new element of the Torah is revealed to combat the challenges unique to our time.**

The words that G-d spoke at Mt Sinai **are still** echoing and reverberating to this very day. Their sound continues to interfere with human nature, challenging us to develop and advance the relationship between Creator and creation.

In the previous Perek (19:1), Rashi quotes the Mechilta that we must discover and learn the Torah each day as if we have received it that morning. As if we were the ones who actually heard G-d's words and saw His voice proclaim that we are His nation.

Because we are! The holy and divine soul within us stood united by Mt. Sinai and accepted the challenge placed by G-d, **in a world of darkness, be the light!**

In our daily life, it is imperative that we stand firm as the integrity of our society continues to worsen and deteriorate. We must be strong as the people around us combats the very notion of G-d and His sovereignty over the universe. By studying the Torah and following the Mitzvahs, we unlock our soul's memory of its intimacy with G-d and the physical path leading back to it.

“Torah – G-d’s law and teaching – was not a code written by a distant king, to be imposed by force. It was to be available to, and intelligible by, everyone. G-d was to become a teacher, Israel His pupils, and the Torah the text that bound them to one another.”

–Rabbi Lord Dr. Jonathan Sacks

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*