

Source Sheet **Parshat Yitro**





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וַיּאמֶר ׂ יִתְרוֹ בָּרָוּך יְהֹוָה אֲשֶּׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֵה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶת־הָעָּם מִחַּחַת יַד־מִצְרְיִם: עַחָּה יָדַשְׁתִּי כִּי־גָדָוֹל יְהָוָה מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהָים כִּי בַדָּבֶּר אֲשֶׁר זָדָוּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

"Blessed be יהוה," Jethro said, "who delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that יהוה is greater than all gods, yes, by the result of their very schemes against [the people]."

(Exodus 18:10-11)

אַל תִּקְרֵי וַיִּחַדְּ אֶלֶּא וַיִּהַד, שָׁנַּעֲשָׁה יְהוּדִי. וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בֶּרוּדָ הוֹ. לָמֶה אָמֵר יִתְרוֹ בִּרוּדָ הוֹ? אָבְּרָה יִנְעוֹלְם שָׁלֹא עֲבַדְתִּיק, וְלֹא מֶצָאתִי אֱלוֹהַ בֵּאלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. עַמָּה יָדַעְּתִּי כִּי גָדוֹל ה' מִכֶּל הָאֱלֹהִים. אַרְבָּעָה אָמְרוּ אַרְבָּעָה דְּבָרִים, אִלּוּ אֲמֶרְן אָדָם אַחַר, הָיוּ שוֹחַקִין עָלִיו לוֹמַר, זָה מִנֵּין הוּא יוֹדַעַ? עָלְי אָקָר הָיּוּ הוֹא יוֹדַע? עֶלְי אָמֶר דָּבָר זָהְ שֶׁבְּתוֹ וְיִתְרוֹ וֹשְׁלֹמֹה. מֹשֶׁה אָמֵר: הַצּוּר הָמִים פְּצֵלוֹ וְגוֹ' (דברים לב, ד). אִלוּ בְּמֶרוֹ אָדָם אַחַר, הָיוּ אוֹמְרִים מְנֵּיִן הוּא יוֹדַע? עֻּלְּכֶּךְ (שמות לֹּג, יג). שְׁלֹמֹה אָמַר: אָת הַכּל עֲשָׂה יָפֶה בְּעִתוֹ (מְהַלִים קְּג, וֹץ אַמְר: הוֹדְעֵנִי נָּא אֶת דְּרָכֶךְ (שמות לֹּג, יג). שְׁלֹמֹה אָמֵר: אָת הַכּל עֲשָׂה יָפֶה בְּעִתוֹ וֹמָה אָמָר: אַרְעָתוֹ לוֹמֵר, מִי הוֹדְיעַ לוֹ מָה יָפֶה בְּעִתוֹ וּמָה אָמָר יִבְיּי אָלְשִׁה יָפֶה בְּעִתוֹ וּמְה אֵמָר יִבְיּה הָעָתוֹ וּמָה אָמָר. שְׁלְשֹׁה הָטָב, וְלְיִבּי אָנְשִׁה לְּמָב אָמָר וְלָמָה אָמֵר, שֶׁלְא חָפֵר מְשָׁלְחָנוֹ כְּלוּם. אָמֵר רָבִי חָמָא בַּרְ חְנִינְא, אֲפִלּוֹ הְנָבְיִלְן לְּנְבִי לְנְמִי אָּמָר, אֶת הָּכּל עֲשָׂה יָפֶה בְּעִתוֹ מִמְּוֹ שְׁלְיוֹ וֹ מְמַשֹּׁה הָּנָה הְעָב הְּבְּי וְּלְמָב אְ אָמָר וְבְיִבְי בְּעָב אְ אָמָר וְבְּבָּר אָשֶׁה חָפֵר בְּבוֹ בְּנְבְיל שְׁתְילִי בְּנִים בְּעְתוֹ בְּיִי בְּלְהוֹ בְּנִילְ הָּבְיִי בְּעָתוֹ בְּנִי בְּיִבְירִ מְעִלְיוֹ בְּמָשׁרִים, מְשְׁלִי בְּבְּירִים, חָשְׁלִי בִּיְיִם בְּעָלִיו הַמְשׁוֹי בָּבְי הְבָּי לְשְׁבָּ לְאָבָּר אָת יִשְׁרָב בְּי בְּבָר אֲשָׁר וְבִיּב בְּיִבְיים וְיִבְּעְיִים מְשִׁלוּי בִּי בְּדְבִר אָשְׁר וְבִיּת מְלְיִים בְּמִבּיים. לְבָּל הְשִׁר בְּבִי בְּבָבְי בְּיְבְים בְּילְים בְּבְי בְּבְּבְי בְּיִב בְּעְרִים, חָשְׁר בְּבוֹ בְּעְבְים בְּי בְּבָר בְשְׁר בְּבוֹ בְּבְּר בְשְׁר בְּיב בְּיבְר אָשְׁר בְּבוֹ בְּבְיב בְּיבְר בְּבְי בְּבְי בְּבְּב בְּבְב בְיבְ בְּער בְּבוֹ בְּבְּבְי בְּיל בְּבְיבְ בְּבְיב בְּיִב בְּבָּבְר בְּבּי בְּבָּבְי בְּבְּב בְּבְיבְי בְּבְיב בְּבְיבְיב בְּבְּבְי בְּבְּבְי בְּבְי בְּבְי בְּיִבְים בְּבְי בְּבְיבְים בְּב

And Jethro rejoiced (Exod. 18:9). Do not read this word as *vayihad* ("and he rejoiced") but rather *vayihed* ("and he became a *yehudi* [a Jew]"). Why did Jethro say: Blessed be the Lord (Exod. 18:10)? Jethro said: I have not neglected to worship any idol in this world, but I have found no god like the God of Israel. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods (ibid. 11). Four men said four things which, had they been uttered by other men, would have been scoffed at with the comment: "How does he know about the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He?" These four were Moses, Nebuchadnezzar, Jethro, and Solomon. Moses said: The Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice (Deut. 32:4), but if any other man had said this, they would have said about him: "How does he know that?" It was proper, however, for Moses to make this statement, since it is written about him: He made known His ways unto Moses (Ps. 103:7). Thus Scripture says: Show me Thy ways (Exod.

33:13). Solomon said: He hath made everything beautiful in its time (Eccles. 3:11). If any other man had made this statement, they would have laughed at him, saying: "Who told him what is beautiful in its time and what is not beautiful?" Solomon, however, could properly make such a remark since nothing was lacking from his table. R. Hama the son of Hanina declared: Even ice in the (hot summer) month of Tammuz and melons in the (cool spring) month of Nisan were not lacking from Solomon's table. Why did he say: He hath made everything beautiful in its time? He said in its time because the taste of growing things changes from season to season. Nebuchadnezzar said: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the hosts of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, nor say unto Him: What doest thou? (Dan. 4:32). If anyone else had said this, they would have ridiculed him, saying: "How does this wicked one know this?" But it was fitting for him to say it, since it is written about him: And wheresoever the children of men, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven dwell, hath He given them into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all (ibid. 2:38). Jethro said: Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; yea, for by the things they planned to do evil (they were destroyed) against them (Exod. 18:11). This may be compared to the man who loaded his ass, only to have the load fall upon him. This happened to the Egyptians. They intended to destroy the Israelites in the water, and they themselves were drowned in the water. Thus it is written: For by the thing they planned to do evil against them.

(Tanchuma Yitro, 7)

וַיָּאמֶר יְהֹוָהֹ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רֵד הָצֵד בָּצֶם פֶּן־יָהֶרְסִּּ אֶל־יְהֹוָהֹ לְרְאֹוֹת וְנָפַל מִמֶּנוּ רֶב: וְגַם הַכּּהָנִים הַנּגָּישִים אֶל־יְהֹוָה לִא־יוּכַל הָּעָׁם לַעֲלָת אֶל־הַר סִינֵי כִּידְּהָה הַעֵּדְתָה בָּנוּ לֵאמֹר יִתְקַדֲשׁוּ פֶּן־יִפְּרֶץ בָּהָם יְהָוָה: וַיִּאמֶר מֹשֶׁהֹ אֶל־יְהֹוָה לֹא־יוּכַל הָעָׁם לַעֲלָת אֶל־הַרְסוּ הַצָּלְת הָבְּרֹץ בָּהָם וְהָעָּם אַל־יֶהֶרְסוּ לַעְלָת הַבְּרִן עָמֶּךְ וְהַכַּהְבָּים וְהָעָּם אַל־יָהֶרְסוּ לַעֲלָת הַבְּרִים הָאֵלֶה וְיִבְבָּר אֱלֹהִים אֵתְ בְּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶה לִאמֹר.

אוֹרי
אוֹרי

ְּוָכְל־הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִּם וְאֵת קּוֹל הַשׁפָּׁר וְאֶת־הָהָר עָאֵוֹ וַיִּרְא הָעָם וַיָּגֵּעוּ וַיִּעַמְדָּוּ מֵדְחְּק: וַיְּאמְרוּ אֶל־הָעָם רֹאָים אֶל־הַעָם רִאָּתָּה עָמָנוּ וְנִשְׁמֻעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּּר עָמֶנוּ אֱלֹהָים פֶּן־נָמְוּת: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אַל־הִעָם הַאַלֹהִים וּבַעֲבוּר תִּהְיָהְ יִרְאָתָוֹ עַל־פְּנֵיכֶם לְבִלְתִּי תָחֲטָאוּ: וַיַּעֲמָד הָעָם מֵרְחִֹק וּמֹשֶׁה נִגְּשׁ אַל־הַעַרְפַּׁל אֵשֶׁר־שָׁם הָאֵלֹהִים:

Hashem said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people not to break through to Hashem to gaze, lest many of them perish. The priests also, who come near to Hashem, must stay pure, lest Hashem break out against them." But Moses said to Hashem, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and sanctify it.'" So Hashem said to him, "Go down, and come back together with Aaron; but let not the priests or the people break through to come up to Hashem, lest [God] break out against them." And Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

God spoke all these words, saying:

I am Hashem...

... All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance. "You speak to us," they said to Moses, "and we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." Moses answered the people, "Be not afraid; for God has come only in order to test you, and in order that the fear of God may be ever with you, so that you do not go astray." So the people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

(Exodus 19:21-20:2; 20:15-18)

אנכי ה' אלקיך. ולא נאמר אני, כי אילו היה כתיב אני, היה משמע שגילה אז הקב"ה לישראל את כל אורו בשלימות ולא יוכלו אח"כ להעמיק בדבריו, כי כבר גילה הכל, אך הכ"ף מורה שאינו בשלימות ורק דמות ודמיון הוא להאור שיגלה הקב"ה לעתיד, וכל מה שישיג האדם יותר עמקות בד"ת יראה שעד עכשיו היה בחושך. וע"ז מרמז היום והלילה, היום היינו שהש"י פותח שערי החכמה לאדם והלילה היינו שלא ידמה האדם שהשיג הכל בשלימות, כי כל מה שהשיג הוא כלילה נגד היום הבא אחריו וכן לעולם, וממילא הכל הוא לילה נגד האור שיפתח הקב"ה לעתיד.

I am the Lord your God. [It says אני and it doesn't say אני For if it has said אני, it would imply that the Holy One, blessed be He, had then revealed to Israel all of His light in its completion, and they wouldn't have been able, after that, to delve deeper into His words, because all would have already been revealed. But the D indicates that it wasn't in [its] completion, and was only and image and likeness to the light that the Holy One, blessed be he, will reveal in the future, and all [the while] that a person grasps more [and more] deeply in words of Torah, he will see that until now he had been in the dark. And about this the [notion] of the day and the light hint [to us] — the day [symbolises] that Hashem, may He be blessed, opens the gates of wisdom to man, and the night that a person shouldn't imagine that he has grasped it all in this completion, because all that a person has grasped is like night compared to the day that comes after it, and so too forever, and it follows that all [understanding] is darkness compared to the light that the Holy One, blessed be He, will open in the future.

(Mei Hashiloach, I, Yitro)

וַיָּשֶׁב משֶׁה אֶת דִּבְרֵי הָעָם אֶל ה', אוֹתָה שָׁעָה בִּקֵשׁ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא לְתֵּן לָהֶם אֶת הַתּוֹרָה וּלְדַבֵּר עִמְּהֶם, וְהָיָה מֹשֶׁה עוֹמֵד, אָמֵר רַבִּי לֵוִי מְשָׁל לְמֶלֶּדְ שֶׁבְּקשׁ לַעֲשׁוֹת מֹשֶׁה עוֹמֵד, אָמֵר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא מְהַ אֶעֲשֶׂה הַפֶּנִי משֶׁה, אָמֵר לוֹ, כְּבָר נַעֲשֵׂית. שׁוּב אָמַר לוֹ, לַדְּ קְרָא אוֹפִיקשׁי עָמִר חוּץ מִדַּעְתוֹ שֶׁל אִפַּרְכוֹס, אָמֵר לוֹ עֲשֵׂה הַפֶּלֶּדְ מַה שֶׁבְּקשׁ. כָּדְ בָּקשׁ הַקּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא לְמֵן עֲשֶׂר לְפְלוֹנִי סִינְקְלִיטָקוֹס וְיָבֹא עִמְּד, עֵד שֶׁהוּא הוֹלֵדְ עָשָׁה הַמֶּלֶדְ מַה שֶׁבְּקשׁי. כָּדְ בָּקשׁ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא לְמִעָּר הַנְקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא אוֹ משֶׁה, אֶלֶּא יֵרֵד משָׁה וְאַחַר כָּדְ אֲנִי אוֹמֵר: אָנִכִי ה' אֱלֹהָיך. אֱלֹהִים, מִי אָמֵר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא אוֹ משֶׁה, אֶלֶּא יֵרֵד משֶׁה וְאַחַר כָּדְ אֲנִי אוֹמֵר: אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהִים, מִי אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּדְ הוּא אוֹ משֶׁה, אֶלֶּא יֵרֵד משָׁה וְבִּסְוּ שִׁמְלֹתָם, אָמֵר לוֹ בְּבָר הַקְּדִשְׁתִּם הַיּוֹם וּמְחָר וְכִבְּסוּ שִׂמְלְתָם, אָמֵר לוֹ בְּנִילְתָ אַתָּה הָעֵדֹתָה בָּנוּ לֵאמִר וֹנוּ עַמְּר לוֹ (שמות יט, כד): לֶדְ בִּדְישְׁתָּה בָּנִי לֵשְׁמִר (שמות יט, כד): לַדְּ הוּא, שֶׁנְּצָמֵר (שמות יט, כה): וַיְּדָבֵר אֲלָהִים. וְיַבְר מֵשְׁה יוֹרֵד, נִגְלָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּך הוּא, שֶׁנְצָמֵר (שמות יט, כה): וַיֵּרָד משֶׁה יוֹרָד, נִגְלָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּך הוּא, שֶׁנְצָמֵת (שמות יט, כה): וַיְּדָב רְאַלֹהִים.

"And Moses delivered the response of the nation to Hashem" (Exodus 19:8). At that moment, the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to give them the Torah and to speak with them, and Moses was standing [nearby]. The Holy One, blessed be He, said, "What will I do regarding Moses?" Rabbi Levi said a parable of a king who wanted to make a proclamation without the knowledge of the lieutenant-governor. He told him to do such-and-such. He replied that it had already been done. He said to him something else, "Go and get so-and-so, the Senator, and bring him with you. Before he had finished, the king did what he wanted to do. So too, the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to give ten statements. Moses was standing at His side. The Holy One, blessed be He, said, "I am [going to be] revealing to them the firmament, and saying, "I am the Lord your God." They [are going to be saying], "Who said that? The Holy One, blessed be He, or Moses?" Rather, Moses will go down, and after that, I will say, "I am the Lord your God."" So said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses. "God down to the people,

and sanftify them today and tomorrow, and clean their clothes. He said to Him that they'd already been sanctified. As it is written, "You warned us saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and sanctify it' (Exodus 19:23)." He said to him, "Go down and bring Aharon up with you" (Ibid., 19:24). While Moses was going down, the Holy One, blessed be He, was revealed, as it is written, "And Moses went down to the nation..." immediately afterwards, it says, "And God spoke..."

(Shemot Rabba 28:3)