



דרכים בפרשה

יתרו



ויחד יתרו על כל הטובה אשר עשה ה' לישראל אשר הצילו מיד

מצרים

Yisro rejoiced over all the good that Hashem had done for Klal Yisroel, that He rescued it from the hands of Mitzrayim (18:9)

Yisro's reaction upon hearing a full recounting from Moshe Rabbeinu of all of the events was one of tremendous joy and emotion. The meforshim all seem to agree that ויחד means, *and he rejoiced*. However, the unusual word ויחד instead of וישמח leads Chazal to offer many alternative understandings.

The word חד which can also mean *sharp*, indicates that he took something sharp to give himself a bris which of course is a very happy event. There is another pshat which simply refers to an intense joy mixed together with the pain of Mitzrayim that as a convert, he would still feel it sharply. The Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh suggests that the joy was so great that he exploded in goosebumps all over his skin (think of pain that one gets in their jaw from smiling too much, and multiply this many times).

But what was this great joy that he was experiencing? As a father, perhaps he was happy to finally see a full picture of whom his daughter married. After all, there was the episode by the *malon* of Moshe almost dying for not giving a bris to his sons. According to the Chasam Sofer, Moshe was not lax in the performance of this mitzvah, but rather, it is that he was exempt as he was en-route to do

the commandment of Hashem to save Klal Yisroel. Tzippora did not know this because Moshe never told her. She may have felt that Moshe's priorities were mixed up. So when Aharon suggested for her to go back home with the children, she was more than happy, thus leaving her in the dark with big questions about whom she married. One year later, upon hearing about the great events, Yisro was so happy to finally hear the truth. This is why he called in Tzippora and the children at that time. Another *pshat* might be that Yisro had finally been able to end his lifelong quest in the pursuit of truth as he now found Hashem (Rashi-Mechilta). For either explanation we say, אין שמחה כהתרת הספיקות, *-there is no joy like the resolution of doubts*.

The Malbim seems to understand that ויחד points to a new understanding for Yisro, He now understood that ה' אחד. It is not that there is good and bad which comes from two distinct places, but rather ה' אחד-it is all one. Everything in the world is from Hashem and even the bad is really good. The Aibishter that seemingly brought something bad upon the Mitzriyim was actually doing something good for the Yidden. Yisro now saw the entire picture. Accordingly, we can now explain that with his newfound understanding, his

rejoicing was now in Hashem Himself. This may be seen in Yisro's words, where we notice that he keeps on mentioning Hashem, Hashem, Hashem.

We can contrast this for a moment with another person who also came to a reckoning of Hashem. In Sefer Yehoshua, we find that Rachav hazona also came to this understanding, recognizing Hashem's existence, with many similar comments in the pessukim. However, Rachav does not express any joy of such intimate knowledge of Hashem. Her reaction is one of fear. Her only reaction that she could muster up was, "will my family be spared?" She was unable to see אהר the way that Yisro saw it; she only saw the bad.

When we recite the *krias shema*, we cover our eyes as we express our deepest *emunah* in Hashem. But perhaps, as we look at how the world has completely turned upside down, we begin to question things. For that, we close our eyes and look away from the craziness. We declare אהר- it is all one, the good and the bad; it is all Hashem and all for the good.

But here is where the tough questions must be asked: The gemara (Sanhedrin 94a) tells us in the name of Rav Papayus that these pessukim are an embarrassment for Klal Yisroel. Yisro said Boruch Hashem and he was actually the very first person to do so. It is so common today; everyone says it: Boruch Hashem or even B"H for short. But why was he the first one? Did none of the Yidden that had just experienced yetzias Mizrayim, Kriyas Yam

suf, and milchemes Amaleik feel enough excitement, joy, and closeness to Hashem? Where were the goosebumps of Klal Yisroel? But now let us fast forward more than 3300 years. We all must ask ourselves the same questions: Do we get excited when we learn our daf gemara knowing that we are attaching ourselves to Hashem? Are we singing with joy the words of davening? Do we feel excited about our relationship with Hashem, or is it all lip service with the mitzvos being done out of rote? Is it only the baal teshuva that gets excited because it is still brand new to him?

The Gerrer rebbe once met a bachur in Yerushalayim and asked him which yeshiva he is learning in. The bachur responded, "Ohr Sameach, but don't worry Rebbe, I am not a ba'al teshuvah. The Rebbe famously responded, "*un fahr vos taake nisht*" (and why not?).

As we now arrive again in this parsha at Kabbalas Hatorah, let us accept the Torah with passion, excitement and great rejoicing. Let us happily proclaim Boruch Hashem, Hashem echad!

מרדכי אפפל, Good Shabbos,



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