



# דרכים בפרשה

יתרו

**והגבלת את העם סביב לאמר השמרו לכם עלות בהר ונגע בקצהו  
כל-הנגע בהר מות יומת**

*And you shall set boundaries for the people around, saying, Beware of ascending the mountain or touching its edge; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death(19:12)*

In Chumash Devarim we find some background to our pasuk: ויאמר ה' מסיני בא וזרח: *“Hashem Came from Har Sinai – Having Shone Forth from Har Seir, and appeared at Har Paran” (Devarim 33:2).*

Lest the Nations of the World complain that Hashem was unfair in only offering the Torah to the Bnai Yisroel, HaShem did in fact offer it to all the other nations of the world, and was turned down by all. When the descendants of Esav were offered the Torah, they replied, “What are its laws?” Hashem gave them a sneak preview of one law: “You shall not murder.” They said, “How can we accept the Torah? That law goes against our very nature, as Yitzchak said to our father, Esav, *“And you will live by your Sword!”* (Bereshis 27:40). He next offered it to Amon and Moav, who likewise turned it down when they heard that immorality was one of its main prohibitions. They reasoned, “Our national origins are bound up with a story of immorality between Lot’s daughters and their sleeping father. (Bereshis 19:30-38)”. The descendants of Yishmael likewise turned it down because they could not deal with the prohibition against stealing, *“He will be a person without self-control, with his hand in everyone else’s property, and everyone else’s hand in his property, and he will camp on the*

*borders of everyone else’s land.”* (Bereshis 15:12). It was only when HaShem offered the Torah to the Bnai Yisroel that He found a Nation with the potential to live according to all the laws of the Torah. And they realized this potential by responding, *“Naaseh V’nishma,* “We will first obey, and then understand,” (Shemos 23:7).

While it is true that Bnai Yisroel were the intended recipients all along, HaShem still saw to it that the other nations would not complain that it was unfair. The *Chidushei Harim* asks that still and all, things seemed unfair. All the nations were challenged with something that went against their nature. But where do we find that Bnai Yisroel was challenged as well in such a manner? He answers that they were indeed challenged when they were given the mitzvah of *“hagbala”*. On the third day of Sivan, HaShem commanded them with the Mitzvah of *hagbala* – Moshe was to designate fixed limits around the mountain beyond which they were forbidden to trespass, for if they were to enter a sphere of *kedusha* (holiness) too intense for their capacity, they would die.

The way I picture it, there were 600,000 adult men, plus women and children all gathered around Har Sinai, awaiting the greatest event ever. Would the people try and push for a

better spot? Would there be complaints of “I got here first”, and, “it’s not fair”? Of course it would all be justified because after all, the people were only trying to come closer to holiness. But now they were being told that advancing was off limits and they would need to stay put in their place. Why? Because that is where HaShem wants them to be at that moment, which means that effectively, they were in the very best spot.

As we know, the acceptance of the Torah at Har Sinai was not meant to be a one-time thing, but actually a daily reacceptance. This means that in some manner, we are challenged on a daily basis with this mitzvah. On the simplest level, this can be applied to our lives in so many ways. Perhaps a person is challenged in finding the right *shidduch* and he or she begins to feel bitter about it. Sometimes the challenge may be in *parnassah* wondering why HaShem is making it so difficult to provide the basic necessities for the family. For some, the struggle may come in the form of not yet having been granted children, or perhaps challenges in raising them. And for the child, it may be as simple as accepting a seat in the classroom or in the minivan that may not be to their liking. These are all basic trials that everyone goes through in one form or another. There hasn’t yet been a person without challenges. The test that we are given is to constantly remind ourselves that we are exactly at the place that HaShem wants us to be. This is the alef-bais of *emunah* in HaShem’s guidance of the world through *hashgacha pratis*.

Looking back at Har Sinai, there may have been two different types of people watching everything unfold. There were those that were nervous the entire time because things were

not exactly how they had envisioned it, thus not allowing them to truly partake in the great *ma’amad Har Sinai*. Their challenge might be to accept HaShem’s running the world and to leave behind all of the anxieties. Then there were the others that said to themselves, “this is where I am; let me make the best of my situation and enjoy it by living life to its fullest in this very moment”. If we spend all of our life complaining and worrying about why we are here and not there, and what we don’t have vs. what we do have, we will fail to enjoy all that HaShem puts right in front of our eyes. (Similarly, for some people, this may be missing out on the most amazing steak dinner due to perhaps the greatest phobia ever known to mankind- fear of becoming *fleishig*).

As we once again revisit the awesomeness of *matan Torah*, let us remind ourselves to be ever-cognizant of HaShem’s constant *hashgocha* over us. If things are not the way we envision them, we should remind ourselves that HaShem’s “vision” is a lot clearer than ours is, and perhaps we may not be able to handle at this moment whatever it is that we are asking for. Ultimately, HaShem has all of us standing exactly at the “spot by the mountain” that we are meant to be, and if there was a better spot, He would have put us there.

**Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפעל**



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