

# פרשת יתרו *Parashat Yitro*

*Shemot/ Exodus 18:1-20:23, Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6  
Matthew 6:1-8:1*

## **Consecrating ourselves for His Glory!**

The opening verses in this week's Torah portion state the following, וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה את כל אשר עשה אלהים למשה ולישראל ולישׂרָאֵל: *18:1 Jethro priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out from Egypt.* 18:2 *So Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after she had been sent home, ויקח יתרו חתן משה את צפורה אשת משה אחר שלוחיה: ואת נשני בניה אשר נשם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר היתי בארץ, 18:3 and her two sons—of whom one was named Gershom, that is to say, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land"; וישם האחד אליעזר; 18:4 and the other was named Eliezer, meaning, "The God of my father was my help, and He delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."* ויבא יתרו חתן משה ובגיו ואשתו ונשני בניה אשר נשם האחד גרשם ונשם האחר אליעזר: *18:5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought Moses' sons and wife to him in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God.* We are told that Yitro heard all that God had done for Moshe for Israel His people and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. If we consider what we are

told when Moshe went to Yitro telling him that he was returning to Egypt, Yitro told him to go. Then we are told that Moshe loaded up his wife and children and went to Egypt. The narrative does not say Yitro went with him. Considering the location of Midean which is near modern day Iran, this location being across the Arabian peninsula is quite a long distance from Egypt and yet Yitro heard all that had taken place in Egypt. *Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 18:1 Part 1* asks the question “*What was the particular report which he heard so that he came? The division of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek (cf. (Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 18:1:1; Zevachim 116a).*” Rashi’s conclusion is that he had heard how the Lord had delivered Israel through the Red Sea and overcome Amalek in war. Now we are told that Moshe had sent his wife and children back to Midean. Yitro may have heard of all the Lord had done from his daughter Zipporah but not the parting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek because these had not taken place when she had returned to her father. The rabbis question how Yitro heard of these things, and conclude based upon *1 Samuel 15:6* that Yitro was a Kenite and was spared destruction when Israel wiped out the Amalekites, one person possibly escaped and told Yitro. This caused Yitro to make the journey to see Moshe and Israel at Sinai. The commentary *Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot / Exodus 18:1 Part 5* states the following:

***Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot / Exodus 18:1 Part 5***

*The reason that the portion of Yitro which contains the account of the giving of the Torah also follows the story of the fight against Amalek and Yitro’s conversion, is that the report of the giving of the Torah is a reminder that eventually the Torah will become the property of all of mankind and G’d’s name and knowledge of Him will be world-wide “like the waters which cover the ocean” (Isaiah 11,9). Following that redemption there will be a יום הדין, a “day of judgment,” a resurrection of the dead. This is why the portion ואלה המשפטים follows the giving of the Torah to signal to us that resurrection and eternal life will be for those who observe the commandments spelled out in that portion. It is worth noting that when Daniel 12,2 refers to that day in the future he men-*

*tions the word אלה twice in that verse. The proximity of our portions is to be understood in terms of Isaiah 46,10 מגיד מראשית אחרית “who foretells at the beginning what the end is going to be like.” By commencing פרשת משפטים with the word ואלה, the link between Torah legislation, observance and resurrection as mentioned in Daniel is established.*

Note how according to this commentary, the Torah portion is connected to the resurrection and the obedience to the commandments. This is consistent with what we read in the Apostolic Writings in the book of *Revelation 19* (see also *Jeremiah 31*), *Galatians 5*, *Romans 3:31, 7, 15, and 16*, etc. Note how the rabbinic commentary mentions “*the story of the fight against Amalek and Yitro’s conversion, is that the report of the giving of the Torah is a reminder that eventually the Torah will become the property of all of mankind and G’d’s name and knowledge of Him will be world-wide.*” (see *Isaiah 1 and 2*) The point of Yitro hearing the report of Moshe, Israel, and the Lord God in heaven was to bring the Torah of God to all the earth. It is interesting how the fame of the God of Israel and Moshe had gone out into all the world, so much so, even Midean which was a considerable distance away (across the Arabian peninsula) heard of the power and might of our God. In a similar manner, the Apostle Paul wrote to the romans saying that their fame had also gone out into all the world.

### ***Romans 1:1-15***

*1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 1:2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 1:3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 1:4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, 1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake, 1:6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;*

*1:7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. 1:9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, 1:10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. 1:11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 1:12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. 1:13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. 1:14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 1:15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. (NASB)*

Note how the fame of the righteous works of the Romans had gone out into all the world. Paul speaks of the obedience of the faith (1:5) and thanks God because of their faith in the Messiah that was demonstrated by their faithfulness which has been proclaimed throughout the whole world (1:8). Paul speaks of their faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Christ) and then of his desire to come to Rome and preach the gospel message to them. Having heard of Yeshua and placing their faith in Him, what is the gospel message Paul is referring to having such a great desire to preach to them if they have already heard and believed in Yeshua? Could this be what the rabbinic commentary is relating to on the importance of the Torah for our lives when the rabbis say: *“This is why the portion ואלה המשפטים follows the giving of the Torah to signal to us that resurrection and eternal life will be for those who observe the commandments spelled out in that portion. It is worth noting that when Daniel 12,2 refers to that day in the future he mentions the word אלה*

*twice in that verse. The proximity of our portions is to be understood in terms of Isaiah 46,10 מגיד מראשית אחרית “who foretells at the beginning what the end is going to be like.” By commencing פרשת משפטים with the word ואלה, the link between Torah legislation, observance and resurrection as mentioned in Daniel is established.”* The rabbis speak of a link between the Torah, obedience to the commands, and the resurrection. These things are connected because the mitzvot (commandments) are part of the sanctification process, of setting us apart as holy unto God for His glory and to bear His testimonies.

In Parashat Yitro, the Lord descended in the cloud, and we are told, י ויאמר יהוה אל-מֹשֶׁה לֵךְ אֶל-הָעָם וְקִדְשָׁתָם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר וּכְבָסוּ שְׂמֹלֵתָם: יא וְהָיוּ נְכֻנִים לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי | בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרֵד יְהוָה לְעֵינֵי כָל-הָעָם עַל-  
*19:10 The Lord also said to Moses, ‘Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; 19:11 and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.*

*(NASB)* The Lord tells Moshe to “consecrate” (וְקִדְשָׁתָם) the people using the root word קדוש meaning to make them “holy” to “set them apart.” The Lord called for the people “to purify” themselves. What does this mean to purify yourself? Based upon the Scriptures, this is related to cleansing and purifying the body, the mind, the heart, and the soul. To consecrate (set apart) the body is synonymous to conquering the flesh which means as a child of God, we must serve the spirit as opposed to the desires and wants of the flesh. This related to walking in God’s ways of righteousness, justice, and truth, to serve the Lord God of Israel, and to overcome the earthly desires. Paul wrote in *Galatians 5* that serving the Lord God is to put in our hearts love, faithfulness, gentleness, peacefulness, joy, self-control and righteousness. The consecration of the body therefore is related to the Torah command and to overcoming the flesh, conquering the desires of the flesh, which Paul lists in *Galatians 5* as greed, envy, lust, deceit, pride and immorality. To consecrate or make holy your mind, is having the ability to make righteous judgments based upon our knowledge and understanding of God’s Word. Here we are called to discern the differences between the Yetzer HaRa and the Tetzzer HaTov. The idea here is godly wisdom which comes from the Lord God of Israel is pure and powerful, while

earthly wisdom is lowly and wicked. Therefore it is our goal to seek the wisdom which is from above. In order to do this, we study God's Word on a daily basis. In the studying of God's Word, we receive His instruction in wisdom which purifies, sets apart, sanctifies our minds, and the way we think. The next step in the consecration process, is to put God's Word into practice (*that which comes forth from the heart*). The act of consecration does not come simply by purifying our minds. We need to value and stand for righteousness, justice, and truth in our lives. The point is we will not understand the things of God if we do not practice them. It is unfortunate how the theologies today have spiritualized God's word. To purify our hearts means that we must "*do*" acts of love towards others and towards God, which is what it means to be faithful, humble, and repentant. This means that we need to actually depart from evil and turn from the practice of sinning, lying, immorality, and iniquity. This is what it means to perform Teshuvah (repentance) and to live a life of repentance daily. We are called as His people to leave the evil things so that we can gain spiritual understanding. This understanding is coupled to practicing God's Word and testifies to the Spirit of God in our hearts where we bear His testimonies by the way we live our lives. Consequently, studying God's Word and putting it into practice purifies our heart and the way we feel. These things are possible only with the help of the Lord which lead us to be changed from the inside out, to have a pure soul in the sense that we are to have a pure life and a pure personality, where our entire being is holy (*both in what we think and in what we do*). We are called to purify our ways of thinking and feeling, that is coupled to purifying the way we live. *i.e. What we decide in our minds is futile if it is not coupled to our actions.* Therefore, we must not just temporarily do godly things we must also practice them continually. Was this what the Lord meant when He told Moshe to "*consecrate*" (קִדְּשׁוּם) the people using the root word קדש meaning "*to make them holy*" or "*to set them apart?*" This purity the Lord is looking for, is to have a pure spirit within, and a pure mind that is coupled to holy actions. We are told *19:14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. (NASB)* Note the cloths we wear are analogous to how we live our lives in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth (*Revelation 19:8*) putting on the testimonies of God

in our lives. Let's discuss what it means to consecrate our lives further in this week's Torah portion.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 19:1-14*.

***Shemot / Exodus 19:1-14***

*19:1 In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 19:2 When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. 19:3 Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 19:6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.' 19:7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. 19:8 All the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do!' And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord. 19:9 The Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.' Then Moses told the words of the people to the Lord. 19:10 The Lord also said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; 19:11 and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 19:12 'You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; who-*

*ever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 19:13 'No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.' 19:14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. (NASB)*

א בַּחֲדָשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּיּוֹם  
הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי: ב וַיִּסְעוּ מֵרְפִידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי  
וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיִּחַן-שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹגֵד הָהָר: ג וּמִשָּׁה עָלָה אֶל-  
הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִן-הָהָר לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית  
יַעֲקֹב וְתֹגִיד לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ד אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי  
לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל-כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וְאַבֵּא אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי: ה  
וְעַתָּה אִם-שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-בְּרִיתִי וְהִיִּיתֶם  
לִי סֻגְלָה מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים כִּי-לִי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ: ו וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי  
מִמְלַכֶּת כְּהַנִּים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֲלֶה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבַּר אֶל-בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: [חמישי] ז וַיָּבֹא מִשָּׁה וַיִּקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי הָעָם וַיִּשָּׂם  
לְפָנֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוְּהוּ יְהוָה: ח וַיַּעֲ-  
נוּ כָּל-הָעָם יַחְדָּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁבַּע  
מִשָּׁה אֶת-דְּבַרֵי הָעָם אֶל-יְהוָה: ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מִשָּׁה  
הֲיֵה אֲנֹכִי בָּא אֵלֶיךָ בְּעַב הָעָנָן בְּעָבוֹר יִשְׁמַע הָעָם בְּדַבְרֵי עַמּוּד  
וְגַם-בָּךְ יֵאֱמִינוּ לְעוֹלָם וַיִּגַּד מִשָּׁה אֶת-דְּבַרֵי הָעָם אֶל-יְהוָה:  
י וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מִשָּׁה לֵךְ אֶל-הָעָם וְקַדְּשָׁתֶם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר  
וְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלְתֶם: יא וְהָיוּ נֹכְנִים לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי | בַּיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרַד יְהוָה לַעֲיִנִי כָּל-הָעָם עַל-הָר סִינַי: יב וְהִגַּבְלֹתָ  
אֶת-הָעָם סָבִיב לֵאמֹר הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם עֲלוֹת בְּהָר וּנְגַע בְּקִצְהוּ  
כָּל-הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּהָר מוֹת יוּמָת: יג לֹא-תִגַּע בּוֹ יָד כִּי-סָקוֹל יִסְקַל  
אוּ-יָרֶה יִירָה אִם-בְּהִמָּה אִם-אִישׁ לֹא יִחֲזֶה בְּמִשְׁחָה הַיָּבֵל הַמָּה  
יַעֲלוּ בְּהָר: יד וַיֵּרַד מִשָּׁה מִן-הָהָר אֶל-הָעָם וַיִּקְדַּשׁ אֶת-הָעָם  
וַיַּכְּבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלְתֶם:

According to this week's Torah portion (Parashat Yitro) when the people of Israel arrived and camped at the foot of the mountain of Si-



nai, Moshe ascended the mountain to speak with the Lord. The Lord then met with Moshe and said the following, אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל-כַּנְּפֵי נְשָׁרִים וְאָבֹא אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי: הַ וְעַתָּה אִם-שָׁמַעְתֶּם תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-בְּרִיתִי וְהִיְיִתֶם לִי סִגְלָה מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים כִּי-לִי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ: וַ וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי מִמְּלֶכֶת כְּהֹנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים: 19:4 *You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 19:6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.' (NASB) The Lord tells the people how He delivered them in a powerful way, and that if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, they would be a treasured (סִגְלָה) possession from among all the nations. They would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This was the point of the Lord coming down to dwell among His people, and of the Lord showing Himself to His people that is related to what is written in *Shemot / Exodus 19:10-11*, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵךְ אֶל-הָעָם וְקֹדְשֵׁתָם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר וּכְבָּסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתָם: יֵא וְהָיוּ נְכֹנִים: 19:10 *The Lord also said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; 19:11 and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (NASB)* The Lord tells Moshe to “consecrate” (וְקֹדְשֵׁתָם) the people to make them “holy” to “set them apart.” The Lord called for the people “to purify” themselves because He was going to draw near.

In the one sense, we find the Lord coming down to meet with His people. On the other hand, we also read of Moshe going up to meet the Lord on the mountain. The Scriptures describe a certain amount of responsibility on our part before God in order to meet with Him. The rabbis have the following to say concerning this idea of Moshe telling the people to sanctify themselves in order to meet the Lord as He descends upon the mountain of Sinai.

### *Sforno on Shemot / Exodus 3:4 Part 2*

ויקרא אליו אלהים להודיעו, כאמרם ז' ל בא לטהר מסייעין אותו כענין ומשה עלה אל האלהים ויקרא אליו ה' מן ההר: *to explain the phenomenon to him, in accordance with the well known principle of הבא* לטהר מסיין אותו, *“when someone wants to purify something impure one extends a helping hand to him “ A well known example of this is Exodus 19:3 where we find that as soon as Moses ascended the mountain G'd descended toward him.*

Sforno comments on *Shemot / Exodus 3:4* may be interpreted as the process of purification is something the Lord does with a helping hand, helping us because we fall short of the commands. The commands are meant for the separation and hallowing of our lives before the Lord.

### *Tur HaAroch Shemot / Exodus, Chapter 19:10 Part 1*

וקדשתם, *“you will sanctify, etc.” according to Rashi the word here means: “you will make preparations.” According to Ibn Ezra the meaning is that the people are to wash themselves with water. According to Nachmanides the meaning is that the men should refrain from sexual intercourse with their wives, and should also refrain from contact with anything else that confers ritual impurity upon them. Any person who makes a point of refraining from contact with ritual impurity is described as “holy.”*

Tur HaAroch writes quoting Rashi, the meaning of *“sanctify”* is to make preparations, quoting Ibn Ezra the meaning is to wash, and quoting Nachmanides, the meaning is to refrain from sexual intercourse or anything else that may cause ritual impurity. Sex with one's wife does not imply ritual impurity, but that which comes from within, the lusts of the heart does. Nachmanides comments are significant because this kind of impurity is not something that is seen by others. The idea of refraining from contact, may also be a reference to Niddah, but it is not

stated explicitly according to in Part 1 of the commentary.

***Rashbam on Shemot / Exodus 19:10***

וּקְדַשְׁתֶּם, *a way of saying “prepare them.” You have the same word in the sense of preparing for an event which did not require ritual purity as prerequisite in Numbers 11:18 before the people would receive meat.*

Rashbam states the preparation did not require ritual purity as a prerequisite before people eating meat (*Bamidbar / Numbers 11:18 ‘Say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, ‘Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt.’ Therefore the Lord will give you meat and you shall eat. NASB)* This blessing the Lord brought in their midst (manna and meat) was done so according to the mercy of God.

Taking these commentaries into consideration, the idea here is that there were no specific commands (mitzvot) that were given for the people to see the Lord descend, as indicated by the variation on the interpretations according to the rabbis. The absence of a “*specific*” command alludes to the difficulty of following the command to achieve justification before God, as opposed to the importance of focusing upon the Lord, upon Yeshua, and the mitzvot that follows as a result of our faith, love, and hope in the Lord. The covenant relationship begins and depends upon faith, and the preparation of our hearts before God. This seemed to be the idea behind the Lord having Moshe consecrate the people three days prior to His descending on the mountain without giving them a specific command except to wash their cloths and to remain pure from sexual relations prior to the meeting. These two things have deep meanings from the Torah context as it is related to righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth.

In *Tehillim / Psalm 111:5-6*, David says the covenant of God brings His blessing in the form of, ה טָרַף נָתַן לִירְאָיו יִזְכֹּר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ: ו  
111:5 *He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever. 111:6 He has made known to His people the power of His works, In giving them the heritage of the nations. (NASB)* The food on our tables, the cloths

on our back, the roof over our heads, these are given as a blessing from God. If you have these things, know for certain the Lord “*has*” blessed you greatly. Note how the Lord brought the manna and the meat as a result of His mercy according to the covenant blessings, and not as a result of the people having properly prepared themselves. The people were very unclean in the inner recesses of the heart. These things remind us of the Torah context of God’s blessing according to Parashat Ekev, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-20*.

***Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-20***

*8:1 ‘All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. 8:2 ‘You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 8:3 ‘He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. 8:4 ‘Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. 8:5 ‘Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. 8:6 ‘Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. 8:7 ‘For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; 8:8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 8:9 a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 8:10 ‘When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless*

*the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. 8:11 'Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; 8:12 otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, 8:13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, 8:14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 8:15 'He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. 8:16 'In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. 8:17 'Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' 8:18 'But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 8:19 'It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. 8:20 'Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the Lord your God. (NASB)*

Based upon the Torah, taking possession of what the Lord has for us is dependent upon our obeying His commands. Our physical needs are designed to lead us to seek the Lord God of Israel. Moshe writes concerning the food and clothing relating this to knowing the Lord disciplines His children, saying, 8:6 *'Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. (NASB)*. He also gives a warning to not forget the Lord to be disobedi-

ent when the blessing does come. The key verse is 8:18 *'But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (NASB)* The Lord provides us with what we need, and this perspective should not be forgotten. Forgetting and becoming lazy to continue in sin in unrepentance, leads to serving and worshiping the sinful way, just as Moshe writes, 8:19 *'It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. 8:20 'Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the Lord your God. (NASB)* Sin itself may become a god to you in the sense of giving one's life wholly to the sin and forgetting about what the Lord wants for us, which is freedom from sin and to walk in His ways. In context to what Moshe is writing in Parashat Ekev, this reminds us of the relationship of faith to the manner in which we serve the Lord as Paul wrote in *Romans 3:30-4:22*.

### ***Romans 3:30-4:22***

*3:30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. 3:31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law. 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 4:7 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. 4:8 'Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into*

*account.’ 4:9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, ‘Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.’ 4:10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 4:11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 4:12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. 4:13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 4:15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. 4:16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 4:17 (as it is written, ‘A father of many nations have I made you’) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. 4:18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ 4:19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; 4:20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 4:21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also*

*to perform. 4:22 Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness. (NASB)*

While reading Romans, due to the church theologies that we have been taught over the centuries, it is difficult to understand how Paul's words are not in stark contradiction to the Torah. Paul writes of the ones to whom the Law was given and says, *3:30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. (NASB)* Note how he is writing, he speaks of the circumcision, God justifies "by faith" whereas for the uncircumcision God justifies "through faith." What does it mean to be justified "by faith" as opposed to being justified "through faith?" He writes this way in the sense that we establish God's Law (*3:31*) by the way that we live our lives. Notice how he is speaking of justification before God and of the commands of God. The Lord saves those who were not given the Law (the gentiles) in the same way that He saves those who were given the Law (Israel). The idea is that those who were given the promises to be heirs of the world, was not accomplished through the Law but through the righteousness of faith. He says the Law brings wrath, and for those who have faith, who repent, and turn from their sins seeking the Lord God of Israel, they will receive mercy. Paul's entire argument is related to the non-Jewish person (gentiles) entering into the covenant relationship with God through faith, and beginning to live their lives by their new found faith. A parallel may be found in Parashat Lech Lecha, in the promise the Lord had given Abraham, his body being dead (his and Sarah's bodies being old). It was not by the works of the flesh which caused their son to be born, but by a miracle and the power of God. His faith was credited as righteousness, meaning that he kept the commands of God because of his faith and love for God. This is what Paul is trying to teach the gentile believers in *Romans 3:30-4:22*.

Now when thinking on all of these things, I have been told the following, *"Thought should be given as to why non-Jews are so eager to observe a law never intended for them."* This is an interesting and deeply theological statement. The idea that the Law was only given to Israel, and that Israel are the only ones who are responsible to keep the commandments is deeply rooted in the minds of Christians today due to replacement theology. As we have studied in the past, this is not the



perspective of the rabbis and it is not the perspective of Yeshua and the Apostles in the NT. The rabbis believed the Torah was offered to all of mankind on the mountain of Sinai. The point of the Torah, as Paul wrote, is *4:15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. (NASB)* He is not advocating that the Torah is done away with in the Messiah. He is speaking of the weakness of the body to keep the commands (see *Romans 7:23-26*), just as his example of Abraham and Sarah demonstrate (*4:19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb*). The weakness of the body leads to death when keeping the commands for the purpose of justification before God. The reason being, we always fall short and are weak, which is why Paul is emphasizing faith and righteousness. The whole point Paul is trying to make is in relation to the gentiles receiving the promises of God and how that is accomplished in the Messiah Yeshua. We are not to remain unfaithful due to our sins. We are to be built up in our faith to get back up and try again, to turn from our sins (Teshuvah / Repentance), and to seek the mercy of God. The Apostolic Writings speak of the Lord sending His Messiah Yeshua for that specific purpose, to believe by faith in the mercy of God. Therefore, Yeshua is the end goal of the Torah, because He is related to our Teshuvah / Repentance and turning from sin. He is the bedrock of our faith. If we continue to study the book of Romans, Paul writes in *Romans 11*, clearly stating that non-Jews are grafted into the covenant, the olive tree, and the remnant of Israel by their conversion from paganism to faith in the God of Israel. Therefore, part of being Yeshua's disciple is walking in God's ways (*following the Torah that God gave to Israel*) and recognizing that the Torah does not save and never could. Thought should be given as to why Christians always miss this point over and over again. The reason being are the theologies that have been, are, and continue to be taught in churches today without a Torah centric understanding of First Century life. The church today only teaches a theology as opposed to what is taught in the Scriptures!

Many contemporary Christians today feel disconnected when considering the vibrant ministries of the prophets and apostles as described in the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings. The Tanach describes the

Lord God taking the people of Israel through miraculous event after miraculous event. The important thing to note is these events occurred over the span of 1400 years until the time when Yeshua came upon the earth in the Apostolic Writings. So the work of God in our lives takes patience that is coupled to diligently seek of the Kingdom of God. Those who watched the ministry of Yeshua were seized with amazement at the miracles he performed (*Luke 5:25*), and the apostles in the early church regularly performed signs and wonders among the people (*Acts 5:12*). In Yeshua's day, these were meant to cause the people to fear God and believe in His Messiah, just as when the people went through the Red Sea, after these events they feared God and believed in Moshe. (*Shemot / Exodus 14:31*) Today however, these miraculous events seem rare, at the very least, the feeling one gets is that there is something different about the way the Lord God worked in the Tanach and New Testament periods as compared to the way He works today. This has led to many theologies (i.e. Dispensationalism, Replacement, Supersessionism, etc). This raises a valid question: *"Why don't we experience the miracles today like we read about in the Bible?"* The reason is due to the theologies that are being taught that do not lead one to seek the kingdom of God in the sense of taking upon the testimonies of God according to the commands. The point of the commands of God is to bring things out into the light, the inner rebelliousness to the Word of the Lord, the unwillingness to seek Him in His ways, and to be set free from bondage and the darkness that we have gotten ourselves into. You see, the Torah command brings to light all of the wretchedness of our lives. The commands lead us not only to seek the Lord God our Father in heaven, but also to seek Yeshua His Messiah. This is why Paul wrote what he did in Romans (*4:15*) that the Law brings death, and that we are the children of the light and life, and we are to seek the God of all creation. The commands reveal the secret and hidden intentions of our hearts. This is what the author of the book of Hebrews meant in Hebrews chapter 4. Hidden shame due to horrific sins that one has committed in secret or in public, the Lord never intended us to live in the shame of sin. This is the message of Yeshua, to deliver us from sin, and to empower us to overcome sin to live in God's ways of righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. Shame is crippling, and we are not called to live in shame, He wants to set us free. If you are living in a

secret sin and feel shameful about it, talk to the Lord about it, and then maybe someone else in your life that you trust. I am not saying that one needs to post their current or past struggles for all to see shouting from the rooftops, but that we need to examine our hearts. It is these things that hold back the power of God in our lives, and is the reason we do not see the Lord working the kinds of miracles that He did in the past. This should be our focus, and this speaks against the theologies which has crippled the church from since its inception following the death of the disciples.

This is why Parashat Yitro is so important for us this week, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵךְ אֶל-הָעָם וְקִדְּשָׂתָם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר וּכְבָּסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתָם: יֵא וְהָיוּ נְכֹנִים לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי | בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרֵד יְהוָה לְעֵינֵי כָל-הָעָם עַל-הַר סִינַי: *19:10 The Lord also said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; 19:11 and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (NASB)* If we are to meet with the Lord, we need to consecrate ourselves in preparation for such an event. If we are a people in whom the spirit of God dwells, how significant do you think these things are for us today in the midst of an ever increasingly wicked generation? As God's children, we are called to hallow our lives for His glory. This purity the Lord is looking for, is to have a type of purity that is through and through. Something that permeates our entire being, mind, body, and soul. This is who we are called to be, and the kind of people we are to look like, a people within whom the Lord God dwells.