



Zera Shimshon on Parshas Yisro

ויבא יתרו חתן מלשה ובניו ואשתו אל-משה
אל-המדבר אשר-הוא חנה שם הר האלקים:
ויאמר אל-משה אני חתנה יתרו בן אלמד ואשתך
ישני בניה עמה
(שמות י"ח:ה-ו)

“Yisro, Moshe’s father-in-law, brought Moshe’s wife and two children to him in the wilderness, where Bnei Yisroel were encamped at the mountain of Elokim. Yisro sent word to Moshe, ‘I, your father-in-law, Yisro, am coming to you, and your wife and her two sons.’” (Shemos 18:5-6).

Rashi explains the second pasuk: “I, your father-in-law, Yisro ... ’ etc.: “Even if you feel that I am undeserving for you to come and greet me, you should greet us because of your wife. If you believe that your wife is also not worthy, then you should come and greet us in the merit of your two children.”

Zera Shimshon asks why Yisro would perceive himself as less deserving of Moshe’s greeting than Tziporah, his daughter. *What perceived deficiency did Yisro identify in himself to justify Moshe’s apparent indifference? Furthermore, what perceived flaw did Yisro attribute to Tziporah, leading him to think Moshe might not welcome her and that he should greet them only because of his children?*

Zera Shimshon explains that Yisro most likely did not harbor any doubts about Moshe greeting him due to a perceived lack of importance. Respecting one’s father-in-law is a fundamental aspect of derech eretz, regardless of status. Yisro, however, speculated that Moshe might have reservations about him becoming a *ger* (convert), suspecting ulterior motives.

His concern wasn’t at all groundless or farfetched. It is written in the Gemara in Yevamos 24b, that converts were not accepted in the time of Dovid and Shlomo, and they will not be accepted in the times of Mashiach. This halacha stems from the need for conversions to be solely for spiritual reasons, *l’shem shamayim*, without any secondary motives. In times of prosperity for klal Yisroel, there’s a worry that individuals might seek con-

version to share in this success rather than to grow closer to Hashem. It’s akin to a person demanding to be accepted to volunteer at a charity event, although it is obvious to all that he only did it to be photographed and gain publicity for himself—rather than to genuinely help those in need. He, for sure, will not be accepted.

Zera Shimshon—citing a midrash—asserts that Yisro’s motives were, indeed, genuinely pure. Despite the Gemara’s ruling that conversions during prosperous times are generally not accepted, Tosfos points out that this isn’t an absolute rule and exceptions exist. For example, a prospective convert of royal descent or one who displays genuine sincerity may be accepted. Yisro—aware of his own sincerity—still worried that Moshe might question it, especially since Yisro came to Bnei Yisroel after witnessing the miracles in Mitzrayim, at the Yam Suf, and the manna. Yisro’s awareness of the benefits of joining Bnei Yisroel raised concerns that Moshe might misinterpret his motives and, as a result, avoid greeting him.

Yisro, therefore, suggested that even if Moshe doubted his sincerity, and would not greet him, he should still greet them for Tzipora’s sake. Tzipora had converted in Midyan when she married Moshe—a time when Bnei Yisroel were still being oppressed in Mitzrayim—underlining her pure intentions.

Yisro’s worry about Moshe not greeting Tzipora—but only for the sake of his children—had another dimension. According to an opinion in the Mechilta, Moshe had divorced Tzipora before returning to Mitzrayim to lead Bnei Yisroel. They were divorced at that time (though they later remarried, as noted in parshas Behaalosecha), which could make it inappropriate for Moshe to greet her. Therefore, Yisro suggested Moshe greet them because of his two children. Since their mother converted during Bnei Yisroel’s suffering in Mitzrayim, their conversion was undoubtedly sincere and, obviously, even if Moshe and Tziporah were not married, the children were still his.

Zera Shimshon gives another fascinating explanation based on the writings of the Arizal, but first some background.

Rashi in Chumash (Bereishis 4:1) quotes the midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 22:2-3) that in the beginning of mankind, Chava gave birth not only to Kayin and Hevel, but Kayin had a twin sister and Hevel had two twin sisters.

It is written in the midrash that there was an argument between Kayin and Hevel who had the right to marry the extra girl. Kayin claimed that he had the right to marry her because he was the firstborn and the firstborn gets double the inheritance. Hevel counter argued that since she was born with him, he has the right to marry her. This argument was so heated that Kayin ended up killing Hevel!

It is written in the writings of the Arizal that Moshe was the gilgul of Hevel, Yisro was the gilgul of Kayin and Tzipora was the gilgul of the second girl born with Hevel—about whom Kayin and Hevel argued.

After Kayin killed Hevel, Hashem exiled him and from Rashi, it seems the reason for this was because Hashem judged him as if he killed by *shogeig* (accident).

It is written in Meseches Makkos that a person who killed by *shogeig* and takes refuge in an ir miklat and the Rambam writes: “Although the killer has gained atonement, he should never return to a position of authority that he previously held. Instead, he should be diminished in stature for his entire life, because of this great calamity he caused.” Zera Shimshon infers from the last phrase, “because of this great calamity he caused,” that not only one that kills someone cannot return to “his position of authority” but even one that only caused someone else to be killed.

Drawing from the above sources, Zera Shimshon explains that Yisro’s concern that Moshe might not show him honor and greet him stemmed from Yisro’s past life as Kayin, who killed Hevel by accident and, therefore, was required to go to a ir miklat which disqualified him from receiving honor. Therefore, Yisro proposed that even if he himself might not merit respect, Moshe should still greet them, honoring Tzipora.

Yet, there was an additional worry regarding Tzipora, who was Hevel’s second triplet. The concern was that she should not be honored because the initial dispute leading to Hevel’s death was linked to her, and the Rambam implies that one who even, indirectly, causes a death may not return to their former stature of honor.

Therefore, Yisro proposed to Moshe: even

if he felt hesitant to greet both Yisro and Tzipora, he should still do so for the sake of their children, who were free from these complex past-life associations.

Although only talmidei chachamim of great stature—like the Arizal—can pinpoint the exact gilgulim of individuals, there’s still a practical aspect to recognizing that we are gilgulim and that this can influence the events in our lives. I’m not referring only to significant life events, such as seemingly random marriages between people from different countries, arranged through unexpected acquaintances. Post-marriage, why Hashem orchestrates it becomes crystal clear.

I’m referring to everyday occurrences as well, like randomly speaking to a stranger after davening—who seems a complete incompatible chavrusa—but ending up learning with him for a few months and both enjoying it tremendously. Or, taking a wrong turn and ending up giving a lift to someone in need. Things that are really trivial, but when one thinks about it, it is, “a veiled mystery” why Hashem made it happen. However, thinking about gilgulim, then these less momentous events, which, initially—seem like mere coincidences—can be understood that it was exactly orchestrated by Hashem as a means of resolving past ties or debts. Simply put, acknowledging gilgulim can help you make sense of events that appear random, arbitrary and haphazard.

The weekly Zera Shimshon column is sponsored:

בזכות זרע של קיימא
יוסף נחמן בן שלי אדל
מעייין רבקה בת אסתר
רחל בת רבקה יתה
אהרון שמחה בן בתיה

This learning should be a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleima* for Avraham Eliezer ben Adel and that Meshulam ben Sarah should merit to meet and marry a suitable *zivug* and together, they should build a *bayis neeman b’Yisroel*.

Email Zerashimi8@gmail.com, if you would like to add a name to daven for.

To automatically receive a *dvar Torah* from Zera Shimshon every week, email Shevachp@gmail.com

TORAH TIDBITS

Reaching Ketz



By Steven Genack

A great chesed that Hashem did for Bnei Yisrael was to count the *shibud Mitzrayim* from the day Yitzchak was born. Therefore, it wasn’t until 190 years later that the actual physical labor began, meaning Bnei Yisroel was in Egypt for 210 years. The question is, how can this be done? God is exact in everything.

A possible answer is that with the birth of Yitzchak the potential of a father sacrificing his son came into the world. This alone is enough pain to cover 190 years. Though we are ultimately redeemed 210 years later from physical work, the 190 years counted as a *galus*, as a *ketz*, which in gematria equals 190. We know that Moshiach’s arrival is referred to as *ketz*, which is a hint that tests and sacrifices count as much as physical pain, and as we endure travails, the time for Moshiach’s arrival can be shortened.

SHAIMOS PICKUP



Hafrashas Challah / Challah Burning

- schools
- shuls
- home
- ספרי קודש all



We do pick ups all year round