



THE MELVIN MAGERMAN
לע"נ מנחם מנדל בן ליב

Parsha

PARTNER™



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Parsha Perspectives

RABBI DAVID ORDAN

יִסְעוּ מִרְפִּידִים וַיְבֹאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי... וַיַּחֲזֵן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגְדַּ הַהָר

They journeyed from Rephidim and arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the Wilderness; and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain. (Exodus 19:2)

The old adage of “two Jews, three opinions” is more than a clever observation regarding our tendency to disagree with each other. It is also a subtle description of the difficulty we face in uniting for a common purpose. This is nothing new. In fact, it goes right back to the Exodus. In describing the various journeys of the Jewish people as they left Egypt, Rashi notes that the verse consistently uses the plural, which teaches that each encampment was accompanied by discord and strife.

There was, however, one notable exception. As the Jewish people camped at Mount Sinai, the verse suddenly switches to the singular. According to Rashi, this reflected a significant change in the mindset of the nation. Immediately prior to receiving the Torah, the Jewish people were no longer divided. Instead, they had become “like one man with one heart.”

The Jews were not the only nation to attain this level of unity, however. As the Egyptians overtook the Jews at the Sea of Reeds, Rashi notes that they drove forward “with one heart, like one man.” The language is nearly identical to that used to describe the Jews at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 14:10)

Rabbi Avrohom Bornsztain, (1839–1910, Poland) author of the Avnei Nezer commentary, points to an important distinction between the two nations and their respective unity. The Egyptians acted “with one heart, like one man,” while the Jews acted “like one man, with one heart.”

According to the Avnei Nezer, Rashi is teaching a fundamental principle about the nature of unity among people. In some cases, unity is a tool

employed to achieve a certain goal or objective. This type of unity can be achieved even when there is a level of indifference, discord, or even animosity between the various individuals of the larger group. This was the unity displayed by the Egyptians. Even though each Egyptian harbored his own personal agenda for wanting to destroy the Jews, it did not detract from the larger goal. One thing they all agreed on was that the Jews needed to be destroyed.

When the Jews came to Mount Sinai, however, their unity was of a different kind altogether. There, the unity was created because of commonality of the people themselves. There was a bond of brotherhood that superseded other concerns, which in turn led to a unity of purpose as well. The question remains, however, as to how the Jewish people were able to achieve this level of unity in such a short period of time? After all, this is the same Jewish people, who prior to arriving at Mount Sinai, had been plagued by all sorts of discord.

The Kli Yakar answers this question by explaining that the Jewish people’s arrival at the mountain

entailed more than simply changing their location. As far as mountains go, Mount Sinai is extremely underwhelming. Rather than majestically towering into the heavens, the place G-d chose to give His Torah to the Jewish people was rather low and unremarkable.

The message was not lost on the Jews: In order to be messengers of G-d’s Torah in the world, the Jewish people had to move beyond their personal agendas and develop a sense of humility that would allow them to truly unite as a people prior to achieving any particular goal.

The following story powerfully illustrates this idea: Several years ago, a reserve Israeli army unit was drawing up plans for an upcoming mission. When it became clear that the men could face heavy enemy fire, a heated dispute broke out among the soldiers. The unmarried men in the unit insisted that they go into battle first and that the married men stay back. They reasoned that the married men had families to take care of, while they did not.

The married men refused to accept this line of reasoning and insisted that they fight while the unmarried men stay back. They reasoned that if they should fall in battle, they had someone to say Kaddish for them, while the unmarried men did not.

In many ways, the struggle of our generation is not so much the need to unify around a common goal as it is to unify around a common sense of shared brotherhood. Indeed, there is no lack of worthy goals that must be achieved, and every act we contribute to achieving them is valuable beyond measure. However, the ability to relate to every Jew we meet as a brother, whose essence is no different than our own, is the most powerful unity we can achieve as a people.

You can reach Rabbi Ordan at parsha@partnersintorah.org



PartnerENCOUNTERS

Meet Gitty Goldberg



Gitty Goldberg's happiness is not just catching – it's positively infectious! With a smile on her face and a spring in her step, Gitty lives to bring joy to others. In her own words, Gitty is a people person who "loves to sing, laugh and share loving, lasting friendships."

A creative soul at heart, Gitty owns her own gourmet home-based food company, Gitty Gourmet, which allows her to express her desire to create things that please both the eye and the palate. She has a thirst to grow in her Judaism, and, as she envisions it, "to be to be the best possible wife, mother, daughter, sister and friend," all of which will bring her closer to G-d as a result.

"Being Jewish to me means total and complete happiness, peace of mind, security, contentment and fulfillment, connection and attachment to G-d," she said. "It means fulfilling my purpose on this

earth with joy, and enjoying life and this material world to the fullest infused with spirituality!" Sharing this enthusiasm for life is at the heart of everything Gitty does, as is her desire to bring out the natural gifts in others.

"I love to make people feel good and help them make the most out of what G-d has given them," Gitty said.

Obviously, then, it was much more than a "mere coincidence" that brought Gitty to Partners in Torah. About six years ago, she was sitting next to a friend at a Bar Mitzvah who mentioned Partners in Torah and the various opportunities the organization offered to get involved with Jews from around the world.

Since then, Gitty has found her experience with Partners in Torah to be extremely rewarding, especially her partnership with Tracie Kurland. As is often the case, Gitty finds that she gains as much – or perhaps even more – than she gives. Over the years, Gitty and Tracie have developed a strong bond of friendship, a true partnership in navigating life's experiences.

"I wouldn't give up my relationship with Tracie for anything. I love her like crazy," Gitty said. "She is always rising to the challenge. I learn a lot from her devoted and kind-hearted ways, and her thirst for knowledge."

Reflecting on her six years with Partners in Torah, Gitty expressed gratitude for the

opportunity it gives her to share passion for Judaism.

"Partners in Torah enriches my life, my values, and keeps me balanced and in check," she said. "It helps me to constantly remind myself the proper priorities and goals to have in life."

We want to highlight YOU on this page. Share your story with us. For more information please email: parsha@partnersintorah.org

Highlights

PARTNER IN TORAH SINCE:
2005

OCCUPATION:
Wife, mother, owner of home-based food company called "Gitty Gourmet"

FAVORITE JEWISH BOOK:
"Small Miracles"

FAVORITE JEWISH FOOD:
Chulent

FAVORITE HOBBY:
Singing

OLD COUNTRY AND CITY ORIGINS:
Poland

WHAT BEING JEWISH MEANS TO ME:
Being Jewish to me means total and complete happiness, peace of mind, security, contentment and fulfillment, connection and attachment to Hashem, fulfilling my purpose on this earth with joy, and enjoying life and this material world to

BESHALACH CORRECTION TO PARTNER ENCOUNTER:
Taras (Yisroel) Prokopenko



PartnerTALK

RUSHING IN WITH THE ANGELS

Dear Rabbi Meisels,

My mother recently passed away at the age of 89. Even though we were not that religious, I have been going to services at a local Orthodox shul to say kaddish for her. Little by little I am learning the prayers and how the services work. I do have one question that I hope you can answer: Why do we raise ourselves on our toes when we recite the kedushah prayer during the repetition of the Amidah?

Morrie S.
Olney, MD

Dear Morrie,

First, allow me to express my condolences on your loss and to commend you on your decision to say kaddish for your mother. May your prayers be a source of continuing merit for her soul.

Regarding your question, many people are not fully aware of the importance of the *kedushah* prayer. However, it is one of the most important parts of the entire service. So much so that one is even required to interrupt the *Shema* and its blessings in order to recite *kedushah* with the congregation. What it is about this prayer that elevates it to such a status?

Although the basic version of the *kedushah* prayer consists of four stanzas, the middle two form the core of it and are the most important. They are:

1. *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh Hashem Tziva'kos M'lo Kol Ha'Aretz Kvodo* – Holy, holy, holy is G-d, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with His glory, (Isaiah 6:3)
2. *Baruch K'vod Hashem mi'm'komo* – Blessed is the glory of G-d from His place, (Ezekiel 6:12.)

These two verses are the words that the Divine Angels use to pronounce the glory of the Divine

Name as reported by the Prophets. Each of these verses deserves a more detailed explanation of their own, but that is the essence of their meaning.

When we recite the *kedushah*, we are expressing our yearning to eventually merit the World to Come, where we will join the Divine Angels as heavenly servants who express these words of *kedushah* to the Almighty. The souls of righteous and pious people from earlier generations, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all inhabit the World to Come and already partake in expressing this praise, and we utter a prayer that we eventually merit the same for ourselves.

Lifting ourselves up on our toes while reciting these verses (and possibly the last verse as well) is symbolic of the movement of the Divine Angels described by the Prophets in the chapters where these verses are taken from. It is an action that expresses our desire to emulate those Divine Angels here, in this world, and eventually in the World to Come.

This is also what lies behind the custom of standing with our feet together when we recite the *kedushah*. The verse (Ezekiel 1:7) also alludes to the Divine Angels as having one foot, and so we place our feet together to emulate

them as well. Angels are also described as perpetually standing, which is why we stand during the recital of the *kedushah*.

It must be clarified that any anthropomorphic descriptions of angels or spiritual phenomena cannot be taken literally. Such descriptions reflect a certain spiritual quality possessed by the angels, and are translated into understandable human terms. The idea that angels have only "one foot," for example, is generally understood to mean that they created with one specific mission. Unlike humans, angels do not possess free will. Thus, they do not waiver in their service to G-d. This aspect of their makeup is described as having "only one foot." The same understanding must be applied to other such descriptions as well.

For a fuller appreciation of these ideas, I recommend that you study the laws in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 125:3 and Rav Schwab on Prayer pages 273 and 434 where he discusses this in detail.

Wishing you all the best,
Rabbi Elazar Meisels

To reach R' Meisels:
rabbimeisels@partnersintorah.org

LOOK WHO MADE PARTNER...

RECENT SAMPLING OF PEOPLE
WHO HAVE JOINED AS PARTNERS:

IRA LIPSUS— KEW GARDENS, NY
BENJAMIN TAUBER— BROOKLYN, NY
ELISHEVA WEISS — LOS ANGELES, CA
JOANNE LANCIN — TOM RIVER, NJ
BRADLEY LIPITZ — BROOKLYN, NY
MARK SKLAR — MEDIA, PA
DEVORAH KARR — WATERBURY, CT
EMILY BERGER — SUNNYVALE, CA

Making Partner has never been this easy!



THE Back PAGE

TABLE TALK

FOR DISCUSSION AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

And it was on the next day, and Moshe sat to judge the people and the nation stood before Moshe "from the morning until the evening." (Exodus 18:13) Rashi explains that a judge who judges truthfully for even one hour, it is considered a partner with G-d in Creation. Obviously, this does not mean that he may judge falsely during the rest of the day. What then, might the verse be implying by judging truthfully for "one hour"?

א) How could judging correctly make one a partner with G-d in creation? What connection is there between judging and creativity in the world? To Creation?

ב) From what words in the verse can Rashi's comment be implied?

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Parsha At-A-Glance

After hearing about the miraculous events of the Exodus, the Splitting of the Sea, and the war with Amalek, Yisro, Moses' father-in-law leaves his homeland and travels to meet Moses and the Jewish people in the desert. He brings Moses' wife Zipporah and his sons Gershom and Eliezer, and the entire Jewish people come out to greet them upon their arrival. After hearing Moses relate how G-d struck the Egyptians in the very manner in which they sought to harm the Jewish people, Yisro rejoices in the knowledge of G-d's omnipotent power and converts to Judaism.

The next day, Yisro observes the interactions between Moses and the nation. From morning until evening, the Jewish people stand by Moses while he sits and adjudicates their cases. Realizing that this is too great a burden for both Moses and the people, Yisro suggests a solution. He advises Moses to choose upstanding men to serve as judges. Moses accepts Yisro's advice and sets up a court system that includes judges over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Minor matters that can be adjudicated without difficulty will be judged by these men; difficult matters will be sent to Moses. Yisro then returns to his homeland to convert his family.

The portion continues with the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. Just seven weeks after leaving Egypt, the Jewish people have transformed themselves from a lowly slave nation into a people ready to be G-d's emissaries in the world. G-d informs the Jewish people that if they accept the Torah and listen to Him and keep his covenant, they will be "the most beloved treasure of all peoples...a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation."

After three days of preparation, the Jewish people gather at the foot of Mt. Sinai. As G-d descends, thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud surround the mountain. Smoke rises from the mountain and the sound of the shofar grows increasingly powerful until the entire camp shudders from the intensity of the experience. After warning to the people that they must not approach the mountain, Moses ascends Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments:

- I am the L-rd you G-d, who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.
- Thou Shalt Not Have Any Other G-d's Before Me
- Thou Shalt Not Take the Name of G-d in Vain
- Remember the Sabbath and Keep it Holy
- Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother
- Thou Shalt Not Murder
- Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery
- Thou Shalt Not Steal (this means kidnapping)
- Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness
- Thou Shalt Not Covet

The Jewish people directly heard the first two commandments from G-d. After that, however, the experience was too overwhelming, and they beseeched Moses to act as G-d's messenger on their behalf. The experience of hearing G-d speak to them directly was sufficient to solidify their belief in G-d and in the truth of Moses' prophecy forever.

The portion continues with G-d reiterating the fact that He spoke to the Jewish people directly and that they are prohibited from making any images that can be misused as symbols or an intermediary between them and the Divine. This includes making images of heavenly bodies and angels, as well as "gods" of silver and gold.

The portion ends with a commandment that the altars for the future Tabernacle must be constructed of earth. When a stone altar is eventually constructed for the Temple in Jerusalem, the stones may not be cut with iron instruments. Iron shortens life, while the Temple lengthens life by offering people repentance and atonement. In addition, the Kohanim must use a ramp when they approach the altar so as to maintain meticulous standards of modesty during their service.

To read Rabbi Meisel's archived Talking Points: <http://www.partnersintorah.org/parsha-partner/beshalach-5768>

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