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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON YISRO - 5783

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)> date:  
Feb 9, 2023, 7:12 PM subject: Rav Frand - Torah is Acquired  
Through Effort, Not Brain Power

### Parshas Yisro **Torah is Acquired Through Effort, Not Brain Power**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of  
Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the  
weekly portion: #1280 The Shul Kiddish Shabbos Morning:  
Two Interesting Shailos. Good Shabbos! There is an  
interesting Ohr HaChaim haKadosh in Parshas Yisro. Parshas  
Yisro contains the narration of the giving of the Aseres  
Hadibros (Ten Commandments) on Har Sinai, which is the  
most fundamental event in the history of the Jewish people,  
even more fundamental than Yetzias Mitzrayim (the exodus  
from Egypt). And yet, the first part of the parsha (and the  
source of its name) is about Yisro and the method he  
proposes to Moshe Rabbeinu for streamlining the process by  
which the people resolved disputes and received answers to  
their questions. The Ohr HaChaim asks: Why does the setting

up the judicial system suggested by Yisro precede Kabbalas  
HaTorah?

The Ohr HaChaim answers that the Ribono shel Olam wanted  
to relay a message to that generation and every subsequent  
generation. Hashem is informing us that there are plenty of  
smart people in the non-Jewish world and it behooves us to  
take advantage of their wisdom and expertise.

We should not think that Hashem gave the Torah to the Jewish  
people because they were so smart. We might have  
chauvinistically claimed that others are not worthy of receiving  
and dealing with the Divine Wisdom contained in the Torah.  
The Ohr HaChaim points out that there are many very smart—  
even brilliant—non-Jews in the world.

The last time I checked, Bill Gates is not Jewish. Warren  
Buffet is not Jewish either. You can go through history and  
find brilliant non-Jews in every generation. Michelangelo was  
not Jewish. Neither was Aristotle. There are plenty of great  
people in the world who are not Jewish. Some are very, very  
smart.

The Ohr HaChaim says that it is instructive that a story of a  
non-Jew who takes stock of the situation, and proclaims, "You  
are doing this all wrong!" precedes Kabbalas Hatorah (the  
Revelation at Sinai). This demonstrates that we were not  
chosen for our brains. The Ribono shel Olam chose us to be  
His people as part of a Divine Kindness, and because of His  
love for our patriarchs. We were chosen for our yichus  
(lineage). We are the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and  
Yaakov whom the Ribono shel Olam loved.

There is another lesson here, beside the fact that brain power  
was not the reason why we merited Torah:

There is a parallel parsha to Parshas Yisro, and that is Parshas  
Devorim. At the beginning of Sefer Devorim, the Torah  
recounts this whole story. Moshe complains that he is  
overburdened with his duties of leadership: "How can I alone  
carry your contentiousness, your burdens, and your quarrels?"  
(Devorim 1:12). This is then followed by the solution to his  
challenge: "Provide for yourselves distinguished men, who are  
wise, understanding, and well known to your tribes and I shall  
appoint them as your heads." (Devorim 1:13). To which the  
people respond positively: "The thing that you have proposed  
to do is good" (Devorim 1:14).

Rashi there (Pasuk 14) sheds a somewhat negative light on the  
people's acceptance of the plan: The people's response should  
not have been "Great idea!" Their response should have been  
"Moshe Rabbeinu, we want you!" "We are willing to wait in  
line for four hours, if necessary, because we want to learn  
Torah from you!" Moshe was suspicious, Rashi adds, that  
perhaps the people were so enthused about the proposal  
because they thought they would be able to bribe or otherwise  
gain the favor of these "district judges" who they felt would  
perhaps not be as incorruptible as Moshe Rabbeinu.

So, perhaps this parsha, which seems so positive in Parshas  
Yisro (everyone was happy; great idea!), was not such a slam-

dunk best policy solution. Even if at the end of the day, Moshe would have had to convince the people “No. This is a good idea.” – at least their initial response should have been “We do not like the idea because, Moshe Rabbeinu—we want you!”

I saw a very interesting insight into this comment of Rashi in the sefer Yad HaTorah. The reason that Rashi provides why they should have said that they prefer to learn Torah from Moshe was “Because you pained yourself for this” (nitzta’arta aleha). You were on that mountain for forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. Therefore, your Torah is superior because you suffered over it. It was not brain power that made Moshe’s Torah superior to that of his students. It was his shvitzing over it.

It was not brain power in Parshas Yisro which caused Hashem to choose us and it was not brain power in Rashi in Parshas Devorim which should have caused them to prefer Moshe’s Torah over that of his disciples.

This is a key lesson. The way a person acquires Torah is not through brain power. It is not necessarily acquired by the smartest kid in the class. It is acquired by the person who shvitzes, who works the hardest.

The Ponnevezer Rav said a fantastic thing. Why were there people in Europe who, compared to today (with rare exceptions), were such great gedolim? We do not have someone like Rav Chaim Ozer. We do not have a Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk or a Rav Chaim Soleveitchik of Brisk. This is not to knock anyone, but is this because they were so much smarter in pre-war Europe? The Ponnevezer Rav answered that the reason they were so much bigger was because they shvitzed for it. They were moser nefesh for it.

Today, we sit in air-conditioned Batei Midrash. We have everything at our fingertips. It is beautiful. I am not belittling it. The amount of Torah today exceeds what existed in Europe. Europe was not utopia. But the gedolim emerged as a result of their shvitzing.

Rav Shach—before he arrived to Eretz Yisroel—owned one shirt. He washed the shirt on Erev Shabbos so he would have something clean to wear for Shabbos. He slept on a bench in the Beis Medrash. There were days when he literally starved for lack of food. That does not exist today. The key to Torah acquisition is not brain power, but rather the pain and effort that a person endures in the acquisition of Torah.

Moshe Lost His Job to Emphasize That the Mesorah is Exact

The pasuk says, “...thus say to the House of Yaakov and tell the Children of Israel.” (Shemos 19:3) Rashi comments “in this language and in this sequence.” Hashem tells Moshe to give over His message precisely as he is being told it. Similarly, two pesukim later, Rashi comments on the expression “...These are the words that you shall speak to the Children of Israel” (Shemos 19:5): “Neither more nor less.”

We would think that there would be no need to tell Moshe Rabbeinu. “Say it this way – neither more nor less, this is exactly how you need to say it!” Is it not obvious that Moshe

Rabbeinu should and will transmit Hashem’s ‘script’ to Bnei Yisrael exactly as Hashem tells him? What is Rashi saying here?

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky addresses this issue in his sefer. The principle he sets forth is basically an idea found in the Droschas haRan. There is a very famous teaching of Rav Nissim ben Reuven of Girona (1320-1380). Why is it that Moshe Rabbeinu, the leader of Klal Yisrael, had a speech impediment? We would think that the person who took the Jews out of Mitzrayim, gave them the Torah, and led them for forty years in the wilderness should be articulate. At least we would assume he should be a good speaker!

The Droschas haRan writes that Hashem wanted Moshe to have a speech impediment because He wanted that the people should accept him and listen to him, not because of his ‘golden tongue’ or because of his oratorical skills. Therefore, he was the leader of the people, not because of his power of speech but because he was Moshe Rabbeinu – the messenger of Hashem.

When the Ribono shel Olam told Moshe “I want you to give Torah to Klal Yisrael,” He emphasized “I do not want a ‘sales job’ over here.” There are people who are born salesmen. Someone walks into a car dealership wanting a stripped-down Corolla and walks out with a Lexus that has every single feature. Why? Because a slick salesman sold him a bill of goods. It is the same when you go buy a refrigerator. You want a basic model refrigerator. You wind up buying a model with an ice-maker that takes your blood pressure and does everything for you! Slick salesmen!

The Ribono shel Olam is emphasizing to Moshe: I do not want any sales jobs over here. I want them to accept the Torah as it is. “This is it.” Therefore, “nothing more and nothing less.”

Rav Yaakov uses this idea to answer a question that troubles all the meforshim. Moshe Rabbeinu made one slip-up in his life. He hit the rock rather than speaking to it (according to Rashi’s interpretation of the aveira (sin) of Mei Merivah). Essentially, Moshe Rabbeinu was fired for that! Because of that one slip-up, Moshe was unable to be the one to continue to lead Bnei Yisroel into Eretz Yisroel! Rav Yaakov explains why. It was vital that the Torah be transmitted exactly as given by Hashem. Once there is any addition or subtraction or modification to the word of Hashem, people can start speculating – “well, maybe other parts of it are not from Hashem either! Maybe this is Moshe’s own editorial comment.” To bring home this crucial idea that precisely the entire Torah is from Hashem, the one time that Moshe did do something not EXACTLY as commanded, he lost his job.

This Torah is the Word of G-d. It is not the word of Moshe Rabbeinu and not the word of anyone else. It is the Dvar Hashem.

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Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Yisro is provided below: # 042

Kiddush: To Sit or Not to Sit # 085 Christianity in Halacha # 133 Honoring In-Laws # 180 The Mitzvah of Kiddush for Men and Women # 226 The Fearless Judge: A Difficult Task # 270 Parental Wishes vs. Staying in Israel # 316 The Reading of the "Aseres Hadibros" # 360 Dolls and Statues: Is There An Avodah Zarah Problem? # 404 Making a Bracha on a Makom Neis # 448 Lo Sachmod # 492 Eating Before Kiddush # 536 Newspapers on Shabbos # 580 Women and Havdalah # 624 Resting Your Animal on the Shabbos # 668 Kiddush B'mkom Seudah # 712 The Kiddush Club # 756 The Kosel Video Camera # 800 Avoda Zara and The Jewish Jeweler # 844 Yisro and Birchas Hagomel # 888 What Should It Be – Hello or Shalom? # 932 Saying The Shem Hashem While Learning – Yes or No? # 975 Kiddush on Wine: Absolutely Necessary? #1019 Unnecessary Brachos #1063 Ma'aris Ayin: The Power Lunch In A Treife Restaurant #1106 Must You Treat Your Father-in-Law Like Your Father? #1149 Kiddush Shabbos Day – On What? What Do You Say? #1192 I Keep 72 Minutes; You Keep 45 – Can You Do Melacha for Me? #1236 "I Want Your House and I'll Make You an Offer You Can't Refuse": Muttar or Assur? #1280 The Shul Kiddish Shabbos Monring: Two Interesting Shailos #1281 Kiddush Shabbos Day – Must Everyone Drink the Wine? #1324 Saying Kaddish: All Aveilim Together or Each One Individually on a Rotating Basis? #1368 Davening For Personal Needs on Shabbos? #1412 Must One Keep Their Father's Minhagim or What Bracha Do You Make on Potatoes #1456 I Haven't Accepted Shabbos Yet, You Have. Can I Make Kiddush For You? #1500 The Case of the Son-in-Law Who Wants More Support Money From His Father-in-Law. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Rav Frand © 2022 by Torah.org. support Do you have a question or comment? Feel free to contact us on our website. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> to get your own free copy of this mailing or subscribe to the series of your choice. Need to change or stop your subscription? Please visit our subscription center, <http://torah.org/subscribe/> -- see the links on that page. Permission is granted to redistribute, but please give proper attribution and copyright to the author and Torah.org. Both the author and Torah.org reserve certain rights. Email copyrights@torah.org for full information. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org) (410) 602-1350

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>  
date: Feb 9, 2023, 11:35 PM  
subject: Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur

**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman – Parshas Yisro 5783**

**1 – Topic – A Thought from Rav Moshe in the Kol Rom**

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Yisro. Let me share with you a fundamental question and then a beautiful answer. The question is back in Parshas Shemos Moshe Rabbeinu asked the Ribbono Shel Olam in what Zechus are the Jews going to go out of Mitzrayim. The Ribbono Shel Olam said in 3:12 (תַּעֲבֹדוּן) על הָהָר הַזֶּה (אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים), He said that in a few weeks in Parshas Yisro you are going to be standing on Har Sinai. (תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים, על הָהָר הַזֶּה) (וְשָׂאֵלְתָּ) (מִה זְכוּת יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁיֵּצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם). You asked in what merit will the Jews go out of Mitzrayim? In the Zechus that they will stand by Har Sinai. Beautiful!

That seems to contradict the idea that we had in Parshas Bo that Klal Yisrael left in the Zechus of the Dam Milah and the Dam Pesach. As it says in Yechezkel 16:6 (וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי) They were Arumim from Mitzvos, they had no Mitzvos (as

explained in Rashi in Parshas Bo 12:6). They went out in the Zechus of the Dam Pesach and Dam Milah (דָּם פְּסַח וְדָם מִיֵּלָה). There seems to be a contradiction in Chazals as to in what merit Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim.

I would like to share with you a beautiful Yesod from Rav Moshe which is printed in the Kol Rom (Page Shin Zayin, Os Yud on 12:6) and it will answer the question. Rav Moshe there deals with the following. He says that in Mitzrayim the Egyptians had the sheep as their Avodah Zora. HKB"Y told Klal Yisrael in 12:21 (מִשְׁכּוֹ, וְקָחוּ לָכֶם). (מִשְׁכּוֹ יִדְיָכֶם מֵאֵלֵי לֵיִם, וְקָחוּ) (לָכֶם צֹאן שֶׁל מִצְרַיִם). You take a sheep as a sacrifice. Separate yourself from this sheep, Avodah Zora of Mitzrayim.

Rav Moshe asks what kind of business is this, a sheep as an Avodah Zora? Jews are going to fall for such silliness, such Narishkeit? Halalu Avodah Zora, they had an Avodah Zora of the sheep? It is the most absurd thing that could be. In what way did they serve the sheep? We are told that the Mitzrim were not even shepherds, they didn't eat the sheep, they didn't Shecht the sheep, they didn't even pasture the sheep, they just let the sheep roam around the country. Like people say they do in other countries with cows Biz'man Hazeh. You think that there are Jews there, that there will be Jews who will fall for this Avodah Zora? It is such an absurdity that to think that Klal Yisrael would fall to that is absolutely senseless, and it is.

Rav Moshe has the unique understanding of the Avodah Zora of the T'leh (sheep) in Mitzrayim and why Klal Yisrael was attracted to it. Rav Moshe said there are two types of Taiva. There is a Taiva Gashmi, a desire from physical pleasure and there is a Taiva Ruchni, there is a desire to be an elevated person. It is innate in a human being to on the one hand have very physical pleasures, eating, drinking, touching. At the same time, there is a part of a person that G-d created with a holy soul and the soul wants to do things that are spiritual. Klal Yisrael is commanded, that desire to be a good, spiritual, moral person. Devarim 28:9 (וְהִלַּכְתָּ, בְּדַרְכֵי) has to be done in the way HKB"Y says and it has to follow the guidelines of the Torah. A Jew can't just say I want to do good things and decide on his own what he wants to do.

You might think that it is a wonderful thing to cook supper for someone. But if it is Shabbos and you cook supper for someone, the person is Chayuv Sekila. You have to follow the rules.

In Mitzrayim, the Avodah Zora of the sheep was this. The Egyptians like all human beings had a certain desire to be kind. They looked at the sheep, the sheep are a particularly defenseless and helpless creature. It doesn't have horns to fight back with, it could barely bite, it can barely move. It is a defenseless and helpless creature. The Frumkeit of Mitzrayim was do not disturb, let the sheep do what he wants. If he wants to cross the street, stop the traffic and let him cross the street. Don't have shepherds for that. Beraishis 46:34 (כִּי-תוֹעֵבַת מִצְרַיִם, ) (כֹּל-רֵעָה צֹאן). The Mitzrim don't like shepherds, the sheep got to do what he wants, leave him alone.

HKB”H took Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe Rabbeinu was a (רֹעֵה צֹאן), he was a shepherd. He understood that the sheep are there for the benefit of human beings. HKB”H took Moshe Rabbeinu and He said go to Klal Yisrael and tell Klal Yisrael that they are going to go out of Mitzrayim. Moshe Rabbeinu said in what Zechus? HKB”H said do you know what Zechus? (תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים, עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה). The Jewish people are going to separate themselves from the very ambiguous desire to do good which is when a person doesn't recognize the Torah from Shamayim, and he is going to put himself under the guidance of the Ribbono Shel Olam. Therefore, in Mitzrayim they were told (מִשְׁכּוֹ, וְקָחוּ לָכֶם). Separate yourself from this idea that the Egyptians have of doing good because something feels good, sounds good. No! Do what I tell you. Shecht a Korban, smear the blood on the Mashkof and the Mezuzos. Why? Because the Ribbono Shel Olam said so. That is the Zechus of (תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים, עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה). A Zechus that a person does good according to the rules of the Torah. That is the (בְּדַמְיוֹ הַיְי בְּדַמְיוֹ הַיְי). The fact that Klal Yisrael is so devoted to the Ribbono Shel Olam, and they follow the way of serving Hashem (עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה), that is the idea of Klal Yisrael separating itself from the ambiguous desire to be good to the very channeled, focused idea of doing things that are right because the Ribbono Shel Olam tells us it is right.

Rav Moshe warns that even today there is a certain drive to do good which is dangerous. Sometimes it causes Sholom Bayis problems, if a person has ideas of what is right and wrong and he pushes things that have no source, they have no basis. Rav Moshe warns about it.

Rav Moshe mentions in the same piece in Kol Rom, that there are people who when they learn they want so much to be Gedolim that they start saying Chiddushei Torah before they finish the Masechta. They start pushing themselves to be Gedolai Yisrael but without the work that is needed, without the knowledge of what is to come. They might be trying to answer a question and it may be on the next page. Zagt Rav Moshe, Moshe Rabbeinu closed his eyes. By the Sneh he closed his eyes. He was afraid to look at the Ribbono Shel Olam. Nadav and Avihu looked at the Ribbono Shel Olam with open eyes. You might think that is better. No! The answer is you need a Shibud, you need to submit to Ratzon Hashem. That is the drive L'tov that has to be channeled right.

I will add on my own. Why is it only adolescents that we see that sometimes get this bug to do what is right. They push themselves, some of them overdo it. Many do it in an incredibly wonderful way. They are devoted to spending hours in learning. We see it in adolescents. Why don't we see it in retired people? Shouldn't people becoming retired suddenly become OCD about Kiyum Hatorah, shouldn't we see them obsessing about spending every minute right? Shouldn't we see them pushing to use their time properly? After all, their time is running out. There is a desire to do good. We have to

push and make it happen. And so, that is a thought on this week's Parsha from Rav Moshe.

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from: Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> date: Feb 9, 2023, 7:11 PM subject: **Tidbits for Parashas Yisro**

### **In memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz ZTL**

#### Reminders

During Kerias HaTorah of Parashas Yisro, the minhag of most Ashkenazi congregations is to stand when the Aseres HaDibros are read. Most Sephardic congregations are particular to not follow this practice.

This week is the fifth week of Shovavim. Next week, that of Parashas Mishpatim, is the final week of the Shovavim weeks.

Daf Yomi: Erev Shabbos is Nazir 18.

Daf Yerushalmi: Berachos 89. The siyum on Yerushalmi Masechta Berachos is this Wednesday, February 15th, Mazal Tov! Masechta Pe'ah (72 blatt) begins next.

Mishnah Yomis: Erev Shabbos is Eiruvim 4:6-7.

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rebbe to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to do the same!

#### Parsha in a Paragraph

YISRO: Yisro arrives at the Jews' encampment along with Moshe's family • Moshe greets him in distinguished fashion; Yisro praises Hashem • Yisro witnesses Moshe's schedule and suggests a system of judges • Moshe implements Yisro's system • Moshe escorts Yisro as he leaves • The Jews arrive at Har Sinai • Moshe ascends the mountain • Moshe prophetically tells Bnei Yisrael that they are the chosen nation and must actualize their potential • Bnei Yisrael respond with "Naaseh" • Hashem tells Moshe that He will reveal Himself to ensure the eternal faith of Bnei Yisrael • Bnei Yisrael prepare for the revelation for three days • Moshe sets boundaries around the mountain • Hashem's glory descends on Har Sinai in an awe-inspiring manner • Moshe warns Bnei Yisrael not to approach • The first two commandments are spoken by Hashem • The remaining commandments are said by Moshe • Aseres Hadibros - See Taryag Weekly for the various mitzvos • The event elicits intense fear and trembling • Prohibition against making idols • Laws regarding construction and ascension of the altar

Haftarah: The Parashah discusses Kabbalas HaTorah, the awesome event at Har Sinai, which was an amazing spectacle of the glory of Hashem. The Navi Yeshaya relates the great heavenly spectacle that he saw in his nevuah. (Yeshaya 6:1 - 7:6)

Taryag Weekly Parashas Yisro: 72 Pesukim • 3 Obligations • 14 Prohibitions

1) Recognize and believe in Hashem's existence and His eternal omnipotence. 2) Do not believe in any other godly power. 3) Do not create or commission the formation of an idol. 4) Do not perform Temple services for another god. 5) Do not perform the services for another god. 6) Do not swear with

Hashem's Name in vain. 7) Sanctify the Shabbos. 8) Do not perform melachah on Shabbos. 9) Honor your parents. 10) Do not commit murder. 11) Do not commit adultery. 12) Do not kidnap. 13) Do not testify falsely. 14) Do not attempt to acquire or covet another's possessions. 15) Do not create a statue or form of a human. 16) Do not construct an altar by carving stone. 17) Do not ascend the altar via stairs or with wide strides.

For the Shabbos Table  
לא תחמד בית רֵעֶךָ {ס} לא תחמד אִשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדוֹ וְאִמָּתוֹ וְשׂוֹרוֹ וְחֲמֹרוֹ  
“You shall not covet your fellow’s home; You shall not covet your fellow’s wife, servant, maidservant, ox, donkey or anything that belongs to your fellow man” (Shemos 20:14)

In the prohibition of coveting another's possessions, the Torah first details various items and then concludes by prohibiting “anything that belongs to your fellow man.” Why does the Torah first list these various items if the conclusion is that everything is prohibited?

Rav Yaakov Galinsky zt”l explains that it seems to be a difficult task for a human being to not desire something he likes. To address this, the Torah writes sage advice on how to curb jealousy. “V’chol (everything) asher l’reiecha” explains that although your friend's home seems so appealing, you must take all of the homeowner's life circumstances and burdens into account - “all that is his.” One would need to accept problems, issues, worries, and challenges that accompany this coveted item.

We can understand each person’s unique circumstances and provisions with a parable from the Chofetz Chaim. A man enters a shop seeking to purchase an ax with which to chop firewood. The proprietor has no axes in stock, but the salesman offers him a quality saw used for cutting metal, and he implores the man to buy it. The man responds, “I am a woodchopper and have no need for blacksmith tools.” The Chofetz Chaim explains that one must recognize that Hashem provides each person with a custom-tailored package of wife, slave, etc. he needs for his unique mission. Then, after the Torah lists these individual items, it guides us to understand that each of these possessions is uniquely suited to its owner. Through acceptance of this reality, jealousy dissipates quickly and easily, as one views his situation from its correct perspective.

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**Why I Am a Proud Jew Three Truths which Compelled Jethro to Join Our People**

## **By: Rabbi YY Jacobson The Story of Jethro**

The opening of the weekly portion tells the story of the Pagan priest Jethro who chooses to come to the wilderness to spend time with the fledgling Jewish nation.

“Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard of all that G-d did for Moses and His people Israel; that G-d had taken Israel out of Egypt.”[1] He took his daughter and two grandchildren and traveled to the wilderness to Moses and the new Jewish nation.

The Talmud asks this question: What did Jethro hear which inspired him to come to the Sinai desert?

The Talmud cites three opinions:[2]

ובאים קטז, א: מה שמועה שמע ובא? רבי יהושע אומר: מלחמת עמלק שמע ובא... רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר: מתן תורה שמע ובא. רבי אליעזר אומר: קריעת ים סוף שמע ובא.

Rabbi Joshua says, he heard of the war of Amalek against the Israelites and he came. Rabbi Elazar Hamudaei says, he heard of the giving of the Torah and he came. Rabbi Eliezer says: He heard about the splitting of the sea and he came. [3]

This seems strange. The Torah clearly states what Jethro heard: “And Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard of all that G-d did for Moses and His people Israel; that G-d had taken Israel out of Egypt!” That is why he picked himself up and traveled to the Sinai desert. Why does the Talmud ask, “What did he hear that made him come?” And why does the Talmud offer different reasons than those stated in the biblical text?

Also, what is the logic behind these three Talmudic opinions? Must we always argue about everything? Why do these eminent Sages attribute Jethro’s sacrifice to another factor?

A Player, Not a Fan

The question that perturbed the Talmudic sages was this.

Prior to his arrival, Jethro was living in great honor and distinction. At the height of his career as the religious leader of Midian, Jethro was surrounded by riches and glory, as was the destiny of the Pagan priests of yore. Yet he left behind all of it, only to arrive in a barren wilderness, eager to hear the words of Torah. [4]He no longer saw himself as a Priest of Midian; instead, he identified himself as the father-in-law of Moses.[5]

Note the question of the Talmud: “mah shmuah shama uba?” what did Jethro hear which compelled him to COME? Why would a person of such stature abandon everything in order to pursue an attraction to Torah? What compels an aristocratic spiritual leader to abandon his comfortable habitat and glorious lifestyle and come join a nation of nomads in a desert? Yes, the Torah tells us that he heard what G-d did for Israel and that he took them out of Egypt. But Jethro could have been content with hearing the stories from far, watching them on CNN or Fox News, reading the blogs, and following the Jews on Facebook. What motivated him to say goodbye to his past and become one of three million Jews?

You can sit on your couch on Sunday and be a fan of one team or another; you can be an admirer, a cheerer, a supporter.

But why did Jethro feel the need to undergo a metamorphosis from spectator to player? Why did he have to link his fate to the Jewish fate?

For this, the sages present three alternative answers. For one, Jethro witnessed the war of Amalek against the Israelites; for the other, Jethro heard of the Torah. For the third, he heard of the splitting of the sea. These three events capture the three timeless features which embody the Jewish story.

#### The Mystery of Hate

“Rabbi Joshua says, he heard of the war of Amalek against the Israelites and he came.”

The war of Amalek represented the timeless enigma of anti-Semitism. Here was Amalek, a strong and secure nation, unprovoked and unthreatened, yet this Amalekite nation found it necessary to declare war on a young nation that has just set itself free from decades of brutal persecution and suffering. The Jews have been in Pharaoh’s massive concentration camps for 86 years—beaten, crushed, and murdered mercilessly. Their infants were plunged into the Nile River, as the men were subjected to slave labor and torture. Now, these people were finally free. Merely a few weeks after their liberation, Amalek declared a sudden bloody war on Israel.

It was not a territorial dispute which ignited the conflict, as Amalek did not even make the claim that the “Jews were occupying his homeland.” The Jews were traveling in the wilderness, remote from Amalek’s territory. Nor were there any political, economic, or military motivations, as Israel was minding its own business and not intending even to visit Amalek’s country. Pharaoh at least had the excuse of fearing that the Jews would take over Egypt. What was Amalek’s excuse to come and kill Jews?

The answer is: He did not need an excuse. This was not rational, calculated hatred. He just hated them because of their very being.

When hate is rational, based on some fear that has some logic to it, even if it is unjustified, then it can be reasoned with and brought to an end. If I hate you because I feel that you undermine by business, or you don’t respect me in the company, the hatred has a cure. If I can see that you mean me no harm, or that you too have been operating out of fear, we can mend the relationship.

But how about unconditional, irrational hatred? What happens if I hate you because of your very existence? Such hate cannot be reasoned with. Amalek had no reason—not even an unjustified reason, based on unjust fear or insecurity—to attack Israel. This was irrational, groundless hate. As long as Jews existed, Amalek could not feel wholesome. With irrational hate, it is impossible to reason. It has no cause, no logic. Therefore it may never go away.

This is what Jethro observed. He realized that for some odd reason the Jew inspires irrational venom and animosity in the hearts of certain peoples. They hate the Jews simply because they are Jews. Something about the Jew drives them mad. And

their hatred does not distinguish between Jewish adults or infants. Amalek, just like Haman and Hitler, sent two-month-old babies to the gas chambers with the same glee as he executed 50-year-old accomplished Jewish leaders. Jethro, an assiduous student of history, realized that there must be something incredibly holy, Divine, and good about the Jew which evokes such hatred toward him or her in the heart of every despot.[6] For Jethro, this was enough to know where to cast his lot.

Show me your enemies and I will tell you who you are. Draw up a list of Israel’s foes—from the days of yore to this very day—and you will see that they were and are all ruthless tyrants who would sell their own people for their greed and hunger for power. Stalin, Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Gamel Abdal Nasser, Yasser Arafat, Osama Bin Laden, Hafez Al Asad, Hassan Nasrallah, and Qassem Soleimani were not—and are not—only enemies of Israel and the Jews. They constitute and remain a threat to every good and decent person the world over. Seeing who hates Jews can be a powerful, if a bit strange, source of Jewish pride.

#### The Grandeur of Torah

“Rabbi Elazar Hamudaei says, he heard of the giving of the Torah and he came.”

Rabbi Elazar Hamudaei’s point of view is that though anti-Semitism can teach us about the moral stature of the Jewish people, this was not enough. What enthralled Jethro about the Jewish story was not just that some people hated Jews with an irrational passion, but that G-d loved them, and He gave them His Torah. When Jethro heard of the powerful institutions of Judaism—its obsession with education, charity, justice, compassion, loving the stranger, respecting the slave, feeding the poor, honoring the old, giving dignity to the sick and the mentally challenged; when Jethro learned of the Mitzvos of Torah—Shabbos, Mikvah, Kashrus, Tefilin, prayer, study; when he discovered the ethical foundations of Judaism—that no one is above the law, that each person was created in G-d’s image and has infinite dignity, that history has a purpose, and that each of us was conceived in love to fulfill a mission—when the Midianite chief Pagan priest learned of all this, he fell in love with Torah and joined the People of the Book.

Now, 3300 years later, we often take for granted the contribution of the Torah to civilization. But Jethro did not. He understood what the Irish Tomas Cahill would articulate in his book “The Gifts of the Jews:”

“We can hardly get up in the morning or cross the street without being Jewish ... The religion of the Hebrews—a tiny, marginal desert tribe—changed the worldview of Western civilization ... The West’s most deeply held beliefs about life, human nature, God, and justice are all owed to the ancient Israelites.

“In the ancient world of the ‘ever-turning Wheel,’ the countless gods and goddesses of the old mythologies played out their dramas in the world above. These gods were lustful,

jealous, and greedy, and humans were of little import. Man had no freedom to choose a destiny, and no divinely inspired laws and ethics to guide him.” According to Cahill, the Hebrews “developed a whole new way of experiencing reality... It may be said with some justice that theirs is the only new idea that human beings have ever had.”

Many Jews I know would be uncomfortable with these words written by an Irish gentile. We take for granted the quality of life shaped by Torah values and rituals over millennia. Shabbos creates happier homes; Mikvah inspires more stable and meaningful marriages; Torah education creates more balanced teenagers, less drugs, and fewer suicides. The emphasis on tradition and history diminishes the generational gap between parents and children. The laws of Jewish burial, sitting shivah, and saying kaddish are deeply comforting during times of loss. The sense of community helps people in times of crisis. All of these concepts were new and novel ideas and Jethro, a brilliant man of ideas, understood the majestic grandeur of Torah. This is what inspired him to link his destiny to the Nation of Torah.

The Super-Natural Quality

“Rabbi Eliezer says: He heard about the splitting of the sea and he came.”

Rabbi Eliezer takes it a step further. If it was only for Torah itself, Jethro could have remained on his hammock in Midian, sipping a pinna-colada and watching a Torah webcast on TheYeshiva.net, or reading a good Jewish book. What inspired him to leave his natural environment to join a crowded wilderness with millions of Hebrews? When he heard of the splitting of the sea.

The splitting of the sea demonstrated to Jethro another component of the Jewish story: The people of Israel transcended the laws of nature and the deterministic patterns of history. The largest seas, mightiest oceans, and fiercest tsunamis would not drown them. They would confront many overwhelming seas throughout their history, they would encounter impossible odds, and yet they would cross every sea and come out on the other side, stronger, more vibrant, more alive, and determined. A nation that endured crusades, inquisitions, pogroms, massacres, gas chambers, crematoriums, and suicide bombings—and yet inexplicably emerged, pulsating with a love for life and a zest for peace, this is a people whose narrative transcends the formulas of natural history.


Jethro understood what the great Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy, articulated in a 1908 article: "The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire, and has illuminated with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring, and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions. The Jew is the emblem of eternity. He, who neither slaughter nor torture of thousands of years could destroy, he who neither fire, nor sword, nor Inquisition was able to wipe off the face of the

earth. He, who was the first to produce the Oracles of God. He, who has been for so long the Guardian of Prophecy and has transmitted it to the rest of the world. Such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is as everlasting as Eternity itself." [7] Jethro understood that to experience this immortality he must leave his mansion in Midian and join the nomads in the desert. To become part of a story that transcends nature, you must transcend your own nature and actively join the symphony of eternity.

Jethro was not Jewish. Yet he made an awesome sacrifice in order to join the Jewish people and internalize Torah. We were given this gift by birth. Will we not leave our comfort zones to embrace it, celebrate it, study it, and make it part of our lives? [1] Exodus 18:1. [2] Zevachim 116a [3] Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105, foremost commentator on the Torah) asks the same questions and answers: Of the splitting of the Red Sea and the war against Amalek. Interestingly, he combines two of the three answers in the Talmud. [4] Rashi questions why the Torah finds it necessary to specify the obvious fact that Jethro came to Jews who were in the wilderness? We already know where they were! Citing the Midrash Mechilta, Rashi explains that the location is emphasized in order to praise Jethro. Prior to his arrival, Jethro was living in a place of great honor and distinction, and yet his heart moved him to go out to the wilderness, to a place of desolation, to hear the words of Torah. [5] See Rashi to Exodus 18:1. [6] At a public address on Purim 5725 (1965) the Lubavitcher Rebbe brilliantly explains the parable in Talmud Megillah 14b about the owner of the mound and the owner of the pit to capture the truth and enigma of anti-Semitism.

[7] Quoted in J.H. Hertz, A Book of Jewish Thoughts, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, p. 135.

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from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy <info@rabbisacks.org> date: Feb 9, 2023, 10:45 AM subject: To Thank Before We Think  (Yitro)

**Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZTL**

The Ten Commandments are the most famous religious and moral code in history. Until recently they adorned American courtrooms. They still adorn most synagogue arks. Rembrandt gave them their classic artistic expression in his portrait of Moses, about to break the tablets on seeing the Golden Calf. John Rogers Herbert's massive painting of Moses bringing down the tablets of law dominates the main committee room of the House of Lords. The twin tablets with their ten commands are the enduring symbol of eternal law under the sovereignty of God.

It is worth remembering, of course, that the “ten commandments” are not Ten Commandments. The Torah calls them *asseret hadevarim* (Ex. 34:28), and tradition terms them *asseret hadibrot*, meaning the “ten words” or “ten utterances.” We can understand this better in the light of documentary

discoveries in the twentieth century, especially Hittite covenants or “suzerainty treaties” dating back to 1400–1200 BCE, that is, around the time of Moses and the Exodus. These treaties often contained a twofold statement of the laws laid down in the treaty, first in general outline, then in specific detail. That is precisely the relationship between the “ten utterances” and the detailed commands of parshat Mishpatim (Ex. 22–23). The former are the general outline, the basic principles of the law.

Usually they are portrayed, graphically and substantively, as two sets of five, the first dealing with relationships between us and God (including honouring our parents since they, like God, brought us into being), the second with the relations between us and our fellow humans.

However, it also makes sense to see them as three groups of three. The first three (one God, no other God, do not take God’s name in vain) are about God, the Author and Authority of the laws. The second set (keep Shabbat, honour parents, do not murder) are about createdness. Shabbat reminds us of the birth of the universe. Our parents brought us into being. Murder is forbidden because we are all created in God’s image (Gen. 9:6). The third three (don’t commit adultery, don’t steal, don’t bear false witness) are about the basic institutions of society: the sanctity of marriage, the integrity of private property, and the administration of justice. Lose any of these and freedom begins to crumble.

This structure serves to emphasise what a strange command the tenth is: “Do not be envious of your neighbour’s house. Do not be envious of your neighbour’s wife, his slave, his maid, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that is your neighbour’s.” At least on the surface this is different from all the other rules, which involve speech or action.[1]

Envy, covetousness, desiring what someone else has, is an emotion, not a thought, a word, or a deed. And surely we can’t help our emotions. They used to be called the “passions,” precisely because we are passive in relation to them. So how can envy be forbidden at all? Surely it only makes sense to command or forbid matters that are within our control. In any case, why should the occasional spasm of envy matter if it does not lead to anything harmful to other people?

Here, it seems to me, the Torah is conveying a series of fundamental truths we forget at our peril. First, as we have been reminded by cognitive behavioural therapy, what we believe affects what we feel.[2] Narcissists, for instance, are quick to take offence because they think other people are talking about or “dissing” (disrespecting) them, whereas often other people aren’t interested in us at all. Their belief is false, but that does not stop them feeling angry and resentful.

Second, envy is one of the prime drivers of violence in society. It is what led Iago to mislead Othello with tragic consequences. Closer to home, it is what led Cain to murder Abel. It is what led Abraham and then Isaac to fear for their lives when famine forced them temporarily to leave home.

They believed that, married as they were to attractive women, the local rulers would kill them so that they could take their wives into their harem.

Most poignantly, envy lay at the heart of the hatred of the brothers for Joseph. They resented his special treatment at the hands of their father, the richly embroidered cloak he wore, and his dreams of becoming the ruler of them all. That is what led them to contemplate killing him and eventually to sell him as a slave.

Rene Girard, in his classic *Violence and the Sacred*,[3] says that the most basic cause of violence is mimetic desire, that is, the desire to have what someone else has, which is ultimately the desire to be what someone else is. Envy can lead to breaking many of the other commands: it can move people to adultery, theft, false testimony, and even murder.[4]

Jews have especial reason to fear envy. It surely played a part in the existence of antisemitism throughout the centuries. Non-Jews envied Jews their ability to prosper in adversity – the strange phenomenon we noted in parshat Shemot that “the more they afflicted them the more they grew and the more they spread.” They also and especially envied them their sense of chosenness (despite the fact that virtually every other nation in history has seen itself as chosen).[5] It is absolutely essential that we, as Jews, should conduct ourselves with an extra measure of humility and modesty.

So the prohibition of envy is not odd at all. It is the most basic force undermining the social harmony and order that are the aim of the Ten Commandments as a whole. Not only though do they forbid it; they also help us rise above it. It is precisely the first three commands, reminding us of God’s presence in history and our lives, and the second three, reminding us of our createdness, that help us rise above envy.

We are here because God wanted us to be. We have what God wanted us to have. Why then should we seek what others have? If what matters most in our lives is how we appear in the eyes of God, why should we want anything else merely because someone else has it? It is when we stop defining ourselves in relation to God and start defining ourselves in relation to other people that competition, strife, covetousness, and envy enter our minds, and they lead only to unhappiness.

If your new car makes me envious, I may be motivated to buy a more expensive model that I never needed in the first place, which will give me satisfaction for a few days until I discover another neighbour who has an even more costly vehicle, and so it goes. Should I succeed in satisfying my own envy, I will do so only at the cost of provoking yours, in a cycle of conspicuous consumption that has no natural end. Hence the bumper sticker: “He who has the most toys when he dies, wins.” The operative word here is “toys”, for this is the ethic of the kindergarten, and it should have no place in a mature life.

The antidote to envy is gratitude. “Who is rich?” asked Ben Zoma, and replied, “One who rejoices in what he has.” There is a beautiful Jewish practice that, performed daily, is life-



transforming. The first words we say on waking are Modeh ani lefanecha, "I thank You, living and eternal King." We thank before we think.

Judaism is gratitude with attitude. Cured of letting other people's happiness diminish our own, we release a wave of positive energy allowing us to celebrate what we have instead of thinking about what other people have, and to be what we are instead of wanting to be what we are not.

[1] To be sure, Maimonides held that the first command is to believe in God. Halachot Gedolot as understood by Nachmanides, however, disagreed and maintained that the verse "I am the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt" is not a command but a prelude to the commands.

[2] This has long been part of Jewish thought. It is at the heart of Chabad philosophy as set out in Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's masterpiece, Tanya. Likewise, Ibn Ezra in his commentary to this verse says that we only covet what we feel to be within our reach. We do not envy those we know we could never become.

[3] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979).

[4] See Helmut Schoeck's classic, *Envy: a Theory of Social Behaviour* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969). See also Joseph Epstein, *Envy* (New York: New York Public Library, 2003).

[5] See Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

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From: **Michael Hoenig** <MHoening@herzfeld-rubin.com>

Date: Tue, Feb 7, 2023 at 2:30 PM

**Tzipporah's Greatness - Parshas Yisro** –

... Tzipporah's Gadlus, inspired by a topic mentioned by Rav Yisrael Reisman in a Shiur last year. Tzipporah comes with Yisro and reunites with Moshe after a long separation. Yet, not much is said about her in the Parsha text.

My essay discusses sublime Keshorim re Tzipporah that most folks don't know. This great woman, actually savior of Moshe's life, deserves better recognition of her greatness. If you elect to include this piece in the Parsha Sheet, please let me know.

Blessings ! Mike

Subject: Fwd: Tzipporah's Greatness - Parshas Yisro -

In a Shiur on Jan. 20, 2022 on Parshas Yisro, Rav Yisroel Reisman focused on the Gadlus of Tzipporah's status as Moshe's wife. Citing Meforshim, he explained that Moshe and Tzipporah complemented each other, providing strengths to each other when the other lacked them or needed them. There was an absence of complaints. There was harmony. This kind of marriage is most desirable.

Why focus on Tzipporah ? Because Parshas Yisro announces a reunion of husband and wife after a long separation. The Parsha relates how Yisro brought Tzipporah with him but there's not much elaboration on this special moment in the lives of the couple. We need to understand how special

Tzipporah was as a marriage partner. The Shiur makes one think more about her. Was she simply an ordinary Midianite woman, a Giyoress without Yichus ? Or did she possess qualities and character that elevated her status?

Many are unaware that Tzipporah reportedly was a Gilgul of Hevel's twin sister. Moshe was a Gilgul of Hevel. So, their reunion in Parshas Yisro is, on some level beyond our comprehension, momentous. Further, Yisro was a Gilgul of Kayin who, some say, killed Hevel in his desire for Hevel's sister. Imagine how "fitting" it is, kabbalistically speaking, that Yisro (Kayin) gives Tzipporah (Hevel's twin) to Moshe (Hevel) as wife .

Tzipporah, separated from Moshe for a long time was not Zocheh to see first-hand or participate in Yetzias Mitzraim, Krias Yam Suf and the Shir Shel Yam.

But, now, in our majestic Parsha, Tzipporah returns to Moshe and who brings her ? Yisro. The Gilgulim cast huge shadows and there are Tikkunim here (of course, that I'm not qualified to fully comprehend). Rav Reisman's Shiur inspired thoughts about how perfectly complementary Tzipporah's and Moshe's marriage truly was. They fit together. They belonged together. It seems more understandable when one recognizes they also had profound family keshorim in the world of the sublime.

Chazal say that a Gilgul of Tzipporah, who had personally missed out on Krias Yam Suf and Shiras HaYam, was none other than Devorah ! Some suggest that Devorah's witnessing of the drowning of Sisrah's chariots in the water's inundation plus her recitation of Shiras Devorah is a remedy, a Tikkun for the Chissaron that Tzipporah had to endure. Indeed, some suggest that Barak's "strange" insistence that Devorah, a woman, accompany him to the battlefield was some kind of a Shlichus to effect , on a Gilgul level, the Tikkun for the majestic experiences Tzipporah had missed .

Rav Reisman's point about the perfect specialness of Tzipporah's and Moshe's marriage inspires one to ponder additional , sublime "plot thickeners". A Midrash suggests that Tzipporah and Bisyah (Bas Paroh) were twin sisters . Seemingly, they were infants found by Yisro and Paroh. The latter each decided to adopt and raise one of them. Tzipporah was adopted by Yisro and Bisyah by Paroh. In this version of events, it may be "smoother" (Gilgul-wise) that Tzipporah (Hevel's sister) is not Yisro's (Kayin's) birth-daughter but, rather, adopted.

Further, Bisyah (Tzipporah's twin) saves Moshe's life. She does so when involved in Geirus and accepting the Ol Malchus Shomayim. Yisro, too, comes to Moshe (with Tzipporah) to be Nisgayer.

At the "incident at the Malon" (Shemos 4:24-26), Tzipporah (Hevel's twin) dramatically saves Moshe's (Hevel's) life. So, we see that Tzipporah is no ordinary Midianite-shepherdess-spouse. "Gilgully-speaking", she is quite "Yichusdik" to be Moshe's wife. Plus, she's actually his life-saver. So the poignant points stressed in Rav Reisman's Shiur about

Tzipporah's Gadlus and wifely perfection echo hidden, sublime, kabbalistic notions most of us are not familiar with, let alone understand.

As mentioned, in the "incident at the Malon", Tzipporah truly shines. Heroically so. The whole Inyan is complicated and Chazal offer no unanimity on the scenario's details. When studying that episode intensively, one is struck by a number of Remozim/Keshorom/clues right there, in this ambiguous, mysterious text. Very briefly, here are just a few. One of the striking aspects is the very text, the words used.

4:24 immediately refers to "BaMalon". Employing Chilufe HaOsios, the rearranged letters of BaMalon spell: MOL BE'NO. It was about Milah of the son. Indeed, Malon also spells NAMUL. Kind of fascinating.

Tzipporah goes into action in 4:25 to save Moshe's life. The rearranged letters of her name spell "PO TZOR" -- here is the flint. The very next word after her name is "TZOR", the flint, with which to do the Milah.

Tzipporah's rearranged letters also spell "RITZPAH", the floor or ground. In 4:25, it says "VaTiga LeRaglav", which Artscroll says means "she touched it (the Orlah) to his feet." (Machlokes whose feet). But Rashi doesn't view it as benign touching. Rashi says Hishlichto Lifnei Raglav Shel Moshe -- She Cast (The Foreskin) Before The Feet of Moshe. She threw it down. Rashi reflects one of the views in Yerushalmi Nedarim 3:9. Another opinion there says Tzipporah cast it at the feet of the Malach, the angel. The point is she threw it on the floor, the ground, at the feet --- THE RITZPAH. This act evokes Tzipporah's meaningful statements about Chassan Domim (at 4:25,26).

Given Tzipporah's exalted status in sublime kabbalistic realms, it is important that we gain further appreciation of this significant Torah personality, especially in light of the reunion described in our Parsha. It's so interesting that Bisyah, Tzipporah, Devorah, Moshe, Yisro are all connected -- in the higher Neshama world above and here via our Torah study.

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Fw From [Hamelaket@gmail.com](mailto:Hamelaket@gmail.com)

**Rabbi Yochanan Zweig**

This week's Insights is dedicated in memory of Moshe ben Yechezkel Shraga. Lure of Martyrdom

You shall not have the gods of others before me (20:3). Rashi (ad loc) clarifies that the verse cannot be explained according to its simple translation ("You shall not take other gods before me") because it would be denigrating to Hashem to even refer to them as gods in the same context. Rather the word "acheirim – other") is to be translated as "gods who act as 'other' to the ones that worship them." In other words, gods who act as "strangers" to those who worship them; no matter how much the worshipers pray they will never be answered.

For thousands of years, much of mankind worshiped powerless idols; but what is the pathology of serving a god who doesn't answer? The answer is – and herein lies the

difference between Judaism and the other major religions – the allure of self-sacrifice is very attractive. Whether it's a vow of poverty, celibacy, or the jihad of suicidal bombing, becoming a martyr is a very self-serving way of elevating oneself.

Worshiping a god who ignores you allows one to feel that the worship is 100% genuine.

In Judaism we are supposed to understand that Hashem loves us and cares about us and only wants what is good and best for us. While we aren't supposed to serve Hashem in order to get a reward, it is critical that we understand that there will be one because we have a relationship with Hashem.

Similarly, in a marriage we don't do things quid pro quo for our spouse, we do it out of love – all the while knowing that our spouse does the same for us. Self-sacrifice is antithetical to all we believe because being in a relationship with a god who ignores you is akin to being in an abusive relationship. The rare occasions when Judaism calls for self-sacrifice is only to preserve the integrity of the relationship, never as an avenue of serving Hashem.

Shabbos...Day of Rest? And the seventh day is the Shabbos of Hashem your God; you shall not do any work [...] For in six days Hashem made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day [...] (20:10-11).

There are two versions of the Aseres Hadibros (Ten Commandments) in the Torah. In the one that appears in this week's parsha, it indicates that the reason one must not do any work on Shabbos is because Hashem "rested on the seventh day." Yet in the second version of the Aseres Hadibros, in Parshas V'eschanan, the Torah states the reason as "remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Hashem your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm; therefore Hashem commanded you to keep the day of Shabbos." Seemingly, there is a contradiction as to why we are commanded to keep Shabbos.

Additionally, both versions of the Aseres Hadibros begin with "I am Hashem your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery." One must wonder why Hashem didn't describe himself as "Hashem, Creator of the world." Would that not be a much better verification of His omnipotence and the ultimate reason we must follow His commandment?

On the possuk, "And the locusts went over all the land of Egypt, and alighted on all the borders of Egypt" (10:14), the Bal Haturim comments that the word "vayanach – alighted" appears only twice in the Torah; here and in this week's Aseres Hadibros. What is the similarity between the two occurrences?

Clearly, the Torah is telling us that the word doesn't mean that Hashem rested on the seventh day, it means Hashem alighted, or came down, on the seventh day. Just as the locusts came down on Egypt, so too Hashem comes down to our world on Shabbos. The reason Shabbos is a day on which work is prohibited is because on Shabbos Hashem comes down to this world to be with us.

With this we can understand that there is no contradiction between the two versions of the Aseres Hadibros concerning why we keep Shabbos. When Hashem took the Jewish people out of Egypt He Himself came down to take us out, as the Torah states: “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement; I am Hashem” (12:12). Thus, the two times that Hashem came into this world for the benefit of the Jewish people are the reasons that we must keep Shabbos. This is why Hashem describes himself as “the one who took you out of Egypt.” It isn’t to verify His omnipotence, rather it is a lasting description of His love of the Jewish people. He begins the Aseres Hadibros with this to set the tone; He doesn’t just want us to follow his rules, we are meant to have a relationship with Hashem. This is why we constantly quote “zecher l’yitziat Mitzrayim,” because it is a reminder of the ultimate manifestation of Hashem’s love for us.

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**Rav Kook Torah Yitro: Serving the Community Rabbi Chanan Morrison**

“Moses sat to judge the people. They stood around Moses from morning to evening.” (Exod. 18:13) From the account in the Torah, it would seem that Moses spent all his time judging the people. Yet it was clear to the Sages that this could not be the case.

Overworked Judges The Talmud (Shabbat 10a) relates that two dedicated judges worked such long hours that they were overcome with fatigue. (It is unclear whether this was a physical weakness from overwork, or a psychological depression from time lost from Torah study.) When Rabbi Hiyya saw their exhaustion, he advised the two scholars to limit their hours in court: “It says that Moses judged the people from morning to evening. But could it be that Moses sat and judged all day? When did he have time for Torah study? Rather, the Torah is teaching us that a judge who judges with complete fairness, even for a single hour, is considered to be God’s partner in creating the world. For the Torah uses a similar phrase to describe Creation, ‘It was evening and morning, one day’ (Gen. 1:5).” Rav Hiyya’s statement requires clarification. If judging is such a wonderful occupation — one becomes a partner with God! — then why not adjudicate all day long? And in what way is the work of a judge like creating the world?

Personal Well-Being vs. Public Service Great individuals aspire to serve the community and help others to the best of their abilities. The two judges felt that they could best serve their community by bringing social justice and order through the framework of the judicial system. Therefore, they invested all of their time and energy in judging the people. For these scholars, any other activity would be a lesser form of divine service. However, their dedication to public service was so

intense that it came at the expense of their own personal welfare, both physical and spiritual. Rabbi Chiyya explained to the scholars that while their public service was truly a wonderful thing, it is not necessary to neglect all other aspects of life. If one only judges for a single hour, and spends the rest of his time improving his physical and spiritual well-being so that he can better serve in his public position, then his entire life is still directed towards his true goal. It is clear that personal growth will enhance one’s community service. Better an hour of productive activity in a fresh, relaxed state of mind and body, than many hours of constant toil in a tired and frenzied state.

Two Parts of the Day What is the connection between Moses’ judging “from morning to evening” and the description of the first day of Creation, “It was evening and morning, one day”? The day is one unit, made up of two parts — daytime and night. The daytime is meant for activity and pursuing our goals, while the night is the time for rest and renewal. Together, daytime and night form a single unit, constituting a “day.” The balance of these two aspects — activity and renewal — is particularly appropriate for those who labor for the public good. The hours that we devote to physical and spiritual renewal help us in our public roles; they become an integral part of our higher aspiration to serve the community. *Gold from the Land of Israel pp. 130-132. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, pp. 4-5. Copyright © 2023 Rav Kook Torah*

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**Shema Yisrael Torah Network Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Yisro Seitzei תשפ"ג פרישת יתרו**  
**Rabbi A Leib Scheinbaum**

**Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it. (20:8)** I think the primary essence of *Shabbos* is to be derived from the word *l'kadsho*, “to sanctify it.” This does not in any way mean to belittle the importance of *zachor*, “remember,” the *Shabbos*. Clearly, one who does not remember, who does not observe *Shabbos* according to *halachah*, can hardly sanctify it. The suggestion, however, is that *Shabbos* observance without focusing on its sanctity, by concentrating on the positive aspects of rest, and how this time should be spent spiritually elevating ourselves, undermines the essence of *Shabbos*. *Shabbos* is a day of elevation, of spiritual growth, which is achieved through the medium of rest. We have the opportunity to rest our bodies, but, more importantly, our minds. *Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl*, was a Torah giant whose sage advice in all areas of concern to *Klal Yisrael* was sought after and followed. This was especially true concerning the area of *kiruv rechokim*, Jewish outreach to the unaffiliated. A seasoned *kiruv* professional who worked for *Peylim* reminisced about the numerous times that he met with this slight, unassuming *gadol*, a quiet Torah giant whose love for Torah and *Klal Yisrael* motivated him to give of his precious time toward enhancing the lofty work of Jewish outreach. He responded to the *halachic* queries of *baalei*

*teshuvah* and advised them concerning their attempt to navigate the transition between a lack of Jewish practice to a committed life of Torah and *mitzvos*. He was sensitive to the fears and practical challenges confronting the penitent, and he guided the professionals about how to best reach these once alienated Jews. “From where does one begin?” was one of the most pressing questions that occupied everyone’s mind. To demand complete *mitzvah* observance without compromise would quite possibly sink the ship in port. The overwhelming responsibilities, obligations and lifestyle changes necessary to become wholly observant could, for the most part, be a game changer and should be done slowly. One takes tiny steps, and, every so often, he stops to rest. The goal may be a long way off, but in this way, he has the possibility of achieving his goal.

Rav Shteinman replied, “Three *mitzvos* and one *t’nai*, stipulation: *Tefillin*, *Tzitzis*, *Shabbos* and (the *t’nai*) *kashrus*, Jewish dietary laws.” He explained that *tefillin* is a powerful *mitzvah* which can be fulfilled in just a few minutes; it places no heavy demands on one’s time. *Tzitzis* is a *mitzvah* that one fulfills every minute that he wears the *tallis katan*. It makes no public demands on him. He can put it on under his shirt, and no one need be aware. Third is *Shabbos* observance. Here, Rav Shteinman qualified his words. It is not only about observance. If a hopeful *baal teshuvah* is given a list of “do nots,” the negative overload will be too much. He must not think that Judaism is the religion of “no.” He must explore the positive aspects of *Shabbos*, for which *shul* attendance is a prerequisite. Yes, encourage him to attend services, to listen and join in the singing and chanting of the tunes, to observe firsthand how a Jew *davens* to Hashem, and the meaning of talking to Hashem.

A *baal teshuva* needs to experience the beauty and sanctity of *Shabbos* in order to appreciate the prohibitive commandments connected to observance. Only when he sees and experiences the majesty and sanctity of *Shabbos*, the *l’kadsho*, can he later go on to accept the *zachor* and become a full-fledged *Shabbos* observer. One can better concentrate on the *sur mei’ra*, turn from evil, after he has tasted the *asei tov*, do good. The *mitzvah* itself will protect the individual who is sincere in his *mitzvah* observance. *Chazal* (*Pesachim* 8a) state, *Shluchei mitzvah einan nizakim*, “An emissary dispatched to do a *mitzvah* will not be harmed.” When, and under which circumstances this applies, is not our present focus. Rather, the very idea that a *mitzvah* protects suggests that, when we perform a *mitzvah*, we connect with Hashem, Who sees to it that no negativity should surface as a result of the *mitzvah*. This serves as a preface to a story that *Rebbitzin Batsheva Kanievsky, a.h.* related, which incidentally pertains to *Shabbos*.

A young woman became a *baalas teshuvah*, returned to religious observance, despite having been raised totally assimilated. She had been estranged from Torah life and *mitzvah* observance. It was all foreign to her. Bit by bit, ever so slowly, she felt comfortable with observance, except for one thing. Having smoked cigarettes her entire adult life, she just

found it nearly impossible to give up smoking on *Shabbos*. She made the attempt a number of times. Despite her determination to succeed, however, she always fell short. She even became ill as a result of abstaining from cigarettes. The *rabbanim* that were involved in her return to observance turned to *Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl*, wondering if he would render a *halachic* decision/dispensation concerning her problem. Rav Elyashiv’s immediate response was, “Check her lineage, I suspect that she is not Jewish.” The *rabbanim* were taken aback by this strange reply, but, when the *gadol ha’dor*, preeminent Torah giant of the generation, speaks, one listens. They investigated and, after a complete background check, it was discovered that, indeed, her mother was not Jewish. They immediately arranged for her conversion to Judaism, to which she readily agreed. All of a sudden, her addiction to smoking on *Shabbos* ceased. Obviously, everyone involved sought an explanation. Rav Elyashiv explained that *Chazal* teach that it is prohibited for a non-Jew to observe *Shabbos*. This woman was wholly sincere in her desire to serve Hashem. As a result, the Almighty created a situation whereby she would be unable to give up smoking, thus preventing her from transgressing His will.

**יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּבְדָה אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֵת אֲבוֹתֵיךָ וְאֵת אֲבוֹתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן יִאָּרְכּוּ יָמֶיךָ** Honor your father and mother, so that your days will be lengthened. (20:12) Every *mitzvah* is accompanied by *halachos*, laws, and customs which guide its fulfillment. If one does not adhere to them, the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* is nullified. Some *mitzvos* have numerous *halachos*, while others are simple and basic. The *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v’eim*, honoring one’s parents, which is one of the most difficult *mitzvos* to carry out properly, has a considerable amount of laws and criteria which must be met in order to appropriately execute this *mitzvah*. Determining what is included in the term *kavod*, honor, and what is not and who is deserving of honor (i.e. an abusive parent) are beyond the scope of this paper. I would like to address what I feel is a commonsensical application of this *mitzvah*: making a phone call. Yes, making a simple phone call can be the fulfillment of *kibbud av v’eim*. As parents age and their lives become less complicated (or so we think), in some instances to the point of boredom, it would be nice to hear from their children. The phone call need not be long and drawn out. A simple, “How are you? Just checking up to see how you are doing. Can I get or do anything for you?” – or just to call and share your or your family’s experiences – is sufficient. In our highly technological society, personal face-to-face, mouth-to-mouth conversation is at a premium. We are so busy, so consumed with ourselves, that we often forget our obligation to acknowledge and pay tribute to the people who brought us into the world and cared for us. In a normal family setting this is how it should be, and, for the most part, it is. We (sadly) see exceptions, for reasons which we find a way to rationalize. These are “complicated” exceptions. Unfortunately, it gets worse. Some children have convinced themselves, or have

been convinced by others, individuals who are either ill or evil, that it is acceptable not to speak to parents for whatever reason they have contrived. I read an article authored by a secular activist who, in a public forum, asked adults who had ceased speaking to parents to explain their decisions. One woman in her late 20's responded that she had not been in touch with her mother for ten years. When questioned concerning the reason for her extreme behavior, she replied that her mother, albeit loving her, was domineering. She felt that her mother would dominate her life if she would speak to her. The writer sensed that someone else had catalyzed this woman's decision, such as an incompetent therapist, who placed his stamp of approval on his patient's selfish, hurtful decision. Obviously, this therapist had been an accessory to an act of malfeasance, both to the parents and to his patient. This is an insubordination on the part of the adult child concerning the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim*. As I have reiterated a number of times, the Torah enjoins us to honor our parents, not love them.

Understandably, some parents are victims of their own issues, which result in their inability to execute their roles properly. It may be difficult to love such biological progenitors (I did not use the word "parents," because the true meaning of the term may not apply), but honoring them is an irrevocable Divine imperative. *Horav Chaim Kanievsky, zl*, writes (*Orchos Yosher*) that, for many *mitzvos* and transgressions, the reward or punishment is reserved for the World to Come. *Kibbud av v'eim*, however, does not brook such postponement. The Almighty punishes or rewards for the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim* in this world. Therefore, in all likelihood, the way one acts towards his/her parents might very well be the precursor for the manner in which their children will act toward them. Someone who was asked to speak to a group of youngsters asked *Rav Chaim*, "What *mitzvah* should I emphasize and encourage them to perform to its fullest extent?" His almost immediate response was: *kibbud av v'eim*. He was further asked, concerning a boy who had just turned *bar mitzvah*, which *mitzvah* he should be *mekabel*, accept upon himself, to carry out scrupulously. *Rav Chaim* replied that his father, the *Steipler Gaon, zl*, was asked the same question, and he replied that it should be *mitzvas kibbud av v'eim*. *Horav Chaim Brim, zl*, was wont to say, "The barometer for ascertaining one's level of *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, is in the manner in which he fulfills the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim*." Need we say more? From the time that he was *bar mitzvah*, *Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl*, would personally read *Megillas Esther* for his mother, who had difficulty hearing. He made a point to read loudly and clearly, meticulously emphasizing every *trop*, cantillation note. He did it this way, so that she would not be compelled to make use of a hearing aid. *Rav Shlomo Zalmen's* son related that, years later, when he read the *Megillah* for his grandmother, he observed that she no longer heard anything at all. When he mentioned this to his father, the sage replied, "It never entered my mind that she had the ability to listen in

accordance with *halachah*. Everything that I did was so that my mother should be calm and feel good about listening to the *Megillah*." Maintaining a parent's self-esteem is also *kibbud av v'eim*.

*Sponsored in loving memory of Vivian Stone חיה לאה בת שמעון נפטרה ה'תשס"ט שבט תשס"ט By her children Birdie and Lenny Frank and Family Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum*

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### **Bedeveled by Stirring Events – or Some Insights on the Melacha of Losh Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

I was recently asked the following question:

"My daughter was taught that we cannot make deviled eggs on Shabbos because adding mustard and shaping them is considered 'kneading' the yolks. But I remember my mother always mixed hard boiled eggs with minced onion and oil on Shabbos morning shortly before the meal. Could my mother have been wrong?"

As our readership is aware, the Torah prohibits melachos on Shabbos not because they are taxing, but because these activities are significant and important (Bava Kamma 2a). As the Yerushalmi relates, after toiling for three and a half years to understand all the prohibited activities of Shabbos, Rabbi Yochanan and his brother-in-law, Reish Lakish, concluded that each of the 39 major melachos (avos) has at least 39 sub-categories, *tolados*, which are also prohibited *min haTorah* (Yerushalmi, Shabbos, beginning of 7:2). As is clear from the passage, these eminent scholars realized that the Torah prohibited these types of significant activity. As *Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch* notes, the Torah does not prohibit *avodah*, which connotes hard work, but *melacha*, which implies purpose and accomplishment (Commentary to Shemos 20:10).

One of the *melacha* activities prohibited on Shabbos is *losh*, kneading (Mishnah Shabbos 73a). Although building the Mishkan did not involve kneading dough, dying the cloth used in its construction required kneading a thick paste (see Rashi, Shabbos 73a and Shabbos 156a). (Some Rishonim contend that we derive forbidden melachos also from activities performed for the service of the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash, and not only from the Mishkan's construction. According to these opinions, the *melacha* of kneading could be derived from the meal offerings of the Mishkan that involved the kneading of dough [Rav Hai Gaon, quoted in introduction to *Maasei Rokei'ach* and by *Eglei Tal*].)

WHAT IS LOSH? The concept of *losh* is to combine fine powders or similar small items into a unit by adding liquid (*Shevisas Hashabbas*). Thus, mixing clay for pottery, or cement and sand into concrete, violates the Torah prohibition of *losh* (see *Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 8:16*; *Rashi, Shabbos 74b*). Similarly, mixing oatmeal or reconstituting instant

mashed potatoes violates the Torah prohibition of *losh* (in addition to whatever prohibitions of cooking may be involved).

Similarly, preparing certain other food items might fall under the rubric of *losh*. For example, the Gemara discusses whether one may mix bran with water to feed one's animals. Although bran and water do not form dough, this question is discussed because adding water makes the bran stick together (Shabbos 155b). The Tanna'im dispute whether one may add water to bran on Shabbos to feed one's animals, Rebbe prohibiting because he feels that this constitutes a Torah violation of *losh*, whereas Rabbi Yosi ben Rabbi Yehudah maintains that adding water to bran involves only a rabbinic prohibition and is permitted in order to feed one's animals, if performed in an indirect way. This introduces a new concept in the laws of *losh* – that one may perform a rabbinically prohibited activity in an indirect way, in order to prepare food or feed on Shabbos (Shabbos 155b-156a). Performing a prohibited activity in an indirect way is called a *shinui* or *kil'achar yad* (literally, using the back of one's hand), and is usually prohibited *miderabbanan*. However, under extenuating circumstances, Chazal relaxed the prohibition.

*Losh* applies only when mixing fine items that stick together to form a unit. It does not apply when adding liquid to large items even if they stick together, since they do not combine into one item (Taz, Orach Chayim 321:12). Therefore, one may use oil or mayonnaise to make a potato salad or tuna salad on Shabbos, if the pieces of potato or tuna are large enough to prevent the salad appearing like a single mass.

**BATTER VERSUS DOUGH** The Gemara implies that there is a halachic difference between a *belilah rakkah*, the consistency of batter, and *belilah avah*, the consistency of dough. By "batter" we mean a mix that does hold together, so it is not a liquid, yet is fluid enough that one can pour it from one bowl to another (Chazon Ish, Orach Chayim 58:9). Creating a batter involves only a rabbinic violation, whereas mixing a consistency like dough, which is thick enough that one cannot pour it, has stricter rules, often involving a Torah violation.

If the mix does not hold together at all, then one may make such a mixture without any concerns because it is considered a liquid (Chazon Ish, Orach Chayim 58:9).

**DEVILING THE EGGS** Based on the above discussion, it would appear that one may not mix egg salad or deviled eggs on Shabbos without a *shinui*, and possibly not even with a *shinui*. The mix created when making these foods cannot be poured, and therefore does not qualify as a "batter" but as "dough," which may entail a Torah prohibition of mixing on Shabbos. Ordinarily, food preparation on Shabbos that involves a Torah prohibition is not permitted, even with a *shinui*.

However, a standard appetizer in many parts of Europe for the Shabbos day meal was to chop up and stir together hard-boiled eggs, onion and schmaltz, a dish called *zwiebel eire* or "eggs

and onions" that required preparation immediately before serving. Was it permitted to mix "eggs and onions" on Shabbos or did this violate the prohibition against kneading on Shabbos, since the finished product was mashed egg and onion held together with fat? Although it would seem to be prohibited to prepare this food on Shabbos, this food was commonly prepared every Shabbos morning prior to serving. Does this mean that all these observant Jews were violating the Torah's command? When we consider that this was the standard appetizer eaten by thousands of Jewish households every Shabbos for hundreds of years, it is difficult to imagine that millions of eggs and onions were prepared in violation of the laws of Shabbos!

Several halachic authorities raise this question, providing a variety of approaches to explain why one may blend eggs and onions on Shabbos. Could the reason to allow it apply to contemporary deviled eggs or egg salad?

Some contend that this was permitted only when the pieces of egg and onion were both large enough to prevent the mix from having a dough-like consistency, but rather looked more like large pieces stuck together. However, the prevalent approach was to chop the eggs and onions into a very fine consistency, in which case the above-mentioned leniency was not applicable. Other authorities permitted mixing and stirring them together only with a *shinui*, although apparently the prevalent custom was to mix it without any *shinui* at all.

**RAV SHELOMOH KLUGER'S APPROACH** Rav Shelomoh Kluger, a great luminary of nineteenth-century Poland, proposed a highly original reasoning to legitimize the preparing of the eggs and onions on Shabbos. Regarding various halachos of the Torah, predominantly the laws of *tumah* and *taharah*, only seven substances are considered liquids -- wine, blood, olive oil, milk, dew, honey and water. Rav Kluger contended that the halachos of *losh* are also dependent on the use of one of these seven liquids to create the "dough" (*Shu"t Ha'elef Lecha Shelomoh, Orach Chayim #139*). According to this novel approach, no *losh* prohibition is involved if one uses mayonnaise or any oil other than olive oil, nor if one makes dough on Shabbos using only juice other than grape juice.

We should note that following this line of reasoning, not only may one prepare the famous eggs and onions mixture, but one may also prepare deviled eggs or egg salad on Shabbos, provided one does not use olive oil as the liquid. Although some may prefer use of olive oil for its cholesterol and other medical benefits, this would not justify violating the laws of Shabbos.

However, Rav Kluger's approach is not without its detractors. For one thing, as he himself points out, his approach disputes the statement of a highly-respected earlier authority, the *Pri Megadim* (*Mishbetzos Zahav 321:12*), who contends that *losh* is violated when one mixes foods together with goose schmaltz (in his era, a common ingredient in European homes). This

demonstrates clearly that any substance that causes items to stick together violates losh, at least according to some widely-accepted opinions. For the most part, later authorities have not accepted Rav Kluger's contention limiting losh to the "seven liquids."

Rav Shelomoh Kluger applied a second reason to permit the preparation of eggs and onions on Shabbos. He theorized that losh only applies to the earth itself or to items that grow from the ground -- thus precluding eggs from the prohibition of losh. Although this approach only resolves the losh consideration germane to the eggs in the mixture but not to the onions, Rav Kluger further contended that the onions are also exempt from losh since the eggs are the main ingredient. He maintained that when mixing several items, of which losh applies only to some, halacha considers only the major ingredient and ignores the rest (Shu"t Ha'elef Lecha Shelomoh, Orach Chayim #139).

This second approach of Rav Shelomoh Kluger is also not without its detractors. Both the contention that losh applies only to items that grow from the ground, and the further supposition that one ignores the lesser item are challenged by later authorities (see Tzitz Eliezer 11:36:3, quoting Yad Yosef).

**OTHER APPROACHES** Other reasons are quoted to permit making eggs and onions on Shabbos, including a suggestion that there is no losh prohibition to stir in an ingredient added for taste, even if it indeed causes the food to hold together. (This position is quoted by the Tzitz Eliezer 11:36 in the name of an anonymous great scholar; however, the Tzitz Eliezer rejects this argument.) According to this approach, one might argue that one may make deviled eggs on Shabbos since the mustard is primarily added for flavor. On the other hand, one could argue that one's intent is to create a consistent filling, which is losh.

Others permit the mixing of eggs and onions because they do not form into a gush, that is, a single unit (Shu"t Be'er Moshe 6:44). According to this reasoning, deviling eggs is forbidden since one is indeed forming units of seasoned mashed egg yolk. **RAV SHELOMOH ZALMAN AUERBACH'S APPROACH** Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach presents a different reason to permit mixing eggs and onions on Shabbos, which requires a small introduction. At the time of the Gemara, neither Post nor General Mills had yet cornered the market on breakfast cereal, and people were forced to prepare their own breakfast. The Cheerios of the day involved mixing a specialty flour called kali, made from toasted kernels, with oil, water and salt. The Gemara quotes an opinion that permits mixing kali on Shabbos, provided one uses a minor shinui while doing so (Shabbos 155b). Several authorities question why the Gemara is so lenient in this instance (Nishmas Adam; Biur Halacha). Allow me to explain the basis of their concern:

Usually, a shinui may be used on Shabbos in only one of two circumstances:

1. To prepare food that, without the shinui, involves only a rabbinic prohibition.
2. To prepare the food in a radically different way from how it is usually prepared. An example of this is crushing foods on Shabbos with the handle of a knife. Although it is prohibited min haTorah to chop items fine on Shabbos, since crushing with a knife handle is a very different method from mashing or grinding with mortar and pestle, Chazal permitted it (Shibbolei Ha'leket #92, based on Shabbos 141a).

Thus, we are faced with the following anomaly: The Gemara permits mixing kali on Shabbos, seemingly permitting a Torah prohibition of losh by means of a minor deviation from the normal method, which is usually not a sufficient reason to be allowed.

The Biur Halacha (321:14 s.v. Shema) responds to this question with two different novel approaches to explain why this is permitted:

1. Mixing food that is already cooked or toasted, and therefore ready to eat, does not violate the prohibition of losh. Chazal prohibited doing so because it looks like kneading, and therefore it is permitted with a shinui, as are many other food preparations.
2. The Biur Halacha suggests an alternative approach: there is no violation of losh while one is eating. This is similar to a concept found by other melachos, notably selecting and grinding, that permits performing these activities immediately before consuming them. As such, preparing kali at breakfast time would be permitted.

This approach has its detractors, since no early authorities note that this lenience applies to losh, and logically there is a big distinction between selecting and grinding, which are processes that are absolutely essential to normal eating, and kneading, which is not essential (see Magen Avraham 321:24).

**RETURNING TO EGGS AND ONIONS** Based on both approaches of the Biur Halacha, Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach notes that preparing eggs and onions should be permitted because this food cannot be prepared before Shabbos, and becomes ruined if not prepared shortly before eating. A similar approach to explain the custom of mixing eggs and onions is presented by the Tehillah Le'David (321:25).

In addition, Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach reasons that losh is a process that one does while eating, since one mixes food together in one's mouth (Shulchan Shelomoh 321:16). This author does not understand the last statement of Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach, since the processing of food that takes place in one's mouth, chewing, reduces food to small particles and does not combine small particles into larger ones, which is the essence of losh. According to Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach's approach, preparing eggs and onions requires a shinui, meaning that one should add the ingredients to the bowl in an inverted order than one usually does, and should also preferably stir the mix in an unusual fashion, such as not in

normal circular strokes but with alternative crisscross motions instead.

However, the approaches mentioned earlier permit mixing eggs and onions without any shinui at all. When reading later halachic works, one finds many poskim who feel that one should avoid preparing eggs and onions on Shabbos, and certainly not without a shinui, whereas others are suspicious of those who question such a time-hallowed practice (Be'er Moshe; Tzitz Eliezer).

We should also note that the first approach presented by the Biur Halacha should permit not only the famous eggs and onions, but also preparing either egg salad or deviled eggs on Shabbos. Furthermore, according to his second approach, it is permitted to prepare them immediately before the meal, even though the egg salad or deviled eggs will not be served until much later in the meal, similar to the rules of boreir. Both of the Biur Halacha's heterim require using a shinui while mixing the ingredients, i.e., by adding ingredients in a different order than usual and by not using the usual circular motions while stirring.

The Torah commanded us concerning the halachos of Shabbos by giving us the basic categories that are prohibited. Shabbos is a day that we refrain from altering the world for our own purposes. Instead, we allow Hashem's rule to be the focus of creation by refraining from our own creative acts (Rav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch's Commentary to Shemos 20:10). By demonstrating Hashem's rule even over non-exertive activities such as kneading, we demonstrate and acknowledge the true Creator of the world and all it contains.