

# A CHANGE IS IN ORDER

*by Rabbi Shlomo Jarcaig*

Of the many great tzaddikim (righteous people) the Torah introduces to us, very few are given the honor of having the an entire parsha named for them. Not only was Yisro (Jethro) given the honor of the name of the parsha, but also he was given the parsha that contains the miraculous event of the Giving of the Torah at the Revelation at Sinai, the most important event in the history of the world. What was Yisro's great deed that merited him such a great honor? What lesson is the Torah teaching us by attaching his name to this event?

"Yisro, the minister of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard everything that G-d did to Moshe and to Israel, His people - that G-d had taken Israel out of Egypt." (Shemos/Exodus 18:1) Rashi, quoting the Talmud (Tractate Zevachim 116b), explains that Yisro was inspired specifically by the miracles of the Splitting of the Sea and War with Amalek. While both of these events were common knowledge to the world community, Yisro gleaned from these miracles the truth of G-d's mastery over the universe. Thus, he traveled to the desert, abandoning his position as priest of Midian, to join the Jewish nation; nobody else made that move.

Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein (1884-1974; "Reb Chatzkel", as he was known, was the mashgiach/spiritual mentor of two of the most illustrious Yeshivos in the world, Mir (Poland) and Ponovezh (B'nai Brak, Israel)) expounds upon this point that in our own lives we often hear statements we intellectually understand to be true but are emotionally unwilling to make the lifestyle changes these truths would mandate. We hear an inspiring address encouraging us to visit the sick, give charity or perform another mitzvah (Divine command) with which we can identify, but we cannot bring ourselves to change as we know we should. To our chagrin, we cannot bring out the Yisro in each of us.

This would be a significance of Yisro's parsha containing the Revelation at Sinai. Before the Jewish people accepted the Torah, they said "na'aseh v'nishmah" - we will perform the mitzvos and will expend effort to try to understand them. They did indeed demonstrate an eagerness to change themselves in order to fulfill G-d's will, a prerequisite to their receiving the Torah as a nation. But the parsha is still named for Yisro. The children of Israel had been the witnesses to and beneficiaries of G-d's miracles, so their preparedness to change is not as remarkable. Yisro had the same willingness after merely hearing of these events.

Have a Good Shabbos!

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