

SAVE THE WORK!

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

We discussed last week how a person must take any momentary inspiration and grasp it and use it if he or she wishes to go. From this week's parsha, we learn that this is the essence of hearing. "And Yisro heard...all that G-d had done for Moshe and Israel... and Yisro came..." Only Yisro! And note that he was "*Kohen Midyan*", the priest of the Midianites (Medeans?), and nonetheless he dropped everything to go join the Nation of Israel. Why? Because he alone really heard the message.

Often we claim to "hear" something, but it goes in one ear and out the other. None of us (I dare presume) has not had the experience of spending an hour or more at the keyboard, and then seeing the computer freeze up, power down, or otherwise head out to lunch without giving us the opportunity to save our work. Without saving, everything is lost. [Incidentally, the lateness of this submission is partially due to the fact that this happened to me last night while preparing the LifeLine...] The same thing can be true of things we hear, but make no effort to remember, understand, or learn from. In the Torah, "hearing" means much more: "*Sh'ma Yisroel*" [Hear, Israel...], and "*Naaseh V'Nishma*" [We will do, and we will hear...] as said at Mt. Sinai. [Heard from Rabbi Asher Rubenstein, Jerusalem]

I would like to offer a second, short *D'var Torah* of a "lighter" nature.

Trivia Question: How many *Mitzvot* are there in the "Ten Commandments?"

In the *Mitzva* of Sabbath observance, the *Torah* tells us that "For six days you will work, and do all your labors; and the seventh day is a day of rest for the L-rd your G-d..." Why does it need to say "all" your labors - isn't that extraneous?

The *Vilna Gaon*, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer, noted that an interesting set of laws pertain to a person who wakes up in an isolated location, and does not know what day is actually Shabbos. Such an individual must count six days, and then consider the seventh to be the day of rest. However, knowing that this is not necessarily true (and is even unlikely), he or she must do no more work during the six days than is necessary for sustenance, and must even work on the seventh day to the same extent - because each day might really be Shabbos. So this is why the Torah tells us to "Guard the Sabbath day:" by remembering, we will be able to do all of our work during the six weekdays, and rest from all work on the seventh! [Heard from Rabbi Avrohom Teichman]

Text Copyright © 1995 Rabbi Yaakov Menken and Project Genesis, Inc.

The author is the Director of Project Genesis.