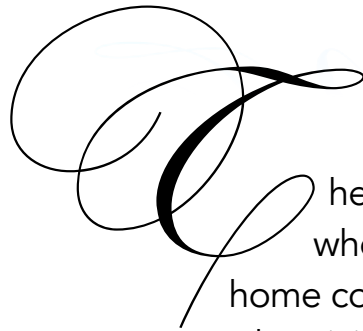


# Parashas

## S H L A C H

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There is some disagreement regarding when Yisro left the Jewish camp for his home country, Midian. Some say it was prior to the giving of Torah and some say it was after, but no one says that he was around for the incident of the spies. And for all we know, that's why he actually left, something Moshe Rabbeinu begged him not to do.

After all, how good could that have looked in the eyes of the world? Yes, he converted, but then he chose to leave the kedushah of the people of God, his own daughter and grandchildren, and the greatest leader of all time, Moshe Rabbeinu, for...Midian? What kind of statement was THAT?

Perhaps Yisro sensed that as good as things for the moment, at some point everything was going to go south, and he didn't want to be there when it did. After all, as Moshe will point out in Parashas Devarim when reflecting back on Parashas Yisro, the Jewish People were litigious.

That was what Yisro saw when he first arrived and why he suggested an expanded legal system. After all they had gone

through and witnessed, so many still seemed more interested in winning than being right. If people could be so self-centered with God overhead, Torah in their hands, and Moshe Rabbeinu as a role model, surely disaster loomed in the near future.

It certainly did not help that the Erev Rav had come along as well for the journey. Yisro knew what Egyptians were like, and the Erev Rav were ex-Egyptians. And if Yisro left after Mt. Sinai, then he already saw the impact they were having on the nation and knew that things would get worse before they would get better. We're still waiting for the better.

Maybe Moshe Rabbeinu acknowledged this when he pleaded with Yisro:

He said, "Please don't leave us, for because you are familiar with our encampments in the desert and you will be our eyes." (Bamidbar 10:31)

What an unusual thing to say to convince Yisro to stay...until you remember this:

Why does the letter *Ayin* come before the letter *Peh* [in *Megillas Eichah*]? Because of the spies who spoke (peh—mouth) about that which they did not see (ayin—eye). (Sanhedrin 104b)

After all, Yisro was an elder statesman. He had been around, seen it all, and tried just about everything. He had a cushy job back where he came from, and probably access to wealth. And yet he left it all behind to be a Jew and live in Eretz Yisroel. It might have been the extra support Moshe needed to counteract the spies whose shortsightedness led to their gruesome deaths and 39 extra years of desert wandering for the rest of the nation.

Even Caleiv and Yehoshua, Moshiach Ben Dovid and Moshiach

Ben Yosef in their time, couldn't do that. Perhaps Yisro weighed the risk and decided it wasn't worth getting caught up with the people who became the spies and their supporters. It might have been a Chillul Hashem that he left, but it was a bigger Chillul Hashem when the spies rejected the land and caused God to back away from them for decades.

We don't hear much about Yisro in Tanach after that. But his descendants, the Kenites were told to separate themselves from the Amalekis by Shaul HaMelech on his way to eradicate the latter. Some of his other descendants were part of the Sanhedrin, and even Bilaam was forced to praise him:

When he saw the Kenite, he took up his parable and said, "How firm is your dwelling place, and your nest is set in a cliff."(Bamidbar 24:21)

How firm is your dwelling place. [Bilaam asks Yisro, who is Keni,] "I wonder how you merited this? Were you not with me in the counsel [we gave Pharaoh], 'Come, let us deal wisely with them'."? (Shemos 1:10)... (Rashi)

One has to wonder once news of the spies reached Yisro back in Midian if he quietly thought to himself, "Told you so." At the very least, he was probably relieved not to be dying off in the desert over 39 years. But maybe, just maybe, he also wondered to himself if, perhaps, he could have made the difference, and prevented the episode of the spies. Who knows?

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I am about to publish my latest book, b"H, "Perfectly Imperfect: Why The Chaos Was, Is, Necessary For Redemption." If you want understand the direction of history and why, this

book (with the help of some kabbalistic insights) will put things into perspective and buffer the impact. I am looking for dedications so if you are interested, please write me at pinchasw@thirtysix.org.

Session 6, the last of Series One of the "Sha'ar HaGilgulim Course" is this week, b"H. For more information, go to: <https://www.shaarnunproductions.org/Shar-HaGilgulim-Course.html>. Series Two will begin in about two weeks, b"H.

Have a great Shabbos,  
Pinchas Winston