

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

YITRO

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 6:1-13

FEBRUARY 18, 2017 22 SHEBAT 5777

**DEDICATION: By the Maleh Family in memory of Moe Maleh, Moshe Ben Jamile 22 Shebat
And in memory of Sarina Bat Victoria – Sally Gindi Azrak**

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Editors Notes

It's like Déjà vu all over again – Yitro 5777

Yogi Berra may have been an 18 time all-star, won ten world series rings – more than anyone in Major League history, caught Don Larsen's perfect game, managed both the Yankees and the Mets, but he will probably be remembered more for his Yogisms; his quotable quotes which have entered the vernacular of every day speech. Among his famous sayings are "It ain't over till it's over", "You can observe a lot by watching", and my favorite, "It's like déjà vu all over again". Berra explained that this quote originated when he witnessed Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris repeatedly hitting back-to-back home runs in the Yankees' seasons in the early 1960s.

Very often we find stories in the Torah difficult to understand and then with the help of Rabbeynu Bachya, Rabbeynu Yishak Luria – the Arizal, The Megaleh Amukot and others who open our eyes to the transmigration of souls from one generation to another and their tikun, we begin to understand. Things begin to make sense in light of previous lives and we utter, "It's like déjà vu all over again"!

This week we read the portion of Yitro, a portion which contains the most important event in world history, Hashem's revelation to the entire Israelite nation at Mount Sinai. Why of all people is Yitro

honored with this portion being named for him? As the portion opens we see that Yitro is sending a message to Moses, "I am Yitro your father-in-law". Why include the title? Additionally the Torah which is typically short on details explains that Yitro is bringing his daughter, Moshe's wife and Moshe's two sons. We are told somewhat ambiguously that Moshe goes out to greet him and one bows to the other, and one kisses the other. Yitro then blesses Hashem, seemingly the first to do so after the Exodus. We are told that Yitro offers burnt offerings to Elokim. Again we wonder why we need this information. Then Yitro goes on to criticize Moses and suggests a new system of governing and judging the people, telling Moses that if you follow my advice, you will be able to survive and all the people will live in peace. One has to wonder at the gall of Yitro, the priest of Midian, in telling Moses, the man of G-d, what to do. Moses immediately accepts and then puts into practice the very next day appointing 78,600 judges to assist him.

The Arizal reveals to us an intriguing piece of information providing us with a deeper understanding of this opening chapter of the portion which in fact covers the first three aliyot. The Arizal explains as we have mentioned a number of times that Moshe was a gilgul – a reincarnation of Hevel. We wrote that the name Moshe indicates his soul Mem for Moshe, Shet for Shet (Adam's third son who was born Tachat Hevel – under or replacing or perhaps to carry Hevel's soul) and Heh for Hevel himself.

The soul of Kayin also comes back in Moshe's life to be repaired. The soul is divided into three to better allow a rectification of each part. The higher part of Kayin's Neshama comes back in Yitro. Rav Chaim Vital notes that this is hinted to by the first letters of the words "Ani chotenchá Yitro" – I am your father-in-law Yitro – which spell the word "achi" – my brother. As if Yitro is sending Moses a message saying, I am your brother Kayin and now is the time to elevate the level of my soul. Furthermore the Zohar writes commenting on the seven names of Yitro, one of which was Keini, that he had this name as he separated himself from Kayin. (The other parts of Kayin's soul come back in the Misri – The Egyptian Moshe kills before fleeing Egypt and in Korach who is swallowed up by the earth. This is hinted to in the

verse Shivatayim Yukam – Yud for Yitro, Kuf for Korach and Mem for Misri).

If we go back in time to Bereshit and the related Midrashim, we are told based on the verses surrounding each birth that Kayin was born with one sister who became his wife and Hevel was born with two sisters. One of Hevel's wives was particularly beautiful, and Kayin wanted her for himself. The motivation behind Kayin's slaying of his brother was in his desire to take Hevel's wife for himself. This supposedly was the real motive behind the killing. Additionally Hashem tells Kayin the bloods of your brother are crying from the earth alluding to the fact that Kayin not only murdered Hevel but those who would descend from him. Thus we learn that Yitro brings his daughter Siporah to Moshe to make up for the sister Kayin desired and also the children to make up for the descendants Hevel would not have.

We are told that one prostrated himself and kissed the other. Rashi questions, "I do not know who prostrated himself to whom". Perhaps in place of the disrespect, animosity and fratricide that occurred between Kayin and Hevel, Moses and Yitro make up for it with love and mutual respect.

The Torah tells us that the sacrifice offered by Kayin did not find favor in Hashem's eyes. Kayin's Korban not being accepted was the start of things and Kayin was incredibly jealous of Hevel. Here we find Yitro correcting this by bringing proper sacrifices to Hashem which were enjoyed not just by him, but also by Aharon and the elders of the generation.

Finally, the Chida writes that while the Torah doesn't recount the final conversation between Kayin and Hevel prior to the murder, the Targum Yonason ben Uziel records that part of it was Kayin's blasphemous claim that there is no Divine judge or system of justice regarding our actions in this world - "Les Din V'Les Dayan,". Now we find that the gilgul of Kayin, the Tikkun of Kayin is in rectifying this by suggesting to Moshe the concept of establishing a proper system of courts and judges. With Moseh immediately accepting the suggestions and putting them into place, it seems as if Moses was waiting for Yitro to come and make the suggestions to allow the soul of Kayin to be corrected.

This idea of Déjà vu all over again is repeated in the Ten Commandments themselves. It seems that although this is Hashem's Divine Revelation to mankind, there is nothing new in those Ten Commandments. We heard all of them before as part of the seven misvot to the children of Noah, as part of the law we were taught at Marah including Shabbat

and as part of ethics required by mankind. So what's the message in the repetition? Been here, done that? Am I required to figure out who I was before, what I did before and what I need to do to fix what came before?

Rabbi Abittan would tell us not to worry about previous lives, but to worry about our previous actions in our own life. He would explain that every year, every month, every week and every day is a chance – hamekadesh betuvo bechol yom tamid - a chance to renew, as my mom says, today is the first day of the rest of your life. Whatever mistakes we made in the past, we have today to fix them. Whomever we hurt, we have today to apologize and make amends. Whatever we neglected to do, we have today to do. Instead of deju vu all over again, lets take today as an opportunity to do it better.

Shabbat Shalom,

David

Summary of the Parasha Yitro - Matan Torah

- 1- Yitro comes to be part of the nation of Israel
- 2- Yitro advises Moshe to set up different levels of judges instead of judging all cases himself
- 3- Moshe follow the advice of Yitro
- 4- Benei Israel encamp by Har Sinai. Hashem offers us, through Moshe, to be his special nation
- 5- Benei Israel accepts. They ask to hear directly from Hashem and prepare for 3 days.
- 6- The 10 commandments
- 7- Benei Israel are afraid and ask that Hashem not speak to them directly but rather through Moshe

This week's parasha has in it the 10 commandments. The 2nd half of the 10 commandments read "lo tirsach (don't kill), lo tinaf (don't commit adultery), lo tignov (don't steal), lo taaneh be're'echa ehd sheker (don't be a false witness), and lo tachmod beit re'echa, lo tachmod eshet re'echa, ve'abdo, ve'amato, ve'shoro, ve'hamoro, ve'kol asher lo. And I heard an interesting question. Why are the pesookim so succinct in the first four commandments (the pesookim don't elaborate as to who we shouldn't kill or steal from) but when it comes to jealousy the Torah elaborates on each item saying not to be jealous your fellow's house, wife, slave, servant, ox, donkey or anything else he has. I heard a beautiful answer to this question and with this we can learn a major foundation in life. The Torah is teaching us how to prevent ourselves from becoming jealous. And that is by looking at the whole picture! So often we see a person's job, or his house, or his wife and we admire

it. Yet we don't take into account that aside from having money this person may have a difficult life. Maybe his job is stressful or requires him to travel and put in long hours, or maybe he doesn't have shalom bayit or maybe his children cause him a lot of grief. Jealousy comes when we look at one aspect of a person's life in isolation and we don't take into account the whole picture. The Torah is teaching us that to control our jealousy we need to look at shoro, ve'chamoro, "ve'kol asher lo". We need to look at the whole picture of the person's life! And only then will we realize that there is nothing to be jealous of and that we wouldn't trade our lives in for anyone else's.

FROM THE RABBIS OF THE JERSEY SHORE

"And Yitro, the minister of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard." (Shemot 18:1)

Yitro heard about the Exodus from Egypt and this prompted him to cast his lot with the Jewish people. Rashi explains that there were two specific things that he heard that motivated him to come, the splitting of the Red Sea and the war against Amalek. Our Sages (Zebahim 116) teach us that these two events tugged at the heart of Yitro to cause him to convert. It seems that these two events are connected to each other, that together they had the great effect on Yitro. What was the connection?

The sefer SImhat Torah (quoted by Torah Lada'at) explains the strong connection. The war with Amalek showed the strength and courage of the Jewish people, that they were able to defeat that powerful enemy. If so, why did they need the miracle of the splitting of the Yam Suf? They could have defeated the Egyptian army the same way they defeated Amalek. The reason is the following. The Israelites had to leave Egypt by being sent out and not by war. It would have been inappropriate to go to battle against Egypt, a country that hosted them at a time of need. War would show a lack of gratitude.

This is what caused Yitro to be so inspired. The war against Amalek led him to understand deeply the true nature of Israel. This nation refused to fight against Egypt, a war that they could win, because of their feeling of gratitude. That put them in a position that the only way to escape was the splitting of the Yam Suf. A nation like this, that these considerations play such a pivotal role in their decision making, was a nation that Yitro felt he must join. So it was this amazing combination that brought in Yitro. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"And Yitro heard." (Shemot 18:1)

This is the perashah which tells us about the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, perhaps the greatest event that ever took place in the world. Wouldn't it be proper to have the entire perashah devoted to that

special occurrence, rather than begin with Yitro joining the Jewish? What was so important about Yitro that this had to precede Matan Torah?

The answer is the first word - g©n§J°H³u - and he heard! The Torah is teaching us that if we don't hear, we will not be able to receive the Torah. Hearing means being able to concentrate and focus on someone else and not only on ourselves. It means to accept that we're not perfect and we can hear advice and criticism. The whole world was aware that the Jews came out of Egypt with great miracles but did nothing about it. Yitro, however, heard and came. Because he was willing to truly hear and understand, he changed his own life and ultimately gave some very useful advice to Moshe. That is why the giving of the Torah must be preceded by the story of Yitro, to teach us what hearing can bring.

We often ask others how they are, but do we really hear their answers? Our kids are constantly talking to us, but are we truly listening? Even if we do allow the words of others to enter our ears, do we hear "between the lines"? Let us learn from Yitro to truly hear and listen to what's around us and this will make our lives a little bit better. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

9-1-1

Having a major problem is not unusual. Unfortunately, too many people face health problems, child-rearing crises, or financial difficulties. The nature of human beings causes them to hide problems from others out of embarrassment, or to deny the situation even exists in order to calm their own hurt egos. This course does not eliminate the anguish of the moment, nor does it remove the pain of the future. It actually makes a simple situation grow into an insurmountable mountain.

It may not be within the capacity of an individual to effectuate the solution to a personal problem, but an advisor or friend may be able to come up with a feasible answer or plan of action. Seeking help when times are rough is not embarrassing; it is smart.

In Mishlei (12:15) it is states: "The ways of a fool are correct in his eyes; but the person who heeds advice is wise."

The sooner you call for help, the better. It is not unusual to find that the experts are people who once suffered from the same circumstances as those you are presently experiencing.

Whenever you see a mountain you can't climb, call for help. It is nothing to be ashamed of; it is the first step to a happy solution. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
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That Little Extra Push

Parashat Yitro tells of Ma'amad Har Sinai, God's revelation to Am Yisrael at Mount Sinai, during which Moshe Rabbenu ascended to the top of the mountain to receive the Torah.

The Sages in the Midrash and Talmud provide us with additional information concerning this seminal event, including a remarkable incident that occurred when Moshe ascended the mountain. The Midrash relates that God showed Moshe a scene from the distant future – a great Rabbi teaching a Torah class to his students. The concepts this Rabbi taught were so deep and profound, that even Moshe Rabbenu could not understand the material. As it turns out, the Rabbi in this prophetic image shown to Moshe was none other than Rabbi Akiba, one of the greatest and most influential of the Tanna'im (Sages of the Mishnaic period).

Realizing that he could not understand Rabbi Akiba's lecture, Moshe decided that he was unworthy to receive the Torah. He told the Almighty that Rabbi Akiba, and not he, should be the one chosen to receive the Torah from God and transmit it to Am Yisrael. God, however, informed Moshe that he was chosen for this exalted role.

This extraordinary account gives us an opportunity to learn about and draw inspiration from Rabbi Akiba, one of the most heroic and important figures in Jewish history. He was a man of unparalleled genius, to the point where, as we have seen, even Moshe Rabbenu could not fully understand his lecture. Additionally, as the Talmud relates, he had 24,000 students – far more than any Torah educator at any point in history. Tragically, all those thousands of students perished in a deadly plague. Rabbi Akiba, remarkably, did not despair, even after suffering such a devastating calamity. He found five qualified students and taught them, and they became the pillars of our Torah tradition.

But even more fascinating than Rabbi Akiba's role as a leading Sage is the humble beginnings from which he came. Rabbi Akiba was ignorant for many years. He never had a Torah education, and he was a simple shepherd working for a wealthy man named Kalba Sabua. But Rabbi Akiba was not only ignorant, he actually despised Torah scholars. He himself attested that before he enrolled in yeshiva and began to learn, he felt the urge to bite Rabbis! This was the

extent of the animosity he harbored toward Torah and its scholars.

How is it possible that a person with such contempt for Torah could emerge as one of the greatest Sages of all time?

The Arizal (Rabbi Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572) explained that undoubtedly, Rabbi Akiba was endowed with a special soul, which allowed him to attain such towering heights of Torah knowledge and piety. For many years, however, until age 40, his greatness was blocked; there were "shells" covering his sacred soul. His soul resembled a brilliant and powerful light which was covered by many thick layers of material which blocked the light from shining and illuminating its surroundings. When Rabbi Akiba married his wife, Rahel, she urged him to enroll in yeshiva and pursue a Torah education, even though he was already 40 years old and could not even read Hebrew. That little push that his wife gave him was able to open the clogged drain, so-to-speak. Once he began putting in the effort, the thick layers that obstructed his powerful soul were gradually removed. Soon enough, the power of his soul was able to burst forth in full force, propelling him to such great heights that even Moshe Rabbenu could not understand his lecture.

Although the Arizal's insight certainly relates to deep concepts of Kabbalah, it also contains a powerful message that applies directly to each and every one of us. If Rabbi Akiba, who wanted to bite Torah scholars, was endowed with a special soul with a potential for unparalleled greatness, then it is certainly possible that each of us, too, is granted such lofty potential. We might not feel naturally driven toward spiritual greatness, but this potential may very well be within us. Like Rabbi Akiba, we just need that extra little push to get us moving, to propel us forward, and then the "Kelipot" ("shells") fall away and we can reach our potential. It would be a terrible mistake to resign ourselves to mediocrity and assume that we are destined to achieve nothing more. We never know what our ceiling is until we make the effort. We must give ourselves that extra push, try just a bit harder, invest just a bit more effort, and we will then find ourselves able to achieve far more than we ever imagined possible.

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Rabbi Wein PASSWORDS

In a moment of extreme foolishness I recently attempted to pay a credit card bill online through my computer. People of my generation should avoid such risky and dangerous behavior. The computer arrogantly demanded a password in order to log into my account. It also condescendingly informed me that I already had a password and that I should really type it in to get started paying my bill.

I have no recollection whatsoever of ever having that password and I certainly cannot remember what that password was. So, I again foolishly attempted to create a new password, which would then facilitate my entry into the hallowed halls of my credit card account. However, my computer repeatedly informed me that I had a password and that I should use that password to login to the account. And, it was very reticent to allow me to create a new password since I had not as yet use up the old one.

In any event, I eventually despaired of dealing with the matter and resorted to the time honored method of actually talking to a human being and arranging the payment of my bill in that fashion. Of course there is a certain waiting time that is mandatory today when attempting to talk to a human being on the other side of the phone line. It is as though companies that service millions of customers shudder at the thought that a representative of the company should be available in a relatively few minutes to provide what is euphemistically called customer service.

Be that as it may, I was able to successfully pay my bill with the help of the human being on the other side of the line, but I realized that I was still absolutely bereft of a password.

Passwords are supposed to prevent hackers and other nefarious individuals from invading one's privacy or, worse still, stealing information and money electronically. And, as is being proven daily by the hackers amongst us, passwords are not the panacea that prevents identity and monetary theft. But they are important.

And this led me to think about the passwords that are central to prayer in Jewish life. The different names/appellations used in referring to God in our prayers are really different passwords to allow our hopes and commitments to enter the different sections of the portals of Heaven. Like all passwords that exist in our physical world, these passwords must also be accurate and correct.

The fixed order of prayer in Judaism often times may appear to be repetitive and not overly inspiring. Nevertheless, this fixed order of prayer established by Ezra and the Men of the Great Assembly, two and a half millennia ago, remains the correct and exclusive password to the Heavenly domain.

Jewish history is abundantly clear that attempting to change the password to fit all sorts of passing fancies and temporary social and political correctness fails to achieve its goal.

Simply put, the wrong password will never get you to your account, no matter how elegant and emotionally inspiring that password may be. Thinking of the texts of Jewish prayer in terms of being accurate and necessary passwords will help make the moments of prayer that one participates in more vital, important and real.

The password that I type on my computer keyboard, and that appears on the computer, has a physicality to it. Our computer screen gives us the illusion of reality though in effect nothing physical is present on it. We have become accustomed to treating what appears on our computer screens as being real, even though it really is ephemeral and transitory.

Much of religious belief falls into those categories as well. To the believing Jew, these transitory words, actions and ritual symbols encompass true reality. They allow us to enter realms of the spirit and the soul that are not visible to human eyes, yet in our hearts and minds we know that they exist and we wish to enter therein.

The moments of truly committed prayer properly executed may not be constant in our lives but when they do occur we feel the surge of holiness and communication with the infinite and with our Creator. That is the connective power of having the right password and the right domain. And having these passwords as part of our spiritual arsenal allows us to, so to speak, pay our bills on time in Heaven, as we accomplish it on earth as well. So, let us all resolve to remember our passwords and use them regularly.

Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Justice or Peace?

The sedra of Yitro, which contains the account of the greatest Divine revelation in history, at Mount Sinai, begins on a note that is human, all too human. Yitro, priest of Midian, has come to see how his son-in-law Moses and the people he leads are faring. It begins by telling us what Yitro heard (the details of the

exodus and its attendant miracles). It goes on to describe what Yitro saw, and this gave him cause for concern.

He saw Moses leading the people alone. The result was bad for Moses and bad for the people. This is what Yitro said:

“What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you advice, and may God be with you...Select capable men from all the people-men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain-and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and so too all these people will reach their place in peace.” (Exodus 18:17-23)

Moses must learn to delegate and share the burden of leadership. Interestingly, the sentence “What you are doing is not good (lo tov)” is one of only two places in the Torah where the phrase “not good” occurs. The other (Genesis 2:18) is “It is not good for man to be alone.” We cannot lead alone; we cannot live alone. That is one of the axioms of biblical anthropology.

The Hebrew word for life, *chayyim*, is in the plural as if to signify that life is essentially shared. Dean Inge once defined religion as “what an individual does with his own solitude”. That is not a Jewish thought. However, it was the great nineteenth century scholar the Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin) who made an unexpected, even counter-intuitive observation on this passage. He begins by raising the following question. It is easy to understand how Yitro’s advice helped Moses. The work was too much. He was becoming exhausted. He needed help. What is less easy to understand is his final comment: if, with God’s permission, you delegate, “so too all these people will reach their place in peace”. The people were not exhausted; Moses was. How then would they gain by a system of delegation? Their case would still be heard – but not by Moses. How was this to their advantage? (Harchev Davar to Exodus 18:23).

The Netziv begins by quoting the Talmud, Sanhedrin 6a. The passage is about what the sages called *bitzua*, or what later become known as *pesharah*,

compromise. This is a decision on the part of a judge in a civil case to seek a solution based on equity rather than strict application of the law. It is not wholly unlike mediation, in which the parties agree to a resolution that they both consider fair, regardless of whether or not it is based on statute or precedent. From a different perspective, it is a mode of conflict resolution in which both sides gain, rather than the pure administration of justice, in which one side wins, the other loses. The Talmud wants to know: is this good or bad? To be adopted or avoided? This is part of the debate:

Rabbi Eliezer, son of R. Jose the Galilean, said: it is forbidden to mediate . . . Instead, let the law pierce the mountain [a saying similar to: “Let the chips fall where they may”]. And so Moses’ motto was: Let the law pierce the mountain. Aaron, however, loved peace and pursued peace and made peace between people . . . R. Judah ben Korcha said: it is good to mediate, for it is written (Zechariah 8:16), “Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.” Surely where there is strict justice, there is no peace, and where there is peace, there is no strict justice! What then is the justice that coexists with peace? We must say: mediation.

The law follows R. Judah ben Korcha. It is permissible, even preferable, to mediate – with one proviso, that the judge does not yet know who is right and who is wrong. It is precisely this uncertainty at the early stages of a hearing that allows an equitable resolution to be favoured over a strictly legal one. If the judge has already reached a clear verdict, it would be a suppression of justice on his part to favour a compromise solution.

Ingenuously applying this principle to the Israelites in Moses’ day, the Netziv points out that – as the Talmud says – Moses preferred strict justice to peace. He was not a man to compromise or mediate. In addition, as the greatest of the prophets, he knew almost instantly which of the parties before him was innocent and which guilty; who had right on his side and who did not. It was therefore impossible for him to mediate, since this is only permitted before the judge has reached a verdict, which in Moses’ case was almost immediately.

Hence the Netziv’s astonishing conclusion. By delegating the judicial function downward, Moses would bring ordinary people – with no special prophetic or legal gifts – into the seats of judgment. Precisely because they lacked Moses’ intuitive knowledge of law and justice, they were able to propose equitable solutions, and an equitable solution is one in which both sides feel they have

been heard; both gain; both believe the result is fair. That, as the Talmud says above, is the only kind of justice that at the same time creates peace. That is why the delegation of judgment would not only help Moses avoid total exhaustion; it would also help "all these people" to "reach their place in peace."

What a profound idea this is. Moses was the *Ish ha-Elokim* (Psalm 90:1), the supreme man of God. Yet there was, the *Netziv* implies, one thing he could not do, which others – less great in every other respect – could achieve. They could bring peace between contending parties. They could create non-violent, non-coercive forms of conflict resolution. Not knowing the law with the depth that Moses did, not having his intuitive sense of truth, they had instead to exercise patience. They had to listen to both sides. They had to arrive at an equitable verdict that both parties could see as fair. A mediator has different gifts from a prophet, a liberator, a law-giver – more modest perhaps, but sometimes no less necessary.

It is not that one character type is to be preferred to another. No one – certainly not the *Netziv* – regarded Moses as anything less than the greatest leader and prophet Israel has ever had. It is, rather, that no one individual can embody all the virtues necessary to sustain a people. A priest is not a prophet (though a few, like Samuel and Ezekiel were both). A king needs different virtues than a saint. A military leader is not (though in later life he can become) a man of peace.

What emerges at the end of the train of thought the *Netziv* sets in motion is the deep significance of the idea that we can neither live nor lead alone. Judaism is not so much a faith transacted in the privacy of the believer's soul. It is a social faith. It is about networks of relationship. It is about families, communities, and ultimately a nation, in which each of us, great or small, has a role to play. "Despise no one and disdain nothing", said Ben Azzai (*Avot* 4:3), "for there is no one who does not have his hour, and nothing that does not have its place." There was something ordinary individuals (heads of thousands, hundreds, tens) could achieve that even Moses in all his glory could not achieve. That is why a nation is greater than any individual, and why each of us has something to give.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL "Remember the day of Shabbat to keep it holy" (20:8)

This is an essential corollary of the previous commandments. The principle of Creation from Nothing is the fundamental understanding that Hashem is the Creator, meaning that He is the originator of all that exists. This is the teaching of the Shabbat: "I am Hashem" (from the word *Hove'*, meaning "existence"). But the Shabbat signifies also the election of Israel (see 31:13); thus it commemorates also "your G-d that took you out of Egypt." Thus the fourth commandment is essentially for the first three.

The Shabbat is explained as a memorial of the Creation in six days (20:11); but Shabbat signifies "a stop" (cessation), and as a memorial of Creation it would be more suitable to be named *Maass* (doing) or *Briah* (Creation). We learn therefrom the extremely important principle taught by the Shabbat: although everything was made by the Creator, yet after the first six days He no longer demonstrated openly His work.

Now He caused everything to appear as if it functioned of itself without the Creator's help. This is intended by the expression: "Which G-d created to do" (*Beresheet* 2:3), meaning "to do of itself" (*Ibn Ezra*). Thus Shabbat means the cessation of the Creator's open deeds" and the beginning of what seems the self-management of Nature.

By this deception, Mankind is tested, whether or not they would recognize the truth that even now nothing functions of itself, and that even now Hashem himself illuminates the world and causes all of its phenomena to exist and to function. The sun does not give its own light, for even before the creation of the sun there was light. Just as the original light existed without the sun, so even now it is Hashem alone that gives light.

It is this test that makes Life worthwhile, for if Hashem had not made a cessation (Shabbat) to His open demonstration of His Presence, men would deserve no reward for recognizing Him.

Quoted from "A Nation is Born" by Rabbi Miller Z'TL