

**Torah:** Sh'mot (Exodus) 18:1 – 20:23(26)  
**Haftarah:** Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 6:1-7:6, 9:5(6)-6(7) (A); 6:1-13 (S)  
**B'rit Hadashah:** Matthew 5:13-48

	<i>year 1, 2, 3 – 18:1 – 20:23(26)</i>
1	18:1 – 12
2	18:13 – 23
3	18:24 – 27
4	19:1 – 6
5	19:7 – 19
6	19:20 – 20:14
7	20:15 – 26

and Yitro heard (priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moshe) / all that God had done for Moshe and for the people of Israel for ADONAI / had brought Israel out from Egypt	<i>va'yishma Yitro khohén Midyan khoten Moshé et kol ashér Elohim l'Moshé u'le'Yisraél amo ki hotzi ADONAI et Yisraél mi'Mitzráyim</i>	וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חתן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ כִּי-הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם:
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Moshe reunites with his father-in-law, Yitro, and accepts his advice to appoint judges to assist in governing the Israelites. The Israelites prepare for the encounter at Mount Sinai. HaShem descends amidst fire, smoke, thunder, and blasts of a shofar, delivering the Ten Commandments. Chapter 18 is recognized as not chronological (see Nu. 10:11, 29-32). It contrasts the behavior of the Amalekites and that of the Midianites. It also creates a logical transition to the giving of the law that follows.

The haftarah recalls a prophet's revelatory experience "seeing" HaShem on his throne, hearing the angelic call "Kadosh! Kadosh! Kadosh!" [Holy! Holy! Holy!] is HaShem of Hosts, and responding to the call to be light to the nations.

### Aliyah Highlights

- Ex. 18:1-12** Yitro (aka Re'uel, Nu. 10:11), Moshe's father-in-law (*khoten* – חתן – father-in-law, bridegroom) comes with Moshe's wife and two sons. He acknowledges and worships HaShem with offerings and sacrifices, grateful for all he has done. A ceremonial meal is shared.
- Ex. 18:13-23** Yitro criticizes Moshe's judiciary system, proposing a new one. Moshe would teach the law (not legislate it) and express the will of HaShem through human judges.
- Ex. 18:24-27** Moshe accepts Yitro's proposal, choosing competent men and giving them authority to judge.
- Ex. 19:1-6** Three months after leaving Egypt, the people set up camp at Mt. Sinai. Moshe meets HaShem on the mountain, who offers an unparalleled covenant relationship to be his treasured possession (*segulah* – סְגֻלָּה), a kingdom of priests and a nation who pursues holiness (De. 7:6, 14:2, 26:18-19, Ps. 114:1-2, Le. 19:1).
- Ex. 19:7-19** The people immediately and unanimously accept, even before hearing the detailed terms of the covenant. Ex. 3:12 is fulfilled. Three days are given to properly reflect, consider, and prepare. The third day fell on what would become Sivan 6, *Shavu'ot*. Thunder, lightning, cloud, and the sound of jubilee (*yovel* – יָבֵל – trumpet/jubilee, Ex. 19:13/Le. 25:10) and shofar (Ex. 19:19) shook the people (Ex. 19:16) and the mountain (Ex. 19:18).
- Ex. 19:20-20:14** Moshe alone ascends to the top of the mountain. The priests (*cohanim* – כֹּהֲנִים) / firstborn (Nu. 3:11-13, 8:16-18) could go up the mount, but not to the top. The Ten Words (*aseret ha'd'variym* – עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים) are given.
- Ex. 20:15-26** The people "saw" the thunder, lightning (*lapidiym* – לַפְדִּיִּם – torches; Ge. 15:17, Ex. 20:16, Acts 2:1-3), and they were afraid. Moshe comforted them. Instructions for altar / sacrifice given.

### Thought Focus

**Jubilee or Trumpet?** – The primary meaning of the root of *yovel* – יָבֵל (Ex. 19:13) means "to cause to transport an object from one place to another" (TWOT). The sound of the shofar caused the children of Yis'rael to be

## Parashah 17 Yitro - יתרו

transported from slavery to divine covenant service. The experience at Mt. Sinai was about *transformation*, not just *information*.

**Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19) and Yitz'khaq's blessings (Ge. 27):** There are many parallel key words and concepts in these two chapters that can teach us how a totally incomprehensible God, outside of time and space, can reveal himself to finite and flawed human beings. These texts show how our senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell/taste – can be used to know HaShem, and how they can also deceive us when we let the bias in our well-meaning hearts get in the way of truth. Here are some parallels that we may discuss. Note your thoughts:

Hearing a Voice: Ge. 27:8 and Ex. 19:5

Hiding: Ge. 27:15-16 and Ex. 19:9

Behold! Ge. 27:18 and Ex. 19:9

Dirty Clothes: Ge. 27:27 and Ex. 19:10

Timing: Ge. 27:20 and Ex. 19:11

Touching: Ge. 27:21 and Ex. 19:12

Trembling: Ge. 27:33 and Ex. 19:16, 18

Torah seems to address how to rectify the well-meaning but flawed efforts of the patriarchs. HaShem is outside of space – our senses, smell, touch, sight – can mask our perceptions in space. HaShem is outside of time – not slowing down and taking time (3 days) with major issues can mask our decision making. All of this can reveal our bias and erroneous preconceptions. And yet HaShem can be known through those same senses.

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### Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

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1. (18:1) Have you heard about God's great works? What are you doing to follow after Him? (Exo 15:14-15, Jos 2:9-10, Isa 63:12-13, Act 7:36, 1Co 10:1-2, Heb 11:29, Mat 2:2, Isa 40:7-8, Mat 24:32-35)
2. (18:13) Do the people in authority over you enjoy their service? How do you view/treat them? (Jud 4:4-5, Deu 17:9, Pro 31:23, Mat 23:2-3, Heb 13:17, Isa 62:6, Acts 20:28, 1Th 5:12-13)
3. (18:25) Do you live a lifestyle of "valor?" (Exo 18:21, Rut 2:1, Rut 3:11, Psa 24:3-4, 1Ti 2:8-9, 1Ti 3:1-13, Tit 2:1-10)
4. (19:1) God courts Israel for 3 months before she accepts His proposal. Have you accepted His proposal to you? (Gen 2:24, Psa 45:10-11, 2Co 5:17, Mat 10:34-37, Exo 24:7, Son 2:10-13, Isa 55:1-3, Phi 3:7-9)
5. (19:7) Are you prepared to put God's Word before all the people He sends your way? (Mat 3:2, Mat 4:17, Mat 21:28-32, Luk 10:36, Luk 18:8, 2Ti 4:2, 1Pe 3:15)
6. (19:20) Are you comfortable with the physical manifestation of God? (Heb 1:1-2, Psa 40:6, Psa 16:10; Isa 42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12; Luk 4:32, Mar 15:39, Rev 19:11-16, Neh 9:13-15, 1Jo 4:2-3)
7. (20:15) Have you had an experience and an encounter with God that you can never forget? (Isa 24:20, Joh 1:14, 1Jo 1:1, Heb 1:1-3, Luk 2:8-14, Mat 2:1-2, Act 2:1-4, Act 2:7-11, Act 4:19-22, Isa 66:18-19)