

“We are journeying to the place about which Hashem had said, ‘I shall give it to you.’ Go with us, and we shall treat you well.” (10:29)

As *Klal Yisrael* “packed up” in preparation for their long journey through the wilderness, a journey that was to last forty years, Moshe *Rabbeinu* had a conversation with his father-in-law, Yisro: “Please join us on our journey,” Moshe implored Yisro. The wise father-in-law responded in the negative: “I am going home to my land and the place of my birth.” But Moshe did not give up, “Please do not forsake us, inasmuch as you know our encampment in the wilderness, and you have been as eyes for us. We need your assistance, your perspective, your advice.” The *Yalkut Shimoni* interprets Moshe’s words: Whatever is concealed from our eyes, you will be able to reveal for us.

This is an incredible dialogue. Does Moshe *Rabbeinu* need Yisro’s vision, his advice, his counsel? This all took place at a time when the *Shechinah* was resting among *Klal Yisrael*. What could Yisro have added that was so significant? What could his eyes have seen that was so unique? In his *Ben Ish Chai*, *Horav Yosef Chaim*, z.l., *m’Baghdad* provides a compelling answer to this question. Yisro had a powerful characteristic that was essential for *Klal Yisrael* as they entered into the challenges confronting them in their travels. It was a characteristic that was not to be found among the members of the nascent Jewish nation. Even *nevuah*, prophecy, would have been of no avail at this critical juncture. They needed a person who had the ability, the unwavering resolution, to swim against the current, to stand tall and erect as the winds of indifference and assimilation blew with a fierceness. Yisro had been there and prevailed. He was able to give *Klal Yisrael* the insight they needed as they confronted the obstacles and challenges that stood in their way. Yisro’s affirmation of the truth was his ammunition. It gave him the strength to prevail. His perspective was invaluable to *Klal Yisrael*.