

The entire people responded together and said, "Everything that Hashem has spoken we shall do." (19:8)

Chazal praise *Klal Yisrael's* affirmative response, their ability to accept the challenge of performing Hashem's command without demanding a rationale. "*Naase v'nishma*," - "We will do and we will listen," was the clarion cry of our ancestors as they accepted the *Torah*. *Chazal* cite the awesome reward that *Klal Yisrael* received for declaring "*naase*", we will do, before "*nishma*," we will listen. Indeed, Hashem queried, "Who revealed this secret to My children, a phrase that only the ministering angels use?" Ultimately, we have to ask ourselves: What difference does it really make? In the end, they accepted both aspects- to do and to listen. Does the sequence really make a difference? What is the special secret that is contingent upon declaring *naase* before *nishma*?

Horav Nissan Alpert, zl, comments that "listening" means more than just being attuned, more than simply hearing what is being said. The whole world heard what happened to the Egyptians: How they were vanquished by Hashem; how the Jews were miraculously saved. Only regarding Yisro, however, did the *Torah* state "*Vayishma Yisro*," "And Yisro heard." Hearing changed his life. How was his *shmia*, hearing, different than everyone else's?

An individual's response depends upon his attitude before he hears or experiences a miraculous occurrence. A unique experience will affect a person only if he is prepared to change - if he has already decided that "the time has come" for a transformation. This explains why two people can respond so differently to a single miraculous occurrence. One individual will be moved to change, while the other one remains immovable, a product of indifference, a victim of complacency. Yisro was a seeker; he sought the truth. When the truth became apparent, he seized the moment. This is the "secret" of "*naase v'nishma*." If *Klal Yisrael* are inclined to "listen," to open up their minds to accept the *dvar* Hashem, word of the Almighty, they must adjust their lives to be open to communications of *emes*, truth. The Angels of Heaven are first and foremost angels waiting to hear Hashem's command, to do His bidding. *Klal Yisrael* exclaimed "*Naase v'nishma*" with zeal and fervor. Hashem, we are ready - prepared to perform Your will. Had they not been "*bnei shmia*," actively attuned to listening, they would never have gone so far as to fulfill the "*naase*," to act in the appropriate manner.