

## Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, took Tzipporah, the wife of Moshe, after she had been sent away. (18:2)

When Moshe took his family with him to Egypt, it was Aharon who felt that they belonged back in Midyan in a safe, secure environment. Enough people were suffering in Egypt. Why add more people to the list? Yisro was now bringing his daughter and grandsons to reunite them with their father. Why does the *Torah* refer to Tzipporah as “*the wife of Moshe*”? Since she was traveling with her father, the *Torah* should have referred to her as “his (Yisro’s) daughter.” **Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl**, comments that Tzipporah is referred to as Moshe’s wife for a specific reason. *Parashas Yisro* enjoys a position of status in the order of the *parshios* of the *Torah*. Yisro is situated between the battle against Amalek and the giving of the *Torah*. Thus, an important lesson can be derived from Yisro’s emergence on the scene with Moshe’s wife and sons.

A *Torah* leader devotes his entire being to the needs of *Klal Yisrael*. There is no day; there is no night; there is no wife and children; there is no personal life--everything belongs to *Klal Yisrael*. Indeed, if, while Moshe was engaged in ministering to the needs of the Jewish People, his wife and children were considered a hindrance, they, regrettably, took a “back seat” to the nation. It then becomes the nation’s responsibility to provide for their leader’s wife and children. If the leader cannot provide for his family because of the overwhelming demands of his position, then it becomes the people’s obligation to compensate.

This was Yisro’s message to *Klal Yisrael*: He was coming with Moshe’s wife--their leader’s wife. Did anyone consider asking, “What about Moshe Rabbeinu’s wife? Is someone taking care of her while Moshe is sacrificing himself for us?” It was Yisro--the priest of Midyan, who taught *Klal Yisrael* the critical lesson that leaders also have families, and that they need to support their families. They cannot be ignored. If the leader, in the call of duty, must totally devote himself for an extended period of time to the needs of the nation, then the nation must see to it that their leader’s family is not doubly forsaken.

The **Ohr Ha'chaim Ha'kadosh** writes that Yisro was given singular eminence. This was to demonstrate that in the gentile world intelligent people can be found who are exemplary in their profundity and ability to address mundane issues with clarity, cogency, and perception. Indeed, Yisro noticed things and gave advice in areas that were overlooked prior to his arrival. This suggests that *Klal Yisrael* was not elected to be the Chosen People as a result of demonstrating greater intelligence than other nations, but simply because Hashem wanted us.

*Horav Sorotzkin* presented this idea in 1934 during an address in support of *Torah* scholars. He said that it is incumbent upon us to be sensitive to the needs of our leaders. They are human beings with personal lives and families. They have concerns, and they must provide for their families--just as we do. The difference is that they place *Klal Yisrael's* needs above and before their own. He makes a compelling observation. We study *Rashi*; we marvel at his insight; his

commentary is the pathway for understanding *Torah* and *Talmud*. Does anybody ever think about who *Rashi* was? Where did he learn? What were the physical conditions under which he wrote his commentary? Who was his family? Were his material needs provided for? We do not know--but the secular historians have probably researched all about *Rashi* and other *Torah* scholars, for that matter. They are concerned about the factors surrounding *Rashi*, the human being. So should we be.

When we go to a great *tzaddik* for a *brachah*, do we ever ask ourselves, "Does this great *tzaddik* have anything to worry about? Are his wife and children well?" We regrettably are concerned only about our personal needs and view the *tzaddik* as being available to provide for us. It is important that we concern ourselves about the welfare of our *gedolim* as much as we want them to be concerned about us.