

## **Yisro... heard everything that G-d did to Moshe and to Yisrael... Yisro...came to Moshe... Moshe told his father-in-law everything that Hashem had done to Pharaoh and Egypt. (Exodus 18:1,5,8)**

The Torah relates that Yisro was so impressed by what he heard had happened to Pharaoh and the Egyptians that he packed up and left Midyan to join *Klal Yisrael*. The *Torah* continues telling us that Moshe *Rabbeinu* told Yisro everything that Hashem had done for His people-the many miracles and wonders that He wrought. Is this not somewhat redundant? Obviously, Yisro was impressed enough by what he heard that he left Midyan, where he held a leadership position, to join *Klal Yisrael*. Not one to waste words, Moshe was clearly rehashing the Exodus experience to impart an important lesson. If Moshe was attempting to inspire Yisro, was it not overkill? Yisro was an intelligent man who understood on his own that the miracles associated with the Egyptian experience were no ordinary events. A G-d was in control and He chose to protect His nation. What was Moshe adding to what Yisro already had known when he left his people?

*HoRav Shmuel Berenbam, zl*, explains that Moshe had a concern with regard to Yisro's inspiration. At times, one can experience a life-altering inspiration, which motivates him to take the proper steps toward spiritual ascendance. How do we ensure that these steps are not mere steps, but lead to a permanent status? *Rashi* writes that Yisro felt it, *V'nadvah libo*, 'his heart motivated him, to join the nascent Jewish people. The words *nadvah libo*, (sort of) mean a donation which his emotions made. This is a wonderful feeling, a spiritual high that one experienced, so that he seeks to actualize his feelings. When one is self-motivated, however, he confronts a drawback because he "wants to," he "feels it's right." What happens when the feeling dissipates ever-so-slightly? People do not remain static. At one point, the emotion runs high, but, after a while, the most ardent emotion chills-and then what? How many people are generous with their charitable contribution one year, and the next year they decide they have other responsibilities? The emotion becomes lukewarm; the motivation has thawed. Interestingly, the fellow who has other responsibilities seems to focus on his annual expenditures, primarily in the context of *tzedakah*. He is still taking his lavish trips and driving the latest luxury car.

Moshe sought to circumvent this problem. Yisro came out of *nedivus ha'lev*, heartfelt motivation, but this, regrettably, is not sustainable on its own. When one feels that something, an endeavor, a way of life, constitutes to life itself, he will never allow his feelings toward it to dissipate. After all, life is life. When something is the product of a good feeling, then, when another "good feeling" comes along, it may well take precedence.

This was Moshe's message to Yisro: You decided, out of the goodness of your heart, to join us in the wilderness. This is a laudable act on your part, but a weak reason to become one of us. It will endure until something else gets your fancy. Moshe explained everything that had taken place in

depth, in order to give Yisro an intellectual appreciation of the liberation. Only then could he hope that the feelings Yisro had would remain with him. He hoped that Yisro would retain only the logical.