

And Yisro heard everything (18:1) – Rashi notes that he heard about the splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek. Why does Rashi limit the impact. The Torah says “Kol” and Rashi says only 2 things? Why? And why these 2 things? The **Sar Shalom of Belz** explains that when the world heard about the splitting of the sea, Amalek ran 400 Parsa to try to curtail the Jewish influence. Had they slowed down and reflected, they would never have attacked the Jews. Yisro ran at the same time, in order to thwart the attempt and side with the Jews. **Rav Yitzchak of Vorke** zt'l adds that when Yisro heard of the great miracles of Kriyas Yam Suf, he was tempted to become part of the Jewish nation. However, he recognized his low level and knew that he wouldn't be able to serve Hashem perfectly. Therefore he assumed that he couldn't join them. But then he also heard about the war against Amalek, which also represents the great war against the yetzer hara. He understood from Milchemes Amalek that Hashem desires primarily our battles and our fight against the Yetzer Hara. This is even more important than our successes. When Yisro heard this, he knew that he too can also join the Jewish nation, and he joined them in the desert.

These are the things that you should speak to Bnei Yisrael (19:6) – Rashi comments that you shall not add or subtract from these words. The problem is that earlier Moshe is told to speak softly to the Beis Yaakov and more harshly to the men. How is one to deliver the same message in the same number of words and be softer in one message and harder in the other? **Rav Gedaliah Schorr ztl.** explained that the issue does not depend on the words spoken but how they will be heard. When one looks at the main request it will be seen as soft but when one considers the responsibilities of being a mamleches Kohanim V'Goy Kadosh, the person will see this as hard.

If it will be an animal or a man it shall not live (19:13) – The Gemara in Sanhedrin notes that a Shor Sinai also gets the punishment of Skilah. The Gemara determines that it must be judged in the Beis Din of 23. The **Baalei HaTosafos** ask why we spend so much time on the issue if it is only a Horaas Shaah? **Meiri** learns that Har Sinai has a continuity to the Beis Hamikdash today. An animal that goes onto Har Sinai today would get the death penalty today too. **Rav Schachter Shlita** told us that he thought this was a big Chiddush and not usually accepted. He quoted from **Rav Yerucham Gorelick ztl.** that there is a single universal rule being taught here – do all rules regarding bovines require a Beis Din of 23 or are all of them treated as chattel. One thing follows – Divrei Torah have to have potential applicability today or spending time on things that were one time events constitutes Bittul Torah.

They stood at the base of the mountain (19:17) – The Gemara (Shabbos 88) notes that this teaches us that Hashem lifted the mountain on top of the people and told them if they accept the Torah great but if not THERE they will be buried. The commentaries note that if the mountain was on top of them already, why did He not say, HERE you will be buried? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl.** explained that there is a valuable lesson here – often in life people get busy. They work to delay their own spiritual growth until they “get around to it.” Hashem tells them if you do not change your priorities, waiting to get “There” will bury you. When it comes to spiritual growth we do not deal with eventualities...we deal with now.

All of these things (20:1) – **Or HaChaim** notes that all the Dibbros were given at once. At the same time we hear that the first 2 Dibbros were given by Hashem. How do we make sense of the contradiction? Or HaChaim answers that Hashem said all 10 at once but the people could not hear anything beyond the first Dibbros at which time their Nishamos left their bodies. **Rav Shlomo Amar Shlita** explained that this explains the Possuk in Tehillim Achat Diber Hashem Shtayim Zu Shamatee – we heard 2 dibbros even if

one was being spoken at the time. The other 8 came out in fire and as soon as the people were revived they were able to see the other 8 present in front of them.

The nation saw the sounds (20:15) – How does one see sounds? Moreover, the Mechilta adds that they saw the sounds and heard the sights. How does that even make sense? See sights and hear sounds! **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita** noted the comments of **Rav Chaim of Volozhin** who explained that the most trusted of the human senses is the power of sight. We implicitly tend to trust what we see even more than what our other senses tell us. Rav Asher added that when the Jews received the Torah, their perspective changed. That which they had accepted on faith became as clear as sight and that which was in front of them – the value of material goods – became as distant as sound as a result of the correction of Matan Torah. Hence the idea of seeing sounds and hearing sights.

And the nation saw and they were afraid and they stood from afar (20:15) – The Midrash states that they moved back 12 mil and the Malachim sought to bring them back to where they were. Why did they move 12 mil specifically? **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky Shlita** explains that Matan Torah took place on Shabbos and the shiur of Techumin was 12 mil. That was as far as the Bnei Yisrael could move back. Rav Rudinsky added that Hashem was teaching an additional lesson by giving the Torah on Shabbos. In essence, lest a generation think that in the future the Torah will be non-applicable in a generation of wealth, the Torah was given on Shabbos. Just as Shabbos gives the power and the life to the rest of the week, Torah gives purpose to all other facets of life.

Haftorah – Woe onto me as I am a man with tainted lips (Yeshayahu 6) – Why does Yeshayahu's declaration and lack of belief in the people become the appropriate Haftorah for Parshas Yisro? Wouldn't it be a better choice for Parshas Shemos where Moshe too, speaks badly of the Jewish people. Why Parsha Yisro? **Rav Gideon Weitzman Shlita** suggests that the message of Har Sinai was told to Moshe (See Shemos 3:12) – success in taking the people out of Mitzrayim would be achieved when they served Hashem there. The proper response to the challenge of Moshe (in Shemos) and Yeshayahu here is found in this week's Parsha --- because the people ultimately served Hashem here. No need for any more questions as to their commitment.