



TORAH in MOTION

Yitro: Counselor and Confidant

with Rabbi Benjamin J. Samuels

Cong. Shaarei Tefillah, Newton, Massachusetts



Jan. Luyken fecit

EXOD. XVIII.

Christoph. Wigel. sculpsit.

Yitro monet Moysen: fidos tibi junge Ministros:
Pars in eos cura distribuenda tua est.
Multos, qui multis vigilat, multisque laborat.
Dux oculos, multas debet habere manus.

Lern Moje, da dein Schwager dich lehret aufs getreueste,
Bleib auf getreue Rãth, und tapfre Fãult bedacht.
Ein Fürst arbeitet viel, drum brauchet er auch viel Hãnde
Er brauchet viel Augen auch, weil er für Viele wacht.

Part I Exodus 2:16-21

¹⁶Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock; ¹⁷but shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock. ¹⁸When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come back so soon today?" ¹⁹They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock." ²⁰He said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why did you leave the man? Ask him in to break bread." ²¹Moses consented to stay with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah as wife. ²²She bore a son whom he named Gershom,^c for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

3: | Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2:

4: | ¹⁸Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro^d and said to him, "Let me go back to my kinsmen in Egypt and see how they are faring." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

פירג ב: וְלָחֲתָן מִדֵּינָן שֶׁבַע בָּנוֹת וּמְכַאֵנָה וּתְדַלְיָנָה
 י ותמלאנה את-הרהטים להשקות צאן אביהן: ויבאו הרעים ויגרשום ויגמם
 יי משה ויושען בשק את-צאנם: ותכאנה אל-רעואל אביהן ויאמר מדוע
 יי מהרתן בא היום: ותאמרן איש מצרי הצילנו מיד הרעים ונס-דלה דלה
 כ לנו בשק את-הצאן: ויאמר אל-בנותיו ואיו למה זה עזבתן את-האיש
 יי קראן לו ויאכל לחם: ויאיל משה לשבת את-האיש ויתן את-צפרה
 יי בתו למשה: ותלד לו בן ויקרא את-שמו גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ
 וְיָצֵא יְהוָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם

יי בילך משה תשב ואל-יתר חתנו ויאמר לו אלקה נא ואשובה אל-אתי
 יי אשר-במצרים ואראה העוכם חיים ואמר יחרו למשה לך לשלום:

- ① The kohen of Midian (ibid. 18:1). He was a priest. R' Eleazar the Modai said: He was a prince (*Mechilta Yisro* 1:1).
- ③ Three were in the same counsel [in saying, "Come, let us deal wisely with them" to Pharaoh (*Exodus* 1:10)]: Balaam, Job, and Jethro . . . Jethro, who fled, merited to have his descendants sit in the Office of Hewn Stones [the seat of the great Sanhedrin] (*Sotah* 11a).
- ⑤ "Come, let us deal wisely with them" (*Exodus* 1:10). Reuel the Midianite answered the king, "Do not extend your hand against them, for their God has chosen them since the days of old. Which of the ancient kings who harmed them ever escaped harm? Your father raised Joseph up, and [Joseph] saved the inhabitants of the land of Egypt from famine. Now, if it is good in your eyes, desist from destroying them" (*Yalkut Shimoni, Shemos* 168).
- ⑥ There was not a deity in the world that he [Jethro] had not worshiped (*Mechilta Yisro* 1:1).
- ⑦ At the time that Moses told Jethro, "Give me your daughter Zipporah as a wife," Jethro said to him, "Agree that your first son will be dedicated to [the discovery of God through investigation and that] the children born thereafter will be dedicated to the Name of Heaven." [Moses] agreed. "Swear to me," said [Jethro], and [Moses] swore (*Mechilta Yisro* 1:1).
- ⑧ Moses' son Gershom was not circumcised because his father-in-law Jethro did not allow it, but

Eliezer was circumcised in accordance with an agreement that [Moses and Jethro] had made (*Targum Yonasan, Shemos* 4:25).

- ② Jethro drew Moses near [i.e., prepared a feast for him (see *Exodus* 18, *Rashi*)] only for his own honor (*Berachos* 63b).
- ④ The child grew (*Exodus* 2:10). Pharaoh hugged and kissed him, and [Moses] took Pharaoh's crown and placed it on his own head. The Egyptian sorcerers said, "We fear that this one who takes your crown and places it on his own head is the one who is destined to take away your kingdom." Some advised executing [Moses] by the sword, others by fire. Jethro, who sat among them, said, "The child has no understanding. Test him. Set before him a plate containing gold and glowing coal. If he reaches for the gold, he has understanding, and you will kill him. If he reaches for the coal, he has no understanding and does not deserve the death penalty." It was brought before [Moses, who reached for the gold, but Gabriel came and pushed his hand] (*Shemos Rabbah* 1:26).
- ⑨ [At first] Jethro was a priest to idols. [Then,] even before Moses came, [Jethro] saw that there was no truth in [idolatry], and he renounced it and thought of repenting. He called the people of his town and said to them, "Heretofore, I have served you, but now I am old. Choose for yourselves a different priest." And he brought out the vessels used in the service of idols and gave them to [the townspeople]. They then excommunicated him so that no one would associate with him or work for him. That is why he sent his daughters to tend [his] sheep. Moses came and judged [that the shepherds were abusing Jethro's daughters] and he saved [them] (ibid. 1:32).

10 □ "I will go to my country and to my relatives (Numbers 10:30), [where] I will convert all the people of my land, bring them to Torah study, and draw them under the wings of the Shechinah." Is it possible that he went but did not do it? It is written, *The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the city of date palms with the children of Judah . . . and they went and dwelt with the people* (Judges 1:16). *The people* alludes to Torah scholarship [as in (Job 12:2)] (Mechilta Yisro 1:2).

11 □ He had seven names: Jether, Jethro, Hobab, Reuel, Putiel, and Keni. [He was called] Jether (יתר) because through him one additional (יתר) portion was added to the Torah [i.e., Exodus 18:21]. When he did good deeds, an extra letter was added to [Jether, making it] Jethro (יתרו) (Mechilta Yisro 1:1).

12 □ Reuel is Jethro. Why was he called Reuel (רעואל)? Because he joined with God (רע אל) [i.e., he converted] (Shemos Rabbah 1:32).

13 (טז-יט) וזכה מדין שבע בנות. לא יזכיר הכתוב שמו כי אינו

רמב"ן ידוע. רק מן הכנוי שהוא נכבד ככהונתו. והוא יתרו⁶⁴ כי אחרי התחתן במשה כתוב וישב אל יתר חותנו (להלן ד יח). ושם כתוב ויאמר יתרו למשה לך לשלום. כמו אליה ואליהו⁶⁵ ירמיה וירמיהו⁶⁶. ואחרי שנתגייר נקרא חובב דכתיב מבני חובב חותן משה (שופטים ד יא). כי דרך כל המתיידים לקרא להם שם אחר בישראל. והוא בן רעואל דכתיב ויאמר משה לחובב בן רעואל המדיני (במדבר י כט). ומה שאמר בכאן ותבאנה אל רעואל אביהן (פסוק יח). הוא אבי אביהן⁶⁷ כמו אלהי אבי אברהם (בראשית לב י). נבוכדנצר אבוהי (דניאל ה ב)⁶⁹ וכן הידעתם את לבן בן נחור (בראשית כט ה)⁷⁰. וכן ומפיכושת בן שאול (ש"ב יט כה)⁷¹ ורבים כן. והיה זה כי הכהן לא ימצא בבית כי היה נטרד בכיהונו בבית אלהיו ותבאנה אל הזקן. ויתכן⁷² כי ירואל משה לשבת את האיש (פסוק כא) הוא הכהן הנזכר למעלה. כי הוא שנתן לו צפורה בתו

14 זכר רמ"ן

In my opinion, the purport of this verse, [And it came to pass in the course of those many days], is to allude to those days when Moses was a fugitive from Pharaoh. Indeed he was but a youth when he fled, as the verse said, *And when Moses was grown up he went out unto his brethren*,¹¹⁵ suggesting that immediately when he grew up and became self-conscious and they told him that he was a Jew, he longed to see the burdens, toils and oppressions of his brethren. On that [first] day on which he went out, he smote the Egyptian, and on the second day, they denounced him [to the authorities] and he fled. He was thus at that time approximately twelve years of age, as our Sages have mentioned,¹¹⁶ and at any rate not twenty,¹¹⁷ and when he stood before Pharaoh he was eighty years old.¹¹⁸ In that case, he was a fugitive from Pharaoh for about sixty years, [and it is with reference to those sixty years that Scripture speaks of those 'many' days].

It is likely that at the end of that period, Moses came to Midian and married Zipporah, since when this word [of G-d that he return to Egypt] came to him, he had begotten of her only his firstborn son Gershom¹¹⁹ [while Eliezer, his second son, was born during his journey to Egypt].¹²⁰

15 ה נרס תמונה

וקנה משה בפלטרין של פרעה עשרים שנה. ויש אוקרים
ארכעים שנה. וארכעים קמדין. וארכעים במדבר. ויש אוקרים. עשרים
בית פרעה. וששים קמדין. וארכעים במדבר.

ואמר רבי לי בר דהא הנפטר מן המט
לא יאמר לו לך שלום אלא לך (א) בשלום הנפטר
מן הדד לא יאמר לו לך בשלום אלא לך (ב) לשלום
הנפטר מן המט לא יאמר לו לך שלום אלא לך
מתי בשלום שנאמר יאתה תבא אל אבותיך בשלום
הנפטר מן הדד לא יאמר לו לך בשלום אלא לך
מתי בשלום שהדי הדד שאמר לא בשלום לך בשלום

16 זכר רמ"ן

הלך ונתלה יתרו שאמר למשה לך שלום הלך והצליח

R. Levi s. P. *utina savi*. One bidding farewell to the dead should not say unto him 'Go unto peace', but 'Go in peace'; one bidding farewell to the living [friend] should not say to him 'Go in peace', but 'Go unto peace'. One bidding farewell to the dead should not say to him, 'Go unto peace', because it is said [unto Abraham]: *But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried.*⁷ One bidding farewell to the living [friend]⁸ should not say to him, 'Go in peace', but 'Go unto peace', because there was David [who] said to Absalom, 'Go in peace' and he went and was hanged.¹

Whereas, Jethro said to Moses, 'Go unto peace', [and] he went and succeeded

17 Zora Neale Hurston, *Moses' Man & the Mountain*

Jethro was very helpful when Moses told him about it. In fact he seemed to Moses to glow and to swell with pleasure. "No need in you taking the thing so serious, Moses. It might not be as hard to do as you think."

"No, it's just ten times as hard. I can't do it, and that I AM WHAT I AM ought to know it. It's going to be just about as hard to talk to them Hebrews as it is to Pharaoh. But the promise done been made, so—"

"Oh, I don't know, Moses. It stands to reason that anybody in slavery would be glad to be free."
"Humph!"

"And when you look at it again, a nation of folks with no particular god would naturally be glad for a god to choose them for his own and then pick out a land to give them."

"When they can get loose from slavery in Egypt and fight the folks that already got the land and lick 'em, they got it. It don't seem such a much to me—that land part don't."

"Oh, I don't know, now. With a good military leader, they might make out top-superior to everything they meet."

"Did you ever lead an army? It takes more than promise of some land to make a fighting army out of folks that just got free. Men fight with more than their hands."

"Well, anyhow, Moses, I can help you out some."

Part II Exodus 18:1-27

Jethro priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out from Egypt. 2So Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after she had been sent home, 3and her two sons—of whom one was named Gershom, that is to say, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land"; 4and the other was named Eliezer, b meaning, "The God of my father was my help, and He delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." 5Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought Moses' sons and wife to him in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. 6He sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons." 7Moses went out to meet his father-in-law; he bowed low and kissed him; each asked after the other's welfare, and they went into the tent.

8Moses then recounted to his father-in-law everything that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardships that had befallen them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. 9And Jethro rejoiced over all the kindness that the LORD had shown Israel when He delivered them from the Egyptians. 10" Blessed be the LORD," Jethro said, "who delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, c yes, by the result of their very schemes against [the people]." 12And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to partake of the meal before God with Moses' father-in-law.

13Next day, Moses sat as magistrate among the people, while the people stood about Moses from morning until evening. 14But when Moses' father-in-law saw how much he had to do for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you act alone, while all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" 15Moses replied to his father-in-law, "It is because the people come to me to inquire of God. 16When they have a dispute, it comes before me, and I decide between one person and another, and I make known the laws and teachings of God."

17But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing you are doing is not right; 18you will surely wear yourself out, and these people as well. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. 19Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You represent the people before God: you bring the disputes before God, 20and enjoin upon them the laws and the teachings, and make known to them the way they are to go and the practices they are to follow. 21You shall also seek out from among all the people capable men who fear God, trustworthy men who spurn ill-gotten gain. Set these over them as chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, and 22let them judge the people at all times. Have them bring every major dispute to you, but let them decide every minor dispute themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them share the burden with you. 23If you do this—and God so commands you—you will be able to bear up; and all these people too will go home unwearied."

24Moses heeded his father-in-law and did just as he had said. 25Moses chose capable men out of all Israel, and appointed them heads over the people—chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens; 26and they judged the people at all times: the difficult matters they would bring to Moses, and all the minor matters they would decide themselves. 27Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell, and he went his way to his own land.

Part III Numbers 10:29-31

29Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD has said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will be generous with you; for the LORD has promised to be generous to Israel."

30"I will not go," he replied to him, "but will return to my native land." 31He said, "Please do not leave us, inasmuch as you know where we should camp in the wilderness and can be our guide. b So if you come with us, we will extend to you the same bounty that the LORD extends to us."

יח א וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה את כל אשר עשה אלהים למשה ולישראל עמו כיהוציא יהוה את ישראל ממצרים: ויבא יתרו חתן משה ואת צפורה אשת משה אחר שלוחיה: ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם ו כי אמר גר היתי בארץ נכריה: ושם האחד אליעזר כי אלהי אבי בעורי ה ויצלני מתוך פרעה: ויבא יתרו חתן משה ובניו ואשתו אל משה אל- והמדבר אשר הוא חנה שם הר האלהים: ואמר אל משה אני חתנו יתרו ו בוא אליך ואשתך ושני בניה עמה: ויצא משה לקראת חתנו וישתחו וישק לו וישאלו איש-לרעהו שלום ויבאו האהלה: ויספר משה לחתנו את כל אשר עשה יהוה למרעהו ולמצרים על אודת ישראל את כל התלאה אשר מצאתם בדרך מצרים והנה: ויחד יתרו על כל הסוכה אשר עשה יהוה לישראל אשר הציילו מיד מצרים: ויאמר יתרו ברוך יהוה אשר הצייל אתכם מיד מצרים ומיד פרעה אשר הצייל את העם מתחת יד מצרים: עתה ידעתי כי גדול יהוה מכל האלהים כי בדבר אשר ודו עליהם: ויבא יתרו חתן משה עלה חבתיים לאלהים ויבא אהרן וכל אקני ישראל לאכל-לחם עם חתן משה לפני האלהים: והיה ממחרת וישב יד משה לשפט את העם ויעמד העם על משה מן הבקר עד הערב: וראו חתן משה את כל אשר הוא עשה לעם ויאמר מה הדבר הזה אשר אתה עשה לעם מדוע אתה יושב לבדך וכל העם נאב עליך מן בקר עד ערב: ויאמר משה לחתנו כי יבא אלי העם לדרוש אלהים: כי יהיה להם דבר בא אלי ושפטתי בין איש ובין רעהו והודעת את חקי האלהים ואת תורתיו: ויאמר חתן משה אליו לא טוב הדבר אשר אתה עשה: כי נבל תבל וגם אתה וגם העם הנה אשר עמך כי כבוד ממך הדבר לא יחוכל עשהו לבדך: עתה שמע בקלי איצחק ויהי אלהים עמך הנה אתה כ לעם מול האלהים והבאת אתה את הדברים אל האלהים: והזהרת אתהם את החקים ואת התורת והודעת להם את הדבר לכו בה ואת המעשה אשר יעשו: ואתה תחנה מכל העם אנשי חיל יראי אלהים אנשי אמת שנאי בצע ושמת עליהם שרי אלפים שרי מאות שרי חמשים ושרי עשרות: ושפטו את העם בכל עת והיה כל הדבר הגדול יבואו אליך וכל הדבר הקטן ישפטוהם והקל מעליך ונשאו אתך: אם אתה הדבר הזה תעשה וצונן אלהים ויכלת עמך וגם כל העם הזה על מקמו יבא ב שלום: וישמע משה לקול חתנו ויעש כל אשר אמר: ויבחר משה אנשי חיל מכל ישראל ויתן אתם ראשים על העם שרי אלפים שרי מאות שרי חמשים ושרי עשרות: ושפטו את העם בכל עת את הדבר הקשה וביאור אל משה וכל הדבר הקטן ושפטו הם: וישלח משה את חתנו וילך אל ארצו:

מספר 10:29-31

ויאמר משה לחבב בן רעואל המדיני חתן משה נסעים ואנחנו אל המקום אשר אמר יהוה לנו לכה אתנו ו להסבנו לך כיהיה דבר טוב עלי ישראל: ויאמר אליו לא אלהי כי לא אס-אל ארצי ואל מולדתי אלה: ויאמר אל נא תעזב אתנו כי על-כן יב ידעת חתננו במדבר והיתן לנו לעינים: והיה כי תלך עמנו והיה הסוב י ה הוא אשר יטיב יהוה עמנו והסבנו לך:

⑦ Zora Neale Hurston, Moses: Man of the Mountain

"All right, Jethro. That's a good idea you give me and I mean to carry it out just like you told me. You being a chief over people nearly all your life, you have learned something about how to handle 'em. I have been more of a military man."

"That is not your job in this case. You got to be something to these people that looks like God. That's a mighty big thing by itself. You appoint men to fight and men to judge, and men to wear the robes of priests and servants around the gathering place of the spirit. You have to be the something bigger and better than the robes and the outward signs. You have to stand between the people and God."

"That's a mighty big mouthful you said, Jethro. It's big like the womb of Time."

"I know it, Moses. But you can fill the bill. It's just one step higher up the shiny mountain for you, and you been climbing all the time. Be something pointing toward God to the folks, Moses. That's what you was born to be."

When Jethro's words went into the little door in Moses' ear, something else went inside besides. He felt that he had been embraced by Time itself. He was never to be the same man again.

"And if you don't mind, Moses, let me get on back home again."

"Oh, no, Jethro, I want you to stay with me all the time. I need you real bad to see this thing out to the end."

"You did need me, but now you don't. Let me go on home again. You got your wife and children now, and I done you all the good I could already. You know where home is any time you want to talk anything over. In fact it will be a help to you to come home and talk things over with me now and then. You know these woods and roads better than anybody else on earth. Much as you done traveled 'em. Come home for

a few days when you can. Sun-up tomorrow I reckon I'll hit the grit for home. Mighty lonesome there now without you and the children. Everybody married off and out of the house. It ain't much for me to do now but sit and think."

"I'll be there with you as often as I can get away. You know my heart is there, don't you?"

"Yes, Moses, I do. But this work done waited so long to get done, son. I hope you fulfill your birth-mission and do it right. Me and God neither one can't make out without you. We both realize you got an awful load to carry, but there wasn't no other way to get it done. Don't forget that when things get awful bad with you, me and God will both be sorry, but the mission, Moses, the mission." Jethro lifted his old hands up on the shoulders of Moses, gave him a powerful eye-look that lasted a long time; leaned his head on Moses' strong chest and hugged Moses very hard. In effect he had departed for home in spirit and at the same time pleaded for understanding. He was gone when Moses woke up in the morning.

⑧ Summary of KJV 10:5 on Ex 18:11

The people are already encamped at "the mountain of God" (v. 5), that is, at Sinai, whereas the notice about their arrival there does not appear until 19:1-2; Jethro brings burnt offerings and sacrifices (v. 20), so that an altar must by this time exist; the only such mentioned so far was located at Rephidim, not Sinai, and was purely commemorative, not functional; therefore, the altar on which sacrifices are brought must be either that mentioned in 24:4 or the one in the Tabernacle, both belonging to the period following the theophany; Moses and his father-in-law refer to "the laws and the teachings of God" (vv. 16, 20), a phrase that is far more appropriate following the giving of the Torah than before it; the account in Numbers 11:11, 29-32 testifies to Jethro's presence in the camp of Israel in "the second month of the second year after the Exodus"; accordingly, the report of his departure given here in Exodus 18:27 must be dated to that time; finally, the story about the establishment of the judicial system is repeated in Deuteronomy 1:9-17 and is immediately followed by the notice that the people set out from Horeb. All this strongly suggests that the events took place toward the end of the sojourn at Sinai.

Nachmanides Shemot/Exodus 18:1 Our rabbis already disagreed (Mekhilta on Exodus 18:1, Zevachim 116a) about this section. There are some of them that say Yitro came before the giving of the Torah, like the order of the sections, and there are some of them that say that it came after the giving of the Torah. And [the latter view] is certainly supported by the verse that states (Exodus 18:5), "And Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, and his sons and wife came to him in the wilderness, where he was encamped there at the mountain of God." Behold, it states that he came to him in his being encamped in front of Mount Sinai, where they encamped for a year. And this [phrase serves as] the explanation of "where he was encamped there." And also as it states (Exodus 18:16), "and I make known the laws and teachings of God," as they are the ones given to him at Mount Sinai. And also as here it states (Exodus 18:27), "And Moshe sent off his father-in-law, and he went his way to his land" - and this was in the second year when they traveled from Mount Sinai, as it states in Parshat Behaalotekha (Numbers 10:29), "And Moshe said to Hovav, son of Reuel the Midianite, Moshe's father-in-law, 'We are traveling.'" And there it is written (Numbers 10:30), "And he said to him, 'I will not go, but rather to my land and to my birthplace will I go,'" and that is the going written [about] here (Exodus 18:27), "and he went his way to his land." **And they** also brought a proof from that which the verse stated (Deuteronomy 1:6-7), "The Lord, our God, spoke to us at Horeb saying, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Turn and travel,'" and there it states, (Deuteronomy 1:9,15), "And I said to you, 'I am not able to carry you by myself' [...] And I took the heads of your tribes, wise men, etc.," and that is the counsel of Yitro. And there it states (Deuteronomy 1:9,15), "And we traveled from Chorev," as they traveled immediately. And, if so, a reason is required why this section is brought forward to write it here. **And nonetheless** I ask about this opinion, when the verse [here] states, "And Yitro heard all that the Lord had done for Moshe and for Israel His people, that the Lord had brought Israel out from Egypt" - and why did it not state that he heard that which He did for Moshe and for Israel at the giving of the Torah, about all of the great wonders that He did for them, as it stated (Deuteronomy 4:32), "You have but to inquire about bygone ages that came before you, ever since God created man on earth, from one end of heaven to the other, 'Has anything as grand as this ever happened, or has its like ever been known? Has any people heard the voice of God speaking out of a fire, as you have, and lived?'" **And [also] when it** states (Exodus 18:8), "And Moshe recounted to his father-in-law everything that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardships that had befallen them on the way," and Yitro said from this (Exodus 18:11), "Now I know that the Lord is greater" - why did he not tell him [about] the stand at Mount Sinai, [since] from it, he would know that the Lord is true and his Torah is true, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 4:35-6), "You have been shown that the Lord alone is God; there is none beside Him. From the heavens He let you hear His voice, etc." And maybe we can say that Yitro immediately heard in his land that God had taken Israel out of Egypt and [so] he traveled from his land and arrived to Moshe after he was encamped at Mount Sinai, after the giving of the Torah. And it does not recount that [Moshe] mentioned to him the matter of that stand, as the thing was still proximate and they were still there, and [so] it is obvious that it was told to him. **And what** is closer to me is to take the order of the Torah, that [Yitro] came before the giving of the Torah, when [the Israelites] were in Refidim, as they said in Mechilta here, "Rabbi Yehoshua said, 'He heard about the war of Amalek and came, as it is written alongside it,'" and he traveled with them from Refidim to Mount Sinai. And the matter of the verse that states, "Where he was encamped there at the mountain of God," is that Mount Sinai was on the way from Midian, close to there - as behold, Moshe went there to graze the flock of Midian (Exodus 3:1), and with Aharon, it stated (Exodus 4:27), "and he met him on the mountain of God." And behold, Yitro went out with his daughter and the boys from Midian and they came to Mount Sinai, and Moshe was in Refidim, which is a place in the Sien Wilderness. As the verse stated (Exodus 16:1), "And they traveled from Elim and the Children of Israel came to the Sien Wilderness which is between Elim and Sinai," meaning the Sien Wilderness extends until Mount Sinai, and includes Dofkah, Alush and Refidim. And even though it states (Exodus 17:1), "And they traveled [...] from the

Sien Wilderness [,,,] and they camped in Refidim," so [also] did it state (Numbers 33:12-13), "And they traveled from the Sien Wilderness and they camped in Dofkah," and "Alush" - and they are part of the Sien Wilderness itself. As the entire wilderness is called the Wilderness of Sien and the [specific] place that is in front of Mount Sinai is called the Wilderness of Sien. And similar to this is (Genesis 22:32), "and they went back to the Land of the Philistines." And behold, the explanation of the verse would [then] be, "Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, came with his sons and wife to Moshe in the wilderness where he was encamped," and he came "to the mountain of God," since he came to the mountain and he stopped there." And it is like (Exodus 3:1), "And he came to the mountain of God, to Chorev," and so [too] (Genesis 4:27), "and he met him at the mountain of God," and so [too] (Deuteronomy 1:6), "It is enough for you to be sitting at this mountain." And from the mountain, he sent [word] to him, "I am your father-in-law, Yitro, who has come to you, and Moshe went out to him." And we will [then] not need to say that "and [Yitro] said" [in this verse] is earlier. And even if Refidim would not be in the Wilderness of Sien, nonetheless it is in the wilderness - since Israel did not come to an inhabited land for the entire forty years. And it was close to Mount Sinai, as the congregation - of such a large camp as it - came from there to the mountain in one day, as was explained regarding the matter of the boulder from which they drank at Refidim, as I explained (Ramban on Exouds 17:7). And behold, the explanation that I said is correct. **And I also** saw in Mekhilta (here), "'To the wilderness where he encamped there' - behold, the verse is wondering about him, that he was [living] in the glory of the world and he [nonetheless] sought to go out to the wilderness of emptiness, where there is nothing in it." [From here we see that] their opinion is to explain, "to the wilderness where he encamped," that it is the wilderness of "the mountain of God" - as the Wilderness of Sien [extended] from Elim to Mount Sinai, and the verse recounts that he came to the edge of "the wilderness where he encamped there" - that is the wilderness of the 'mountain of God, to Chorev.' And it mentioned this for the praise of Yitro, that he left his land and came to the wilderness in which he was in, which was the mountain of God - as there was God revealed to him, as he already heard the whole matter that Israel went out of Egypt to serve 'God upon this mountain,' and he came 'in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.' And this is also correct. **And so** [too] does it appear [correct] to me that [that which] it stated here (Exodus 18:27), "And Moshe sent away his father-in-law and he went his way to his land," was in the first year, and he went to his land and returned to [Moshe afterwards] - and it is likely that he went to convert his family, and he returned to Moshe while he was still at Mount Sinai, since it is close to Midian, as I have mentioned. As behold, when the camp traveled in Iyar of the second year, when Moshe said to him, "We are traveling [...] Come with us," and Yitro answered him, "I will not go, but will return to my native land," and Moshe supplicated him greatly and said to him, "Please do not leave us, etc. and you will be to us like eyes. So if you come with us, we will extend to you the same good that the Lord grants us" (Numbers 10:29:32), he did not respond at all, and [so] it appears that [Yitro] accepted [Moshe's] words and did according to his will and did not leave them. **However** [we find that] in the days of Shaul, his children were with Amalek and they came and reconnected with Israel and [that] the children of Yonadav the son of Rachav were in Jerusalem. [So] maybe with the death of Moshe, he or his children returned to his land. And maybe the Kenites that dwelt with Amalek were from the family of Yitro, but were not his children, and [Shaul] did kindness with the whole family for [Yitro's] sake, like Yehoshua did with the family of Rachav (Joshua 6:23). **And the** opinion of our rabbis is such that he went with them: they said in Sifrei Behaalotekha 34:1 that they gave him the fat [land] of Yericho, and they would consume [produce from] it for four hundred and forty years, until the Temple was built. And Rashi himself wrote this in Parshat Behaalotekha (Rashi on Numbers 10:32). If so, [Yitro] changed his mind [about leaving]. And in Mikhilta (here) [it is written], "'Behold, I will go and convert the people of my city, so that I will bring them under the wings of the Divine Presence.' Maybe he went and did not come back? [That is why] it teaches to say, 'And the children of the Kenite, the father-in-law of Moshe, went up from the city of dates, etc.'" (Judges 1:16)."

20. שופטים א: ט"ז וּבְנֵי קִינִי חָתָן מֹשֶׁה עָלוּ מֵעִיר הַתְּמָרִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה מִדְּבַר יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּנֶגֶב עַרְד וַיֵּלְךְ וַיָּשָׁב אֶת־הָעָם:

20. Shofetim 1:16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt with the people.

21. רד"ק שופטים א: ט"ז

מעיר התמרים – תירגם יונתן מקרית יריחו לפי שהיו בה תמרים רבים נקראת כן ובא במפורש בתורה **בקעת יריחו עיר התמרים**.

וילך וישב את העם – על הראש שבבני קני אמר והלכו בני המשפחה עמו וישבו שם עם בני יהודה במדבר יהודה והכתוב לא ספר למה עלו מעיר התמרים או אם היו יושבים שם עם הכנעני ואפשר שהיו שם עם הכנעני יושבים כי יתרו לא היה עם בני ישראל כי כן כתוב וילך לו אל ארצו ופרשת ויאמר משה לחובב ופרשת וישמע יתרו בזמן אחד היה בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים וחובב הוא יתרו כמו שכתוב מבני חובב חותן משה ופרשת וישמע יתרו שלא במקומה נכתבה לחבר דבר יתרו עם דבר עמלק כי עמלק הרע לישראל בצאתם ממצרים והצר להם לפיכך שמר לו הקב"ה הדבר עד סוף כל הדורות כמו שכתוב מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור ויתרו הטיב לישראל ושמח בטובתם והטיב להם בעצתו ושמר לו הקב"ה הטובה עד סוף כל הדורות כי הנה אומר שישבו עם בני יהודה ונתנו להם מקום לשבת בארצם וישבו לדת ישראל ובימי שאול היו יושבים עם עמלק כי באהלים היו יושבים ונוסעים ממקום למקום ואמר להם שאול סורו רדו מתוך עמלקי וגו' ואתה עשית חסד עם בני ישראל וגו', הנה כי החסד היה שמור להם לעולם ובימי יהוא יונדב בן רכב היה אהוב ונכבד בין ישראל ובימי ירמיהו הנביא היו בית הרכבים בתוך בני ישראל ואמר הכתוב לא יכרת איש לבית יונדב בן רכב עומד לפני כל הימים ובית הרכבים הם מבני יתרו כמה שנאמר המה הקנים הבאים מחמת אבי בית רכב ועתה כשלכדו בני יהודה חברון היו יושבים עם הכנעני בחברון בעיר סמוך לה נקראת עיר התמרים וכשלכדו בני יהודה חברון עלו משם בשלום כי קראו להם בני יהודה לשלום בהלחמם עם הכנעני שיעלו מביניהם ולא יסופו עמם כמו שקרא להם שאול בהלחמו עם העמלקי וכן עשו ועלו משם בשלום וישבו במדבר יהודה עם בני יהודה זהו הנראה לי מדרך הפשט ומדרך הסברא ורז"ל דרשו בו כי בני ישראל נתנו לו עיר התמרים והיא יריחו לדעתם כמו שתירגם יונתן נתנוהו לבני קני ואמר כי מה שאמר משה רע"ה והיה הטוב ההוא אשר ייטיב השם עמנו והטבנו לך הוא דשנה של יריחו שהיה חמש מאות אמה על חמש מאות אמה והניחוה מלחלק אמרו מי שיבנה בחלקו בית המקדש יהיה לו ובין כך ובין כך נתנוהו לבני יתרו והיה בידם ארבע מאות וארבעים שנה עד שנבנה בית המקדש ואז בא בנימין ליטול אותה מהם ופנו אותה להם שנאמר עלו מעיר התמרים ועם ישראל נשאר יתרו כמו שאמר לו משה אל נא תעזוב אותנו ומה שאמר וילך לו אל ארצו שהלך לגייר בני משפחתו ועוד דרשו בו כי מה שאמר עלו מעיר התמרים שהניחו אותו מעצמם שהלכו ללמוד תורה במדבר יהודה עם עתניאל בן קנז הוא יעבץ כמו שכתוב בדברי הימים ומשפחות סופרים יושבי יעבץ וגו' המה הקנים הבאים מחמת אבי בית רכב

22. שמואל א ט"ו (ה) וַיָּבֹא שָׁאוּל עַד־עִיר עַמְלֵק וַיִּרְבּ בְּגָחַל: (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־הַקִּינִי לֵכֹּף פָּרוֹ וְרֵאֵוּ מִתּוֹךְ עַמְלֵקִי פָּן־אֶסְפֹּף עִמּוֹ וְאַתָּה עֲשִׂיתָה חֶסֶד עִם־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵלּוֹתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם וַיִּסַּר קִינִי מִתּוֹךְ עַמְלֵק: (ז) וַיֵּךְ שָׁאוּל אֶת־עַמְלֵק מִחֲוִילָה בּוֹאֵךְ שׁוּר אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי מִצְרָיִם: (ח) וַיִּתְּפֹשׂ אֶת־אֶגַּג מֶלֶךְ־עַמְלֵק חַי וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעָם הַחֲרִים לְפִי־חֶרֶב:

22. Samuel I 15 (5) And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. (6) And Saul said unto the Kenites: 'Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt.' So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. (7) And Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is in front of Egypt. (8) And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.