



RABBI BARUCH TAUB

RABBI EMERITUS, THE BAYT TORONTO
OU ISRAEL FACULTY

PESACH



Beyond the Letter of the Law

The first fulfillment of the mitzvah of relating the Exodus - סיפור יציאת מצרים, was performed by Moshe with his father in law, Yitro (Shmot 18:8 ויספר משה לחתנו).

Included in this memorable dialogue, Yitro actually adds a parsha to the Torah. This is quite bizarre. Yitro, a newly minted Ger, proceeds to reform Moshe's judicial system! Concerned that his son in law is working too hard, he presents a court system that will ease Moshe's role of providing law and order for the nation.

Parenthetically there is dispute between Rashi and Ibn Ezra whether

Yitro converted before or after the Giving of the Torah. Tongue in cheek we can suggest a third possibility, that Yitro in fact never converted. It is highly unusual to imagine a Jewish father in law complaining that his son in law is working too hard!

The real question is the presumptuousness of this "new man on the block" to immediately suggest major changes in the transmission of Torah.

It gets more bizarre. The Talmud (Baba Metzia 30b) insists that Yitro did not simply offer advice about how to insure that Am Yisrael will live according to the Law. He actually introduced the obligation to perform mitzvot **Beyond the Letter of the Law** – משורת הדין (המעשה אשר יעשון Shmot 18:18 ליפנים).

It is surprising enough that he insists on adjusting the procedure of Law but now he is insisting that Am Yisrael go "the extra mile" **beyond the letter of the Law!**

Perhaps "presumptuous" is not strong enough criticism. It seems to be the height ofchutzpa! Again how does this newly minted convert assume the position of challenging Moshe and the people to aspire to this elevated level of commitment?

Before we answer the question let us define the concept of Lifnim Meshurat haDin with the help of Ramban. The central mitzvah ואהבת כמורך - to love every Jew as **yourself**

In the words of Ramban is an exaggeration Firstly it is against the law, חייך קודמין - "your own life comes first". (Bava Metzia 62b). Secondly it seems to be psychologically impossible based upon the axiom "man's best friend is himself" - אדם קרוב אצל עצמו (Yevamot 25)

Here's the amazing thing, Ramban is not being critical and dismissive of כמורך **yourself** when he refers to it as an exaggeration. He is actually *defining* the proper performance level of the mitzvah. Incredulously, every Jew is challenged to perform **Beyond the Letter of the Law**.

In fact "beyond" is an imprecise translation. Lifnim means two things. "Pnim", internal, meaning that this concept is the essence, the microchip of the mitzvah. Additionally

Lifnim means “before” not “beyond”. The goal to reach this level is a prerequisite to the performance of the mitzvot.

So how in the world is Yitro the first Ger in Jewish history the one to not only introduce this concept but insists on its universal performance?!

The truth is Yitro is the only one in a position to introduce this idea precisely because he is the first Ger. **Yitro is the first Jew by choice.** His entire persona is **Beyond the Letter of the Law.** His surrender to HaShem is not about what “I have to do” but about “what I want to do”.

This entire dialogue took place on the backdrop of a “Pesach Seder” between Moshe and Yitro. This was not unintended nor serendipitous. The seder is in fact designed to be a **Beyond the Letter of the Law** moment. Take for example the central mitzvah of the seder והגדת לבייך, discussing the Exodus with our children. **Beyond the Letter of the Law** demands a conversation reaching **beyond** the words of the Haggadah. It is not a “one size fits all” presentation. The Haggadah speaks of multiple children with different needs. The open dialogue of the Seder must be infused with a sense of excitement and adventure. The ideal fulfillment should encourage curiosity, questioning, seeking and exploring. The central motif of the seder should create a desire on the part of the participants to understand that Yahadut is not about what “I have to do” but “what I want to do” more and more!

There is no better place to put Yitro’s “beyond” challenge to work than at the Seder Shel Pesach.

Chag Kasher veSameach ■



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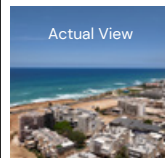
BAT YAM - FIRST LINE - ON THE BEACH



LUXURY - BOUTIQUE BUILDING
ONLY 8 APARTMENTS LEFT
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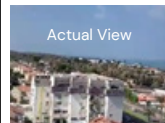
NORTH NETANYA - STARTING AT 3.21M NIS



Actual View

3 BEDROOMS 104 sqm + 12 sqm Balcony
STARTING FROM 3.21M NIS
4 BEDROOMS 125 sqm + 12 sqm Balcony
STARTING FROM 3.4M NIS
PENTHOUSE - 170sqm + 56 sqm Balcony
STARTING FROM 6.1M NIS (2 LEFT)
ALL APARTMENTS - PARKING & MACHSAN

ASHKELON, NEW PROJECT- FROM 1.77M NIS



Actual View

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4 BEDROOMS – FROM 3.16M NIS
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+ CENTRAL AC UNIT + PARKING

* FURNISHED MODEL UNIT- 3 BEDROOMS- SUKKAH PORCH- 2.5M NIS

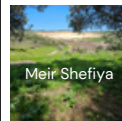
NAHARIYA STARTING AT 1.69M NIS



STARTING AT:
3 BEDROOMS 1.69M NIS (\$458K) 1.9M NIS (\$515K)

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