



## YITRO

LOVE ME, LOVE ME NOT?

*Exploring G-d's love and our limitless potential*

# PARSHA OVERVIEW

## *Yitro*

Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, hears of the great miracles that G-d performed for the people of Israel and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses's wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The Children of Israel camp opposite Mount Sinai, where they are told that G-d has chosen them to be His

"kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall do."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the Exodus, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. G-d descends on the mountain amid thunder, lightning, billows of smoke, and the blast of the shofar and summons Moses to ascend.

G-d proclaims the Ten Commandments,

commanding the people of Israel to believe in G-d, not to worship idols or take G-d's name in vain, to keep the Shabbat, to honor their parents, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, and not to bear false witness or covet another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the Revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the Torah from G-d and convey it to them.

## RASHI RULE

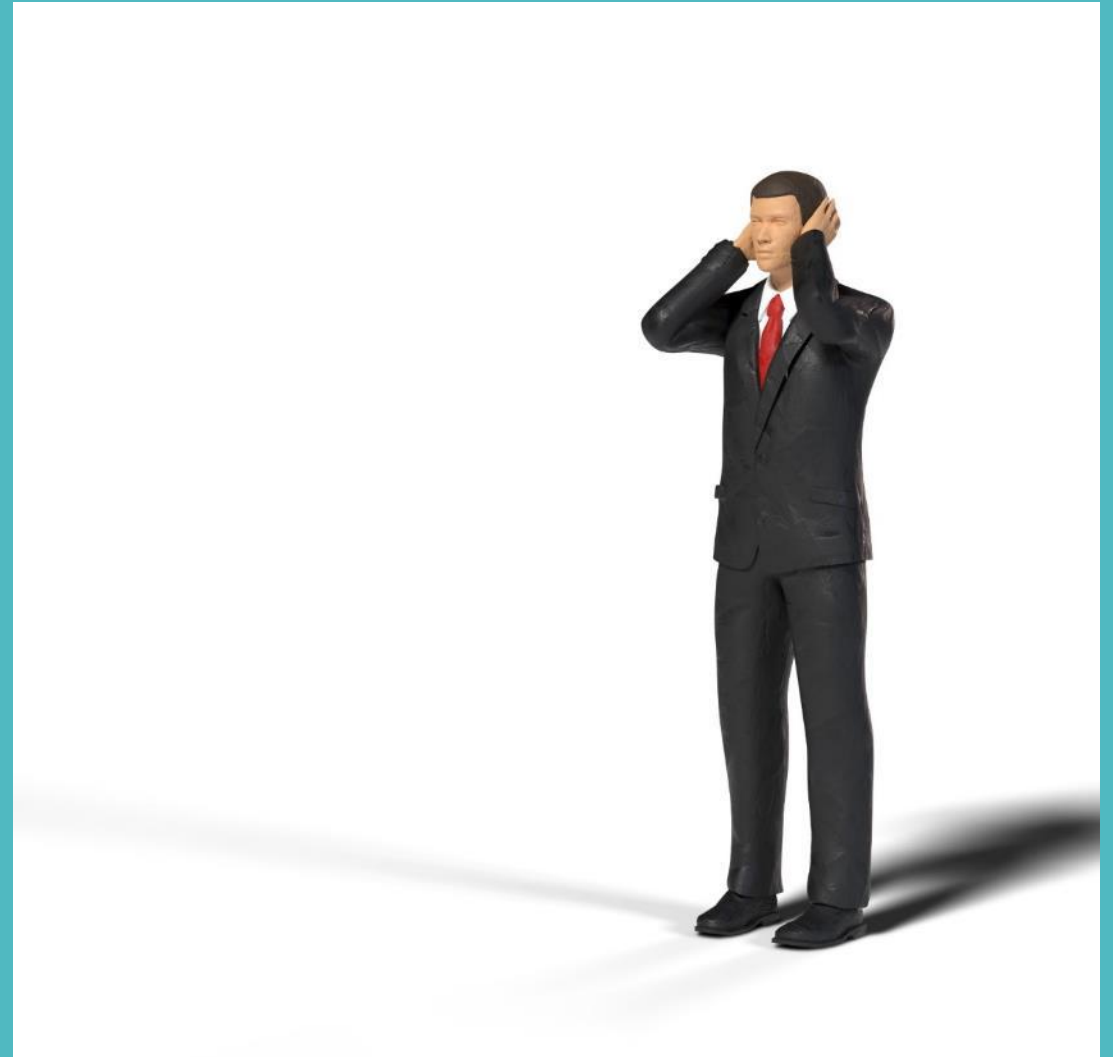
Rashi only comments on words that raise some difficulty.



The relationship  
between G-d and  
the Jewish people  
is often compared  
to a marriage.

## QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Does G-d listen to or care about someone who isn't interested in Him?



# TEXT 1

*Exodus 20:1-2*

א. וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאַמֹּר.

ב. אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים. לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פָּנָי.

1. G-d spoke all these words, as follows:
2. "I am the L-rd, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall not have any other gods in My presence."

## TEXT 2

*Rashi, Exodus 20:2*

### THE RASHI

"אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם". כִּדְאִי  
הִיא הַהוֹצָאָה שְׁתִּהְיוּ מְשֻׁעָבָדִים לִי.

"Who took you out of the land of Egypt."  
The act of taking you out is sufficient to  
make you subservient to Me.

WHAT'S BOTHERING RASHI?

The verse seems very straightforward.  
Why is Rashi commenting?



# TEXT 3

*Exodus 3:12*

בְּהוֹצִיאֲךָ אֶת הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן  
אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה.

When you take the people out of Egypt,  
you will worship G-d on this mountain.

## TWO PARTS, SAME STORY

1. The Jewish people  
will be redeemed  
from Egypt.



2. They will become  
G-d's people.



# TEXT 4

*Exodus 6:6-7*

ו. לָכֵן אֶמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי  
ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם  
סְבִלֹת מִצְרִיִּים וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם  
מֵעֲבָדָתָם וְגָאֵלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזֵרוּעַ  
נְטוּיָהּ וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים.

ז. וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם  
וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וִידַעְתֶּם  
כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַמּוֹצִיא  
אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם סְבִלֹת מִצְרִיִּים.

6. Therefore, say to the Children of Israel, "I am the L-rd, and I will take you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their labor, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

7. "And I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be a G-d to you, and you will know that I am the L-rd, your G-d, Who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

## RASHI'S QUESTION

Why is the fact that G-d redeemed us from Egypt so important that it needs to be reemphasized before the Giving of the Torah?

## RASHI'S FIRST EXPLANATION

G-d as our redeemer from Egypt isn't just a reminder of past events.

The fact that G-d is our redeemer defines the nature of our relationship with G-d going forward.

# TEXT 5

*Nachmanides,  
Exodus 20:2*

"אנכי ה' אלקיך". הדבור הזה מצות עשה, אמר אנכי ה', יורה ויצוה אותם שידעו ויאמינו כי יש ה', והוא אלקים להם, כלומר הווה, קדמון, מאתו היה הכל בחפץ ויכולת, והוא אלקים להם, שחייבים לעבוד אותו.

"I am the L-rd, your G-d." This statement constitutes a positive commandment. "I am the L-rd" was an instruction to know and believe that there is a G-d, and that He is their master. It means that He is eternal, He is the original cause who willed everything into being, and He is their G-d that they are obligated to serve.

## TEXT 6

*Rashi, Leviticus 18:2*

אֲנִי הוּא שֶׁאֶמַרְתִּי בְּסִינַי אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
וְקַבַּלְתֶּם עָלֵיכֶם מַלְכוּתִי, מֵעַתָּה קַבְּלוּ גִזְרוֹתַי.

I am the One who said at Sinai, "I am the L-rd, your G-d." You accepted My kingship on yourselves then; you must therefore now accept My decrees.

“אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ”

“I am the L-rd, your G-d”



Establishes belief in G-d and our  
commitment to follow His rules.

“אֱשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ

מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם”

“Who took you out of  
the land of Egypt”



G-d bestowed us with a new identity  
and a life of constant meaning.





No matter what we're  
busy with, we are  
always G-d's servants.

# TEXT 7

*Rashi, Exodus 20:2*

## THE RASHI, CONTINUED

דָּבָר אַחֵר:

לְפִי שְׁנֵגְלָה בַּיָּם כְּגִבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה  
וְנִגְלָה כְּאִן כְּזָקֵן מְלֵא רַחֲמִים . . .  
הוֹאִיל וְאֲנִי מְשַׁתְּנֶה בְּמַרְאוֹת, אֵל  
תֹּאמְרוּ שְׁתֵּי רְשׁוּיּוֹת הֵן, אֲנֹכִי הוּא  
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַל הַיָּם.

דָּבָר אַחֵר:

לְפִי שָׁהִיו שׁוֹמְעִין קוֹלוֹת הֶרְבֵּה,  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֶת הַקּוֹלֶת – קוֹלוֹת בָּאֵין  
מֵאַרְבַּע רוֹחוֹת וּמִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִן  
הָאָרֶץ – אֵל תֹּאמְרוּ רְשׁוּיּוֹת  
הֶרְבֵּה הֵן.

An alternative explanation:

G-d expressed Himself at the Red Sea like a battle warrior. But here, G-d presented like an elderly person, full of compassion. . . . Since G-d changed appearances, He clarifies, “I am the L-rd, your G-d,” the same one “Who took you out of the land of Egypt” and led you through the sea. Don’t think that there are two authorities.

An alternative explanation:

At the Giving of the Torah, the people heard many sounds, as the verse states, “The people saw the sounds” (Exodus 20:14), using the plural. They heard sounds coming from all four directions, as well as from the heavens and the Earth, so G-d clarified that there are not multiple authorities.

## RASHI'S SECOND EXPLANATION

G-d expressed Himself with might and power during the Exodus and with warmth and kindness at Mount Sinai. To eliminate any concerns of polytheism, G-d stated, "I'm the One Who took you out of Egypt; it's Me, the One and only G-d."

## RASHI'S THIRD EXPLANATION

With so many sounds coming from all different angles, some of the people might have questioned if more than one god was speaking. This is why G-d emphasizes the point that He is the same One G-d Who liberated us from Egypt and was giving us the Torah.

# TEXT 8

*Rashi, Exodus 20:2*

THE RASHI,

CONTINUED

וְלָמָּה אָמַר לְשׁוֹן יָחִיד אֱלֹהִים? לְתֵן פְּתִיחוֹן פֶּה לְמֹשֶׁה לְלַמֵּד סִגְוֹרִיא  
בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָעֵגֶל.

וְזֶה נִשְׁאַמַּר "לָמָּה ה' יִחְרָה אַפָּי בְּעַמִּי" – לֹא לָהֶם צוּיָת "לֹא יִהְיֶה לָכֶם  
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים", אֲלֹא לִי לְבַדִּי.

Why did G-d use the singular "you" when He stated "I am the L-rd, your G-d?"  
By wording Himself in this way, G-d gave Moses an opening to present a  
defense for the Jewish people after they committed the sin of the Golden Calf.

This is the meaning of Moses's words to G-d [after the Golden Calf], "Why, G-d,  
should You be angry at Your nation?" Meaning, "You didn't tell them 'You shall  
not have any other gods in My presence' in the plural; You only addressed this  
to me, in the singular."

לך: THE SINGULAR YOU

”אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ...  
לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים”

“I am the L-rd, **your** G-d. . . .  
**You** shall not have any other gods”

# TEXT 9

*Rabbi David Pardo,  
Maskil LeDavid,  
Exodus 20:2*

ומאי דמסיים רש"י "ולמה אמר  
בלשון יחיד", הכי פירושו:  
הואיל וכל עצמו במה שכתוב  
"אנכי ה' אלקיך וכו'" לא אתא  
אלא לאפוקי שלא יאמרו רשויות  
הרבה, אם כן למה זה אמר ה'  
אלקיך בל' יחיד, דאפשר לטעות  
הואיל והיו קולות הרבה שיסברו  
שאלוקה א' מדבר עם איש א'  
ואלוקה אחר עם איש אחר חלילה.  
אם כן הוה עדיף טפי שיאמר  
בלשון רבים.  
ומשני דהוכרח לומר כן ליתן  
פתחון פה וכו'.

The reason why Rashi concluded with his explanation of the use of the singular "you" is as follows:

The entire statement of "I am the L-rd, your G-d," etc., came to counter the thought that there may be multiple authorities. Why, then, did the verse use the singular "you"? This could lead to the mistaken notion that the multiple voices the people were hearing were indeed multiple authorities, and each of them was addressing a different person, hence the singular "you." It would have been better for the Torah to use the plural "you" here.

To answer this question, Rashi explains that the singular "you" was designed to give Moses an opening to defend the Jewish people.

## RASHI'S CONCLUSION

G-d used the singular “you” to provide a defense for the Jewish people, who would later sin with the Golden Calf.

## THE PARADOX

### RASHI BEGINS . . .

G-d wants us to devote our lives to meaning, purpose, and connection with Him.

### RASHI CONCLUDES . . .

As imperfect people, we make mistakes, even going as far as betraying G-d.

Even when we mess up terribly, G-d still loves us.

G-d has an **unconditional love** for every single one of us.



## TEXT 10

*Rabbi Yisrael Baal  
Shem Tov, Keter  
Shem Tov, Hosafot  
167*

מאמר הבעל שם טוב: אַז יעדער איד איז טייער ביי  
דעם אויבערשטן ווי א בן יחיד וואס איז געבארן  
געווארן ביי עלטערן לעת זקנותם, און נאך טייערער.

The Baal Shem Tov said, "G-d loves every Jew like parents love their only child born to them in their old age—and even more."



The same G-d that wants us to recognize and dedicate ourselves to His Oneness provides a defense in case we betray the relationship.

# TEXT 11

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Sichot 26, p. 130*

פון דעם סיום אין פירוש רש"י,  
"ולמה אמר לשון יחיד . . . ללמד  
סניגוריא במעשה העגל", איז דא א  
הוראה נפלאה, אויף וויפל יעדער איד  
איז חביב ביים אויבערשטן:

דא רעדט זיך וועגן אידן ביי וועלכע  
עס האט געפעלט ניט בלויז דער  
"תהיו משועבדים לי", נאר זיי האבן  
געהאלטן ביי דעם קצה ההפכי לגמרי  
פון "אנכי ה' אלקיך". און צוליב  
אזעלכע אידן זאגט דער  
אויבערשטער בא מתן תורה ולכל  
הדורות "לשון יחיד", כדי משה זאל  
האבן אויף די אידן א "סניגוריא"!

Rashi's conclusion, "Why did G-d use the singular 'you' . . . [to give] Moses an opening to present a defense for the Jewish people after they committed the sin of the Golden Calf," contains a powerful lesson about how deeply G-d loves every Jew.

We are talking about Jews who weren't just lacking in their absolute commitment to Divine service. These were people who had gone all the way to idolatry, the opposite of "I am the L-rd, your G-d." And yet, for such people—and for the Jews of subsequent generations—G-d used the singular "you" at Mount Sinai to enable Moses to present a defense for them.

Unlike in a reciprocal human relationship, G-d's deep love for us remains unchanged, no matter what we do or think.



# TEXT 12

Rabbi Shneur  
Zalman of Liadi,  
Tanya, ch. 32

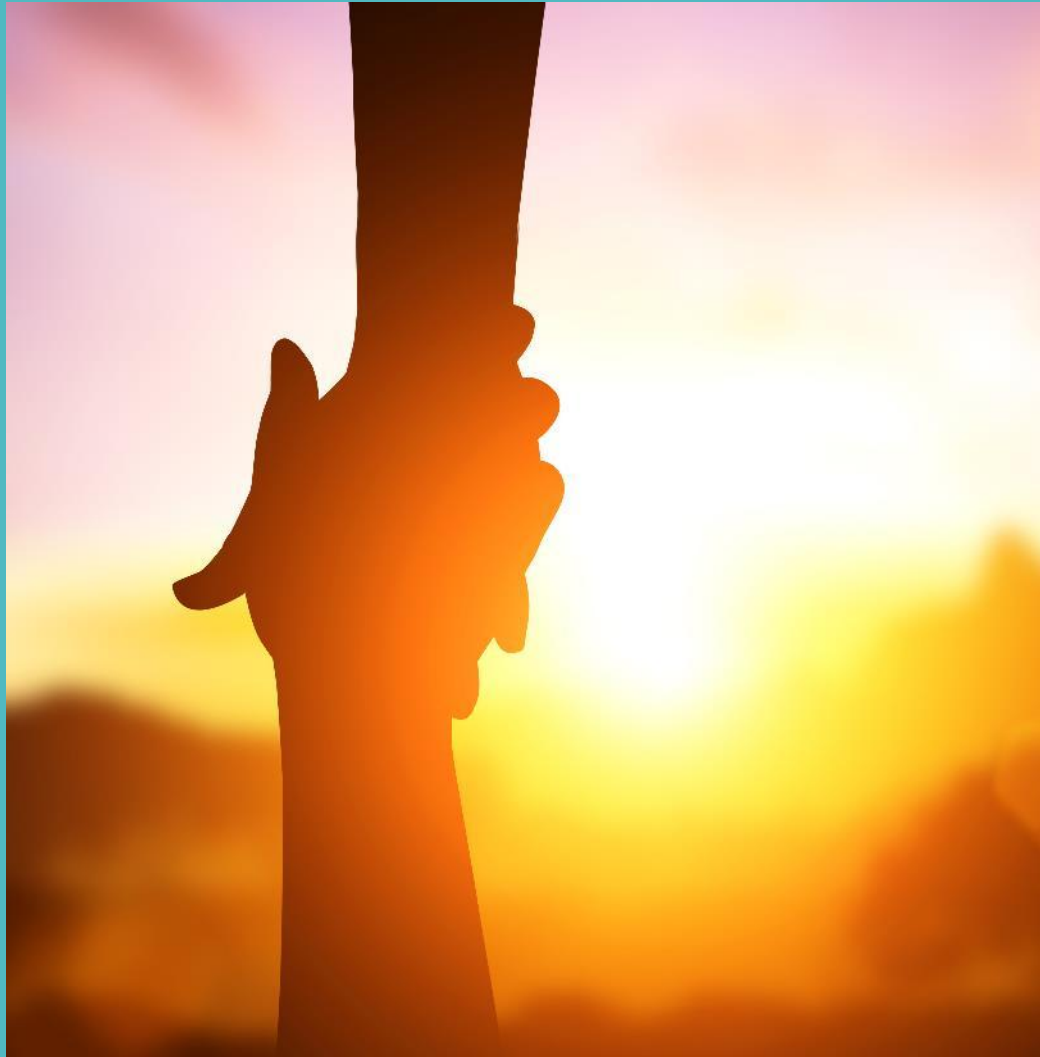
שאף הרחוקים מתורת ה' ועבודתו, ולכן נקראים בשם בריות בעלמא,  
צריך למשכן בחבלי עבותות אהבה.

וכולי האי ואולי יוכל לקרבן לתורה ועבודת ה', והן לא, לא הפסיד שכר  
מצות אהבת ריעים.

We must draw close with strong bonds of love even people who are distant from G-d's Torah and Divine service. Even though such people are classified simply as "creatures"—owing to the fact that their status as G-d's creations is their sole virtue—they, too, must be brought closer with love.

Perhaps we will eventually be successful in drawing them closer to the Torah and Divine service. But even if we fail, we have still earned the merit of the *mitzvah* of brotherly love.





Love isn't permissive—**it's motivating.**

When someone realizes that G-d's love is unwavering, it inspires them to draw closer to Him, to reciprocate that love.

## KEY POINTS

1. The Ten Commandments open with the commandment to believe in G-d Who took us out of Egypt.
2. The Jewish people's enslavement in Egypt served as a prelude to receiving the Torah.
3. Moreover, the entire purpose of the liberation from Egypt was to become His servants, a new identity.
4. G-d introduced Himself as the One "Who took us out of Egypt" to dispel any misconceptions of polytheism.

## KEY POINTS

5. Yes, G-d used the singular “you” to provide defense for the Jewish people who would later sin with the Golden Calf.
6. G-d did this because He loves His children—even when they fail.
7. When we internalize this message of unconditional love, it empowers us to reciprocate and align ourselves with His will.



