Joining the Jewish People: Yitro as the Golden Standard

Source 1a): Bereishit Ch. 44

Yehuda's plea to Yosef, before Yosef reveals himself:

וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־עֲבָדֶיךָ הוֹרִדֵהוּ אֵלָי
וְאָשִׂימָה עֵינַי עָלָיו׃
וַנֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֲדֹנִי לֹא־יוּכַל הַנַּעַר לַעֲזֹב
אֶת־אָבִיו וְעָזַב אֶת־אָבִיו וָמֵת׃

Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set eyes on him.'
We said to my lord, the lad cannot leave his father, for if he leaves his father, he shall die (*va-met)*

Questions:

- ***Who are the two subjects in these pesukim?***
- ***Who do you think is going to potentially "die" when the 'lad' leaves his father? What are the possibilities?***
- ***Which do you think is a more convincing interpretation?***

1b) Rashi

(כב) ועזב את אביו ומת - אם יעזוב את אביו דואגים אנו שמא ימות בדרך, שהרי אמו מתה בדרך׃

'If he leaves his father, he shall die' – if he leaves his father, we are concerned that he might die on the way, for his mother died on the way…

1c) Rashbam

(כב) ועזב את אביו ומת - אביו ימות:

If he leaves his father, he will die: His father will die

1d) Ramban

אבל פירוש לא יוכל הנער לעזוב את אביו, מפני נערותו והיותו ילד שעשועים בחיק אביו אשר אהבו, ואם יעזבנו ויבא בדרך ימות הנער:

'The lad cannot leave his father' – because of his youth, and the fact that he is a favored child in the bosom of his father, who loves him. If he leaves him, and comes on the way, the boy will die."

> ❖ ***Q: Do Rashi and Ramban fully agree on the interpretation of the verse If they differ, how do their explanations differ?***

Source 2: Devarim 24:7

כִּי־יִמָּצֵא אִישׁ גֹּנֵב נֶפֶשׁ מֵאֶחָיו מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִתְעַמֶּר־בּוֹ וּמְכָרוֹ **וּמֵת הַגַּנָּב הַהוּא** וּבִעַרְתָּ הָרָע מִקִּרְבֶּךָ׃

If a man is found to have kidnapped a fellow Israelite, enslaving him or selling him, **that kidnapper shall die**; thus you will sweep out evil from your midst.

- ❖ What does this verse show us about the style with which the Torah was written when it comes to the death of someone?
- ❖ What could have been the meaning of the verse had the Torah written:

כִּי־יִמָּצֵא אִישׁ גֹּנֵב נֶפֶשׁ מֵאֶחָיו מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִתְעַמֶּר־בּוֹ וּמְכָרוֹ **וּמֵת** וּבִעַרְתָּ הָרָע מִקִּרְבֶּךָ׃

> ***Q: Do we have any greater clarity about what Yehuda means from the continuation of Yehuda's plea?***

Source 3: Bereishit Ch. 44 (cont'd)

Your servant my father said to us, 'As you know, my wife bore me two sons.	וַיֹּאמֶר עַבְדְּךָ אָבִי אֵלֵינוּ אַתֶּם יְדַעְתֶּם כִּי שְׁנַיִם יָלְדָה־לִּי אִשְׁתִּי

Source 4: Dr. Bracha Elitzur:

בדוגמה שלפנינו, מיוחס המבע הדו משמעי לדובר שמשימתו לשכנע את השליט הנכרי לשחרר את אחיו הצעיר. המבע הדו משמעי המשולב בנאום, הוא חלק ממערכת רחבה של רטוריקות שכנוע המשולבות בו, **ונראה כי תפקידו הוא להוסיף מימד רגשי חזק יותר מאשר אהבה ודאגה טבעית של אב לבן. האפשרות שהמבע מתאר גם את תלות הבן באב מצביעה על קשר יחודי של עבותות אהבה ותלות של חיים**

Source 5: Bereishit 46:29
The reunion of Yaakov and Yosef in Egypt

וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ וַיַּעַל לִקְרַאת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו גֹּשְׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל־
צַוָּארָיו וַיֵּבְךְּ עַל־צַוָּארָיו עוֹד׃

Yosef **readied** his chariot, and **went up** to meet Yisrael, his father, in Goshen; and **he presented himself** to him **and he fell** upon his neck, **and wept** on his neck for a good while

Q: What would you say is the fundamental difference between the verbs that appear in red vs. those that appear in blue?

Source 6a: Bereishit 42:24

וַיַּעַן רְאוּבֵן אֹתָם לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹא אָמַרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם | לֵאמֹר אַל־תֶּחֱטְאוּ בַיֶּלֶד וְלֹא
שְׁמַעְתֶּם וְגַם־דָּמוֹ הִנֵּה נִדְרָשׁ׃

Then Reuben spoke up and said to them, “Did I not tell you, ‘Do no wrong to the boy’? But you paid no heed. Now comes the reckoning for his blood.”

וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שֹׁמֵעַ יוֹסֵף כִּי הַמֵּלִיץ בֵּינֹתָם׃

They did not know that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between him and them.

וַיִּסֹּב מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וַיֵּבְךְּ וַיָּשָׁב אֲלֵהֶם וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם וַיִּקַּח מֵאִתָּם אֶת־שִׁמְעוֹן
וַיֶּאֱסֹר אֹתוֹ לְעֵינֵיהֶם׃

He turned away from them and wept. But he came back to them and spoke to them; and he took Simeon from among them and had him bound before their eyes.

Source 6b): Bereishit 43:30-31

וַיְמַהֵר יוֹסֵף כִּי־נִכְמְרוּ רַחֲמָיו אֶל־אָחִיו וַיְבַקֵּשׁ לִבְכּוֹת וַיָּבֹא הַחַדְרָה וַיֵּבְךְּ שָׁמָּה׃

With that, Joseph hurried out, for he was overcome with feeling toward his brother and was on the verge of tears; he went into a room and wept there.

וַיִּרְחַץ פָּנָיו וַיֵּצֵא וַיִּתְאַפַּק וַיֹּאמֶר שִׂימוּ לָחֶם׃

Then he washed his face, reappeared, and—now in control of himself—gave the order, "Serve the meal."

Source 6c) Bereishit 45:1-2

וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵעָלָי וְלֹא־עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוַדַּע יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו׃

Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone withdraw from me!" So there was no one else about when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־קֹלוֹ בַּבֶּכִי וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה׃

His sobs were so loud that the Egyptians could hear, and so the news reached Pharaoh's palace.

Source 6d) Bereishit 45:14-15

וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו׃

With that he embraced *Lit. "fell on."* his brother Benjamin around the neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

וַיְנַשֵּׁק לְכָל־אֶחָיו וַיֵּבְךְּ עֲלֵהֶם וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן דִּבְּרוּ אֶחָיו אִתּוֹ׃

He kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; only then were his brothers able to talk to him.

Source 6e) Bereishit 33:4

וַיָּרָץ עֵשָׂו לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיְחַבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוָּארָו וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ׃

Esau ran to greet him. He embraced him and, falling on his neck, he kissed him; and they wept.

In reference to the reunion between Yosef and Yaakov, Ibn Ezra writes: "It would not be respectful for Yosef to fall upon Yaakov's neck; rather, he would prostrate himself before him, or kiss his hands."

Source 7: Commentary of Ramban on the Yaakov/Yosef reunion:

ודבר ידוע הוא מי דמעתו מצויה, אם האב הזקן המוצא את בנו חי לאחר היאוש והאבל, או הבן הבכור המולך.

Everyone knows who would be more liable to weep – an elderly father who discovers his son alive, after despairing and mourning him, or his first-born son, who is now a ruler

Source 8: Rashi

ויבך על צואריו עוד - ...**כאן הרבה והוסיף בבכי יותר על הרגיל אבל יעקב לא נפל על צוארי יוסף ולא נשקו, ואמרו רבותינו שהיה קורא את שמע:**

Thought Questions:

What does the ambiguity of who is doing the crying convey?
What was Yaakov thinking during those years?
What was Yosef thinking during those years?

Prior to Hashem revealing to Avraham that He was going to destroy the city of Sodom: **Source 9: Bereishit 18:17-19**

Now the LORD had said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? **For I know him (*ki yeda'tiv*), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they will observe the way of God, to perform righteousness and justice, in order that God might bring upon Avraham that which He has spoken concerning him**

וַיהוָה אָמָר הַמְכַסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה׃

וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוֹ יִהְיֶה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם וְנִבְרְכוּ־בוֹ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ׃

כִּי יְדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יְצַוֶּה אֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ ה׳ לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה׳ עַל־אַבְרָהָם אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר עָלָיו׃

Throughout Chumash and Nach, the term לדעת implies intimacy between people: For example,

Source 10: Bereishit 4:1

וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה׃

Now the man his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gained a male child with the help of the LORD."

Source 11a): Yeshyahu/Isaiah 41:8

וְאַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתִּיךָ **זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם אֹהֲבִי**׃

But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen,
Seed of Abraham who loved me…

11b) Rashi:

זרע אברהם אוהבי - **שלא הכירני מתוך תוכחה ולימוד אבותיו אלא מתוך אהבה:**

11c) Radak:

(ח) ואתה ישראל עבדי - אינך כגויי הארצות כי עבדי אתם ואני בחרתיך להיות לי עבד, <u>ולמה שאתה זרע אברהם אוהבי שאהבני ודבק בי ויצא מתוך עובדי פסילים ואלילים:</u>

Source 12a): Bereishit Ch. 15

ב וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם, אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה מַה-תִּתֶּן-לִי, וְאָנֹכִי, הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי; וּבֶן-מֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי, הוּא דַּמֶּשֶׂק אֱלִיעֶזֶר.	**2** And Abram said: 'O Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go hence childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'
ג וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם--הֵן לִי, לֹא נָתַתָּה זָרַע; וְהִנֵּה בֶן-בֵּיתִי, יוֹרֵשׁ אֹתִי.	**3** And Abram said: 'Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is to be mine heir.'
ד וְהִנֵּה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר, לֹא יִירָשְׁךָ זֶה: כִּי-אִם אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֵּעֶיךָ, הוּא יִירָשֶׁךָ.	**4** And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying: 'This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.'
ה וַיּוֹצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה, וַיֹּאמֶר הַבֵּט-נָא הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים--אִם-תּוּכַל, לִסְפֹּר אֹתָם; וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ, כֹּה יִהְיֶה זַרְעֶךָ.	**5** And He brought him forth abroad, and said: 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them'; and He said unto him: 'So shall thy seed be.'
ו וְהֶאֱמִן, בַּיהוָה; וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ, צְדָקָה.	**6 And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.**

12b) Rashi

והאמין בה׳: לא שאל לו אות על זאת, אבל על ירושת הארץ שאל לו אות ואמר לו במה אדע:

And he believed in the Lord: He did not request of Him a sign regarding this, but regarding the inheritance of the land, he did request of Him a sign, and he said to Him, "How will I know?" [from Ned. 32a]

ויחשבה לו צדקה - הקדוש ברוך הוא חשבה לאברם לזכות ולצדקה על האמונה שהאמין בו. דבר אחר במה אדע, לא שאל לו אות אלא אמר לפניו הודיעני באיזה זכות יתקיימו בה, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא בזכות הקרבנות:

and He accounted it to him as righteousness: The Holy One, blessed be He, accounted it to Abram as a merit and as righteousness for the faith that he believed in Him (Targum Jonathan). Another explanation for: "How will I know?" He did not ask Him for a sign, but he said before Him, "Let me know with what merit will they [my descendants] remain therein [in the Land]?" The Holy One, blessed be He, replied, "With the merit of the sacrifices.".

Compare with Ramban:

12c) Ramban

והנכון בעיני כי יאמר שהאמין בה׳ וחשב כי בצדקו של הקדוש ברוך הוא יתן לו זרע על כל פנים, לא בצדקת אברם ובשכרו, אף על פי שאמר לו "שכרך הרבה מאד". ומעתה לא ייראה פן יגרום החטא. ואף על פי שבנבואה הראשונה חשב שתהיה על תנאי כפי שכר מעשיו, עתה כיון שהבטיחו שלא ייראה מן החטא ויתן לו זרע, האמין כי נכון הדבר מעם האלהים, אמת לא ישוב ממנה, כי צדקת ה׳ היא ואין לה הפסק, כענין שכתוב (ישעיה מה כג) בי נשבעתי (נאם ה׳) יצא מפי צדקה דבר ולא ישוב

It seems to me that this means that he believed in God and believed that, in His righteousness, He would grant him progeny regardless, not only as a result of Avraham's righteousness and as a reward for it, even though He had told him, 'Your reward is very great.' From this point onwards he would not fear lest some sin cause the promise not to be fulfilled

Dr. Elitzur: In this example, <u>the ambiguity serves to glorify Avraham.</u> If God does not take Avraham's faith in the promise of progeny for granted, expecting him to despair of the promise ever being fulfilled (RASHI) then the possibility of Avraham not only having faith in God's promise but also believing that God's treatment of him goes beyond what he deserves (RAMBAN) depicts Avraham as expecting no special Divine treatment despite the tests he has endured and the promises made to him. Every gesture of salvation, or promise for the future, is regarded by him as a Divine favor.

Source 13a): Shemot 18:7

וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה לִקְרַאת חֹתְנוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַיִּשַּׁק־לוֹ וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ־לְרֵעֵהוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֹהֱלָה׃

Moshe 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

The verb "he prostrated himself" appears in many biblical narratives describing encounters between people, but it is usually followed by a clear indication of the subject's identity. Here are two examples:

13b) Bereishit Ch. 47:31

לא וַיֹּאמֶר, הִשָּׁבְעָה לִי— וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ; וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה. {פ}

31 And he said: 'Swear unto me.' And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed down upon the bed's head. {**P**}

(לא) וַיֹּאמֶר הִשָּׁבְעָה לִי וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה׃

13c) Shmuel Aleph 15: 31

לא וַיָּשָׁב שְׁמוּאֵל, אַחֲרֵי שָׁאוּל; וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ שָׁאוּל, לַיהוָה. {ס}

31 So Samuel returned after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD. {**S**}

Source 14:
Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishma'el, Masekhta de-Amalek

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַיִּשַּׁק לוֹ. אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ מִי הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה לְמִי, אוֹ מִי נָשַׁק לְמִי. כְּשֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר: שמות יח,ז וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ לְשָׁלוֹם מִי קָרוּי אִישׁ? הֲלֹא מֹשֶׁה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר במדבר יב,ג וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד. הֱוֵי אוֹמֵר, לֹא הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה וְלֹא נָשַׁק אֶלָּא מֹשֶׁה לְחָמִיו. מִכָּן אָמְרוּ, שֶׁיְּהֵא הָאָדָם מוּכָן לִכְבוֹד חָמִיו.

'He prostrated himself and he kissed him' – it is not clear who prostrated himself to who, or who kissed who. But when the text says, 'They asked one another (*ish le-re'ehu*) concerning their welfare' – who is called *'ish'*? This must be Moshe, as the Torah testifies (*Bamidbar* 12:3), 'The man (*ha-ish*) Moshe was exceedingly humble.' Hence, we must conclude that it was Moshe who prostrated himself and kissed his father-in-law. From here our sages said that a man must be prepared to honor his father-in-law.

What does this interpretation say about Moshe? But of course the Mekhilta was considering Yitro, too, if it were not for the pasuk וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד…

Review "The Many Faces of Yitro…." : Yitro's change of names throughout Ch. 18 of Sefer Shemot

The dual meaning indicates a mutual covenant between the two men, representing a microcosmic preview of the pledge of friendship that would arise between Israel and the family of the Keini over the course of the generations. **Source 15: Shoftim Ch. 1**

טז וּבְנֵי קֵינִי חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה עָלוּ מֵעִיר הַתְּמָרִים, אֶת-בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה, מִדְבַּר יְהוּדָה, אֲשֶׁר בְּנֶגֶב עֲרָד; וַיֵּלֶךְ, וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶת-הָעָם.

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.

Source 16: Shoftim 5:24

כד תְּבֹרַךְ, מִנָּשִׁים--יָעֵל, אֵשֶׁת
חֶבֶר {ר} הַקֵּינִי: {ס} מִנָּשִׁים בָּאֹהֶל,
תְּבֹרָךְ. {ס}

24 Blessed above women shall Jael be, the wife of Heber the Kenite, above women in the tent shall she be blessed.

Source 17: Shmuel Aleph Ch. 15

ה וַיָּבֹא שָׁאוּל, עַד-עִיר
עֲמָלֵק; וַיָּרֶב, בַּנָּחַל.

5 And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

ו וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל-הַקֵּינִי
לְכוּ סֵרוּ רְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ עֲמָלֵקִי,
פֶּן-אֹסִפְךָ עִמּוֹ, וְאַתָּה
עָשִׂיתָה חֶסֶד עִם-כָּל-בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בַּעֲלוֹתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם;
וַיָּסַר קֵינִי, מִתּוֹךְ עֲמָלֵק.

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.

Source 18a): Shemot Ch. 18, Parshat Yitro

א וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן, חֹתֵן
מֹשֶׁה, אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים
לְמֹשֶׁה, וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ: כִּי-
הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל,
מִמִּצְרָיִם.

1 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel His people, how that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

18b) Rashi

Now…Jethro…heard: What news did he hear that [made such an impression that] he came? **The splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek**. — [from Zev. 116a, and Mechilta, combining the views of Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer]

Q: What seems to be the basis of Yitro joining the Jewish people? Why does he have a parsha named after him?

Source 19: Shemot Ch. 18

יא עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי, כִּי-גָדוֹל יְהוָה מִכָּל-הָאֱלֹהִים: כִּי בַּדָּבָר, אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם.

11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods; yea, for that they dealt proudly against them.'

Source 20: Shemot Ch. 2

טז וּלְכֹהֵן מִדְיָן, שֶׁבַע בָּנוֹת; וַתָּבֹאנָה וַתִּדְלֶנָה, וַתְּמַלֶּאנָה אֶת-הָרְהָטִים, לְהַשְׁקוֹת, צֹאן אֲבִיהֶן.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

יז וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרֹעִים, וַיְגָרְשׁוּם; וַיָּקָם מֹשֶׁה וַיּוֹשִׁעָן, וַיַּשְׁקְ אֶת-צֹאנָם.

17 And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

יח וַתָּבֹאנָה, אֶל-רְעוּאֵל אֲבִיהֶן; וַיֹּאמֶר, מַדּוּעַ מִהַרְתֶּן בֹּא הַיּוֹם.

18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said: 'How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?'

יט וַתֹּאמַרְנָה--אִישׁ מִצְרִי, הִצִּילָנוּ מִיַּד הָרֹעִים; וְגַם-דָּלֹה דָלָה לָנוּ, וַיַּשְׁקְ אֶת-הַצֹּאן.

19 And they said: 'An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and moreover he drew water for us, and watered the flock.'

כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-בְּנֹתָיו, וְאַיּוֹ; לָמָּה זֶּה עֲזַבְתֶּן אֶת-הָאִישׁ, קִרְאֶן לוֹ וְיֹאכַל לָחֶם.

20 And he said unto his daughters: 'And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.'

כא וַיּוֹאֶל מֹשֶׁה, לָשֶׁבֶת אֶת-הָאִישׁ; וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-צִפֹּרָה בִּתּוֹ, לְמֹשֶׁה.

21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.

Dr. Elitzur: The attitude towards foreign and weaker elements in society represents the touchstone for the fundamental morality of the individual and of society. A person or a nation is chosen if, even when it is in a position of strength and placed alongside someone in a weaker position, the advantage is not exploited, but rather used to help the needy. Moshe flees his native Egypt and his royal adopted home for Midian, where he is at the mercy of the local inhabitants. He encounters Yitro's daughters, witnesses their troubles at the hands of the local shepherds, and assists them: "The shepherds came and banished them; and Moshe arose and saved them, **and he watered their flock**" (*Shemot* 2:7). However, having grown up in a social environment in which moral rules do not apply to female inhabitants, either, they see no need to repay the man in any way for helping them.

Yitro's reaction to them not having invited Moshe?

Source 21a) : Devarim Ch. 23

ד לֹא-יָבֹא עַמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי,
בִּקְהַל יְהוָה: גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי,
לֹא-יָבֹא לָהֶם בִּקְהַל יְהוָה עַד-
עוֹלָם.

4 An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation shall none of them enter into the assembly of the LORD for ever;

ה עַל-דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-קִדְּמוּ
אֶתְכֶם, בַּלֶּחֶם וּבַמַּיִם, בַּדֶּרֶךְ,
בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם; וַאֲשֶׁר
שָׂכַר עָלֶיךָ אֶת-בִּלְעָם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר,
מִפְּתוֹר אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם--לְקַלְלֶךָּ.

5 because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse thee.

21b) Ramban

It seems to me that the Torah rejects these two tribes because they were the beneficiaries of Avraham's kindness in saving their father and mother from the sword and from captivity (*Bereishit* 14:16), and it was by his merit that God had sent them away from the overturning of the city (19:29). Hence, they were indebted to Israel, but they acted badly towards them instead

והנראה אלי כי הכתוב הרחיק שני האחים האלה שהיו גמולי חסד מאברהם, שהציל אביהם ואמם מן החרב והשבי (בראשית יד טז), ובזכותו שלחם השם מתוך ההפכה (שם יט כט). והיו חייבין לעשות טובה עם ישראל, והם עשו עמהם רעה.

Source 22: Talmud Sanhedrin 103b-104a

Rabbi Yochanan taught in the name of Rabbi Yossi ben Kisma: **Great is a mouthful [of sustenance], for on its account two families were distanced from Israel, as it is written [concerning Ammon and Moav], 'for they did not meet you with bread and with water.'** And Rabbi Yochanan, for his part, said: 'It distances those who are near, and brings near those who are distant, and causes [God's] eyes to be diverted from the wicked, and causes the Divine Presence to rest [even] upon the prophets of Ba'al. And an unintentional transgression in this regard is treated as a deliberate one. **'It distances those who are close' – this refers to Ammon and Moav; 'and brings near those who are distant' – Yitro as Rabbi Yoḥanan says: In reward for Yitro telling his daughters: "Call him, that he may eat bread" (Exodus 2:20), inviting Moses to join them for a meal, Yitro's descendants were privileged and sat as scribes in session with the Sanhedrin** in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. As it is stated: "And the families of the scribes who dwelt in Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, the Sucathites. These were the Kenites who came of Hammath, father of the house of Rechab" (I Chronicles 2:55). And it is written there with regard to the identity of the Kenites: "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the city of the 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" (Judges 1:16).

א"ר יוחנן משום רבי יוסי בן קסמא גדולה לגימה שהרחיקה שתי משפחות מישראל שנאמר (דברים כג, ה) על דבר אשר לא קדמו אתכם בלחם ובמים ורבי יוחנן דידיה אמר מרחקת את הקרובים ומקרבת את הרחוקים ומעלמת עינים מן הרשעים ומשרה שכינה על נביאי הבעל ושגגתו עולה זדון **מרחקת את הקרובים מעמון ומואב ומקרבת את הרחוקים מיתרו דאמר ר' יוחנן בשכר (שמות ב, כ) קראן לו ויאכל לחם זכו בני בניו וישבו בלשכת הגזית** שנאמר (דברי הימים א ב, נה) וממשפחות סופרים יושבי יעבץ תרעתים שמעתים סוכתים המה הקינים הבאים מחמת אבי בית רכב וכתיב התם (שופטים א, טז) ובני קיני חותן משה עלו מעיר התמרים את בני יהודה מדבר יהודה אשר בנגב ערד וילך וישב את העם

Dr. Elitzur: In the second year after the Exodus from Egypt, at the commencement of the journey to Eretz Yisrael, Moshe extends an invitation to Yitro to join Am Yisrael and to enjoy the blessings which God has promised to them:

> "Moshe said to Chovav, son of Re'uel, the Midianite, father-in-law of Moshe: We are journeying to the place concerning which God has said, 'I shall give it to you.' Come with us, and we shall be good to you, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel.
> And he said to him, I shall not go, but to my land and my birthplace shall I go.
>
> And he said, I pray you, do not leave us, for you know how we shall encamp in the wilderness, and you will be as eyes for us. And it shall be, if you go with us, then the good that God will do to us – we shall do also to you." (*Bamidbar* 10:29-32)

The story of Yitro in our *parasha* explains Moshe's later invitation and promise to Yitro, presenting Yitro as having been an ally of his son-in-law even before the giving of the Torah. Yitro's recognition of the God of Israel was an essential prerequisite for his completing the process of joining the chosen nation, but this process had begun long before, in the first encounter between him and Moshe. There Yitro is shown to be a model character of high moral standards, quite unlike his pagan environment. The extensive description of Yitro's reunion with Moshe at the Mountain of God, Yitro's advice, and the negotiations calling for his joining the nation, are meant to signal to the reader that Yitro's actions and values should be contrasted with those of the other foreign leaders who come into contact with Am Yisrael. The comparison shows why the Torah's command that the others should not become part of the Israelite congregation, does not apply to Yitro's family. The deficiencies and immorality of their societies have not influenced Yitro's behavior, and he is even described as aspiring to correct defects in his native environment as well as amongst the nation which he seeks to join.