

# NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Yitro

[http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh\\_TorahSummary.htm](http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm)

## Parsha Outline

- On the advice of Yitro, Moshe appoints judges
- Preparation for receiving the Torah
- The Jewish nation receives The Ten Commandments
- Other laws

## Parsha Summaries

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/347711/jewish/Yitro-Roundup.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/347711/jewish/Yitro-Roundup.htm)

### Yitro Roundup

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro (Yitro), who lives in Midian, hears the news of all the amazing miracles that G-d did for the Jewish people, and he decides to go visit. So he, together with his daughter, Moses' wife Tziporah, and their two sons Gershom and Eliezer leave Midian and head for the desert, where they meet Moses.

Now, Jethro sees that Moses is incredibly busy, because anytime the Jews have a problem, or they want to understand how to do a certain mitzvah, they come to Moses. And so, every day, from morning until night, Moses sits and answers questions. Jethro tells Moses that doing this is too hard for him and will wear him out. Instead, he suggests, Moses should appoint judges who will be in charge of smaller groups of people, and then if those judges don't know the answers, they will go to the higher judges in charge of larger groups, and if those don't know, they'll go to the higher level judges, all the way up, until it reaches Moses. This way, Moses will only get the hardest questions, and he'll have time for other things. Moses does as his father-in-law suggests, and appoints the judges. Then Jethro leaves to return to Midian, and Moses sees him off.

Next, the Jews travel to a part of the desert called Sinai, where G-d tells them that if they accept the Torah, they will be a chosen and special nation. The Jews respond, "Everything that G-d has said, we will do!" So they are told to prepare for three days for a very awesome event that will take place on Mount Sinai. Also, they receive instructions about the mountain. Because it is so holy, no one is allowed to touch it, and they must be very careful to not even come too close.

On the third day, there is booming thunder and flashes of lightning, and the Jews all go to Mount Sinai. There, they see a thick cloud over the mountain and hear a long, powerful blast of a shofar. Then G-d comes down to the mountain and proclaims the Ten Commandments.

These Ten Commandments set the standard for goodness in the world; here they are:

1. Belief in G-d
2. Not to worship idols or other gods
3. Not to swear falsely in the name of G-d
4. Keep the Sabbath
5. Honor your parents
6. Do not kill
7. Be faithful to your spouse--do not engage in immoral behavior
8. Do not steal
9. Do not testify falsely against somebody else
10. Do not be jealous of what your friend or neighbor has

When G-d began to speak the commandments, it was too powerful and overwhelming for the Jews to hear. So they begged Moses to receive the Torah from G-d and then tell it to them. Then, Moses went up to the mountain.

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/625026/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/625026/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm)

## Yitro Aliya Summary

**General Overview:** In this week's reading, *Yitro*, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, arrives at the Israelite encampment, and advises them to set up a smoothly functioning legal system. The Israelites experience the Divine revelation at Mount Sinai and hear the Ten Commandments.

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**First Aliyah:** Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, having heard all the miracles that G-d wrought for the Israelites, came from his native Midian to the Israelite desert encampment—bringing along Moses' wife and two sons. Moses warmly greeted his father-in-law and recounted to him all that G-d had done to the Egyptians. Jethro thanked G-d for all the miracles and offered thanksgiving sacrifices.

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**Second Aliyah:** Jethro observed Moses adjudicating all the disputes that arose among the Israelites. Jethro suggested to Moses that such a system, one that placed such a great burden on Moses' shoulders, would eventually wear him down. Instead, he advised Moses to appoint a hierarchy of wise and righteous judges and to delegate his responsibilities—with Moses presiding only over the most difficult cases. This would also free up Moses' time to teach the Israelites the teachings of the Torah that he hears from G-d.

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[Third Aliyah](#): Moses accepted his father-in-law's suggestion, and set up a hierarchical judicial system. Jethro then returned to his native land.

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[Fourth Aliyah](#): Six weeks after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived in the Sinai Desert and encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses ascended the mountain where G-d gave him a message to transmit to the people. Included in this message was G-d's designation of the Israelites as "His treasure out of all peoples" and a "kingdom of princes and a holy nation."

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[Fifth Aliyah](#): Moses conveyed to the people G-d's words, who, in turn, accepted upon themselves to do all that G-d commands of them. G-d then instructed Moses to have the Israelites prepare themselves, because in three days' time He would reveal Himself atop the mountain to the entire nation. The Israelites were commanded to sanctify themselves and were warned not to approach the mountain until after the divine revelation. On the morning of the third day, thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the piercing sound of a *shofar* emanated from the mountaintop. Mt. Sinai was smoking and trembling, while the sound of the *shofar* grew steadily louder. Moses escorted the shuddering and frightened nation to the mountain, and settled them at its base.

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[Sixth Aliyah](#): G-d descended upon the mountain, and summoned Moses to its summit. G-d instructed Moses to again warn the Israelites about the tragic end that awaited anyone who approaches the mountain itself. Only Moses and his brother Aaron were allowed on the mountain during this time. G-d then spoke the Ten Commandments to the Israelite nation. They are: 1) Belief in G-d. 2) Not to worship idols. 3) Not to take G-d's name in vain. 4) To keep the Shabbat. 5) To honor parents. 6) Not to murder, 7) commit adultery, 8) steal, 9) bear false witness or 10) covet another's property.

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[Seventh Aliyah](#): The Israelites were left traumatized by the overwhelming revelation, the awesome "light and sound" show. They turned to Moses and asked that from thereon he serve as an intermediary between them and G-d—Moses should hear G-d's word and transmit it to the people. Moses agreed. The reading concludes with a prohibition against creating idolatrous graven images – considering that no image was seen when G-d revealed Himself on Mount Sinai – and the commandment to erect a sacrificial altar. The altar stones should not be hewn with iron implements, nor should there be steps leading to the top of the altar.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/3369>

Hearing of the miracles G-d performed for *Bnei Yisrael*, Moshe's father-in-law Yitro arrives with Moshe's wife and sons, reuniting the family in the wilderness. Yitro is so impressed by Moshe's detailing of the Exodus from Egypt that he converts to Judaism. Seeing that the only judicial authority for the entire Jewish nation is Moshe himself, Yitro suggests that subsidiary judges be appointed to adjudicate smaller matters, leaving Moshe free to attend to larger issues. Moshe accepts his advice. *Bnei Yisrael* arrive at Mt. Sinai where G-d offers them the Torah. After they accept, G-d charges Moshe to instruct the people not to approach the mountain and to prepare for three days. On the third day, amidst thunder and lightning, G-d's voice emanates from the smoke-enshrouded mountain and He speaks to the Jewish People, giving them the Ten Commandments:

1. Believe in G-d
2. Don't worship other "gods"
3. Don't use G-d's name in vain
4. Observe Shabbat
5. Honor your parents
6. Don't murder
7. Don't commit adultery
8. Don't kidnap
9. Don't testify falsely
10. Don't covet.

After receiving the first two commandments, the Jewish People, overwhelmed by this experience of the Divine, request that Moshe relay G-d's word to them. G-d instructs Moshe to caution the Jewish People regarding their responsibility to be faithful to the One who spoke to them.

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[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1)

## פרשת יתרו

**(שמות יח:א-כ:כג)**

### **Yitro Comes to the Jewish People**

Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, heard of the miracles that had happened for the Jewish people when they left Egypt. He brought Moshe's wife, Tzipora, and Moshe's two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, to Moshe in the desert. (Although Moshe's wife and sons had traveled to Egypt with Moshe, Aharon had advised him to send them back to Midian to protect them from the troubles in Egypt.)

Moshe told Yitro of all the miracles that had taken place and Yitro rejoiced, blessed Hashem, and brought offerings.

## Yitro's Advice

The next day, Yitro saw that Moshe was functioning as a judge for the people from morning until night. He told Moshe that he was doing too much on his own. He advised him to appoint a hierarchal system of judges to reduce the workload from Moshe. These judges should be men of accomplishment, God-fearing, truth loving, and men who despise receiving money from others.

Moshe accepted Yitro's advice and established such a system. Yitro then returned to his land.

## Arrival at Mt. Sinai

In the third month from leaving Egypt they arrived at *Midbar Sinai* and they encamped opposite the mountain. Hashem told Moshe to tell the Jewish people that if they obey Him, then they will be to Him a “סגולה מכל העמים” – “A treasure from all the nations” – and a “ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדש” – “a kingdom of priests and holy nation.” Moshe reported this to the Jewish people and they responded that they would obey whatever Hashem told them.

Hashem then told Moshe that He would come in a pillar of cloud and speak to Moshe so that the people could hear so that the people would believe in Moshe forever. He told Moshe to tell the people to sanctify themselves for three days and immerse in a *mikva*. On the third day Hashem would descend to Mt. Sinai in view of the entire nation. He told Moshe that a boundary must set up around the mountain so that no one would touch it.

## Matan Torah

On the third day there was thunder, lightning, and the powerful sound of the *shofar*. The mountain was smoking like a furnace. Moshe ascended the mountain and Hashem spoke to him and the entire people and told them the עשרת הדברות – “the ten statements.”

## The עשרת הדברות – Ten Statements

Hashem spoke to the Jewish people. The first two statements were made directly by Hashem to the entire nation, then, when the Jewish people were too overwhelmed (as the Torah states immediately after the עשרת הדברות), Hashem spoke the remaining eight to Moshe and he repeated them to the people. The ten statements deal with ten *mitzvot*, although some of them actually have more than one *mitzvah* in them. In brief, these *mitzvot* are:

1. The *mitzvah* to believe in Hashem. This is expressed in the statement, “I am Hashem your God etc.”
2. The prohibition against worshipping idols.
3. The prohibition against using Hashem's name in vain. This refers primarily to the prohibition against false oaths.
4. The *mitzvah* to observe *Shabbat*.
5. The *mitzvah* to honor your father and mother.
6. The prohibition against murder.

7. The prohibition against adultery.
8. The prohibition against kidnapping a Jew and selling him as a slave. (Although the simple translation refers to stealing, ל"ל tell us that the main point of this verse is the sin of kidnapping.)
9. The prohibition against false testimony.
10. The prohibition against desiring that which belongs to another person.

The *sedrah* concludes with a brief discussion of the prohibition of idolatry and the laws of a proper altar.

## Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/573591/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/573591/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm)

### Lyrics:

I am your Hashem, I brought you from Mitzrayim  
 No other shall you serve, my Mitzvos observe  
 You shall not use in vain, Hashem's holy name  
 Remember the Shabbos day, keep it a special way.  
 Honor your parents too, long life Hashem will give you  
 You shall not kill, that is Hashem's will  
 You shall be moral and true, believe in the Mitzvos you do  
 Do not steal, when with others you deal

False witness never be, you must live truthfully  
 Don't be jealous of your friend's life, his things or his wife  
 The Torah Hashem did give, a guide for us to live  
 To Hashem always be true, because you are a Jew

<http://www.torah4kids.com/shlock/shlock1.html>

## Shlock Rock for Kids Party Time!

### The 10 Commandments



[Right click on this link and select "save link as" to download song](#)

Written by Lenny Solomon from the CD Shlock Rock for Kids Party Time!

[www.Shlockrock.com](http://www.Shlockrock.com)

## Lyrics

When Moses came down with the tablets  
That is the Shnei Luchot  
That was the Ten Commandments  
The Aseret Hadibrot

Now we'll teach you about the Commandments  
In this little song  
So here's a little melody  
And you can sing along

There is one G-d, Don't Pray to Idols  
Use G-d's name respectfully  
Remember Shabbat and Keep it Holy  
Your Mother and Father treat very nicely  
The Last Five Commandments  
Are how to treat all of your friends  
So be the best that you can be  
Again and again

## Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1473>

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1),

[http://www.chinuch.org/admin\\_topic\\_search.php?id=130](http://www.chinuch.org/admin_topic_search.php?id=130),

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=7075](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=7075)

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

### K-2

#### Questions

1. What is the name of this week's parsha?
2. What was the name of Moshe's father-in-law?
3. How many names did Yitro have?
4. Why did Yitro come to the Bnei Yisrael in the midbar?
5. On which mountain did Hashem give the Torah?
6. When was Matan Torah and which Yom Tov (holiday) celebrates it?
7. When Hashem asked the Bnei Yisrael if they want the Torah, what did they answer?
8. Who was the only one to go up Har Sinai?
9. What was written on the Luchot?
10. The fourth statement of the aseret Hadibrot states that we are commanded to rest on Shabbat. Why?

## Answers

1. Yitro.
2. Yitro.
3. Seven.
4. He heard about the miracles that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael.
5. Har Sinai.
6. On the sixth and seventh of Sivan. The name of this holiday is Shavuot.
7. Naaseh VeNishmah (we will do and we will listen).
8. Moshe.
9. The Aseret Hadibrot.
10. Because Hashem rested on Shabbat.

## 3-4

## Questions

1. What was the name of Moshe's father-in-law?
2. How many names did he have?
3. What was the name of Moshe's wife?
4. Who were Moshe's two sons?
5. Why did Yitro come to the Bnei Yisrael in the midbar?
6. What did Yitro see that he didn't like?
7. What was Yitro's advice to Moshe?
8. What special zechus (reward) did Yitro get for giving advice?
9. How many days did the Bnei Yisrael prepare for Matan Torah?
10. What are these days called?
11. When was Matan Torah and which Yom Tov (holiday) celebrates it?
12. When Hashem asked the Bnei Yisrael if they want the Torah, what did they answer?
13. Why did Hashem command us to rest on Shabbat?
14. How does the kohen walk up the mizbe'ach?
15. Why did Hashem say to build the mizbe'ach without steps?

## Answers

1. Yitro.
2. Seven.
3. Tzipporah.
4. Gershom and Eliezer.
5. He heard about the miracles that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael.
6. Moshe was judging the Bnei Yisrael from morning until night.

7. He said that Moshe should appoint judges to help him answer the questions that the Bnei Yisrael have. If the judges have questions, then they would come to Moshe.
8. The Parsha is named Yitro after him.
9. Three days.
10. Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah.
11. On the sixth and seventh of Sivan. The name of this holiday is Shavuot.
12. Naaseh VeNishmah (we will do and we will listen).
13. Because Hashem rested on Shabbat.
14. He walks up a ramp, not steps.
15. Tzenius (modesty).

## 5-6

### Questions

1. What was the name of Moshe's father-in-law?
2. How many names did he have?
3. What was the name of Moshe's wife?
4. Who were Moshe's two sons?
5. Why did Yitro come to the Bnei Yisrael in the midbar?
6. What did Yitro see that he didn't like?
7. What was Yitro's advice to Moshe?
8. What special zechus (reward) did Yitro get for giving advice?
9. When did the Bnei Yisrael come to the wilderness of Sinai?
10. How many days did the Bnei Yisrael prepare for Matan Torah?
11. What are these days called?
12. When was Matan Torah and which Yom Tov (holiday) celebrates it?
13. When Hashem asked the Bnei Yisrael if they want the Torah, what did they answer?
14. Who was the only one to go up Har Sinai?
15. What was the punishment for touching the mountain?
16. Until when were the Bnei Yisrael not allowed to touch the mountain?
17. List the Aseret Hadibrot.
18. Why did Hashem command us to rest on Shabbat?
19. How does the kohen walk up the mizbe'ach?
20. Why did Hashem say to build the mizbe'ach without steps?

### Answers

1. Yitro.
2. Seven.
3. Tzipporah.
4. Gershom and Eliezer.
5. He heard about the miracles that Hashem did for the Bnei Yisrael.

6. Moshe was judging the Bnei Yisrael from morning until night.
7. He said that Moshe should appoint judges to help him answer the questions that the Bnei Yisrael have. If the judges have questions, then they would come to Moshe.
8. The Parsha is named Yitro after him.
9. On the first day of Sivan.
10. Three days.
11. Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah.
12. On the sixth and seventh of Sivan. The name of this holiday is Shavuot.
13. Naaseh VeNishmah (we will do and we will listen).
14. Moshe.
15. Death by stoning.
16. Until the blast of the shofar.
17. There are ten commandments in the Aseret Hadibrot. They are:
  - a. אנכי ה' אלקיך
  - b. לא יהיה לך אלקים אחרים
  - c. לא תשא את שם ה' אלקיך לשוא
  - d. זכור את יום השבת לקדשו
  - e. כבד את אביך ואת אמך
  - f. לא תרצח
  - g. לא תנאף
  - h. לא תגנב
  - i. לא תענה ברעך עד שקר
  - j. לא תחמד
18. Because Hashem rested on Shabbat.
19. He walks up a ramp, not steps.
20. Tzenius (modesty).

## Parsha Stories

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/349099/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349099/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm)

### Living with the Parsha: Well Meant?

By [Tali Loewenthal](#)

Michal stood by the open fridge, looking for a suitable snack. Her mother called from the living room, "Michal, dear, would you be willing to go to the grocery shop and pick up a few things for Mrs. Stern, please?" Michal rolled her eyes. She really was not in the mood to help out their elderly neighbor, and was about to claim that she was too busy when she remembered Mrs. Stern's chocolate chip biscuits...

"Okay, Mom", she said as she closed the fridge door. "Give me the list and I'll go in around five minutes". This was becoming a regular chore since Mrs. Stern had had her

hip operation, and though Michal did not particularly enjoy the errand, the warm chocolate chip biscuits that awaited her at the elderly widow's home at the end of the trip seemed to make the whole hassle worthwhile.

The following Thursday when the family was sitting together at dinner, Michal's father turned to her and said "Michal, your mother and I have been really proud about all the efforts that you have been going to for Mrs. Stern. Being elderly, alone and ill is an uncomfortable situation for anyone, and the fact that you have been helping her with her errands has really meant a lot to her."

Michal grinned, "Actually, it's only worth it because Mrs. Stern always has some amazing delicacy awaiting me when I get to her house."

Misha, Michal's brother started laughing. "That's not exactly the right intention one should have when doing a mitzva!"

Michal's mother shrugged her shoulders as she helped herself to some salad. "The main thing is that Mrs. Stern is actually receiving the assistance that she needs. Actually, there is something similar discussed relating to this week's Torah portion. We learn how G-d gave us the Torah at Mount Sinai. The question is, did we accept the Torah of our own free will, or was there an ulterior motive?"

"I thought we said to G-d 'we will do whatever You tell us,' before hearing what He would command," said Misha. "That sounds very dedicated!"

"Yes, but it also says that G-d held the mountain over us and said we must accept the Torah," said their mother. "I read this means that it was so exciting to get to Mount Sinai after all the things that had happened, like going out of Egypt and the Splitting of the Sea, that we couldn't think straight. At that point we weren't able to say 'no.' We just had to go along with it."

"You mean we were just drooling for those chocolate-chip cookies," said Michal.

"Yes. But the Sages tell us that when a person does the right thing for the wrong reason, eventually they will come to do it for the right reason. So it's right to do it, chocolate-chips or not!"

"Mmm," said Michal, feeling a little embarrassed at all the attention she was getting. "The truth is, I do enjoy Mrs. Stern's company; she has some really interesting stories of when she was a little girl during the war. Do you think that listening to her stories is also an ulterior motive?"

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/349100/jewish/Yitro-Parshah-Lesson.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349100/jewish/Yitro-Parshah-Lesson.htm)

## Yitro Parshah Lesson

By [Malka Touger](#)

"What advice did Jethro give Moses?" Mr. Katz asked at the beginning of the Torah portion class.

Many of the sixth graders raised their hands. Mr. Katz pointed at Danny. "Jethro advised Moses to appoint judges who would help him judge the people," Danny answered.

"Mr. Katz," Barry asked, "Jethro's advice makes sense. Appointing judges seems like the logical thing for any leader to do, especially since there were over 600,000 people to lead. Why didn't Moses come up with the idea himself?"

"That's an excellent question, Barry," replied Mr. Katz. "If you think about it, the question becomes even greater. One of the reasons G-d chose Moses as a leader was because He saw how Moses cared for each and every one of the sheep in his flock. But here, it seems that Moses was not aware of the people's needs. Instead, it appears to have been Jethro, an outsider, who understood and suggested a plan to make life easier for everyone.

"There is another incident later in this Torah portion that can help us answer this question," Mr. Katz continued. "What was the Jewish people's reaction when they heard the first two of the Ten Commandments from G-d?"

"They were frightened," replied Sarah. "They asked Moses to speak to them instead of G-d."

"Oh, I see," Dave called out. "Here we have exactly the same question. Since Moses was such a dedicated leader, shouldn't he have known that the people would not be able to listen to G-d's voice directly?"

"Good thinking, Dave," Mr. Katz praised. "Now I'll explain. Moses was a dedicated leader and he knew his people very well. He was so devoted to his people that he wanted them to hear and understand G-d in the same way that he himself did. He was able to lift them up to this level, and they could hear G-d's voice directly.

"But the people wanted something different. 'Moses,' they told him, 'you are doing so much for us by raising us to your level. Still, we want to understand G-d's words on our own level.' We see that G-d agreed. 'They have spoken correctly,' G-d said. So for the remaining eight commandments, it was Moses and not G-d who spoke to the people.

"Now we can understand why Moses wanted to judge the people himself. He wanted to lift them up and give them the chance to understand G-d's wisdom like he did. But Jethro saw that it wouldn't work; the people couldn't always be uplifted to Moses's level.

"He told Moses: 'You bring them the word of G-d. Teach them the Torah and tell them how to lead their lives. But appoint others to help you judge.

" 'When you are teaching people Torah,' Jethro told him, 'you can raise them to your level. But when they have an argument and need to be judged, they are not on your level. Then they cannot be uplifted to hear the word of G-d the way you can. Appoint others to be the judges.'

"We see that G-d agreed to Jethro's advice, and Moses appointed judges. Having a group of wise leaders like these judges to guide the people was important - and not only at the time Jethro gave his advice. It would become even more important in the future when the Jewish people would enter Israel and Moses would no longer be there to lead them."

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-Yitro.pdf?docid=3009&ie=1&showobject=1>

## LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

### No Other Power

Isn't this a beautiful chassanah, Ephraim?" "It is wonderful, Yerachmiel. Are you ready to leave? Do you want a ride home?" "Yes. Thank you very much for the offer. It is a big chessed (act of kindness)." "My pleasure. I'll bring the car around." Ephraim goes to get his car. He pulls up and Yerachmiel gets into the front passenger's seat. He almost bumps his leg on the steering wheel. "Be careful, Yerachmiel. Don't hit the steering wheel." "What kind of a car is this, Ephraim? You have a steering wheel on your side, and a steering wheel on my side. Are there two sets of controls?" "As a matter of fact there are. You can see that there is a brake and a gas pedal on your side also. But don't worry. They are all fake." "You mean that they really do not control the car?" "No." "Forgive me for asking a silly question, but what are they doing here? I never saw a car with fake controls before." It's all because of my little son. He is very inquisitive and active. He is only nine years old and he already wants to drive a car. When he was smaller, I would let him sit in my lap when the motor was off. He could then turn the wheel and push the pedals as much as he wanted. Now that he is older, he wants more. I rigged up this fake steering wheel and pedals on the passenger side. Now he can turn the wheel and push the pedals to his heart's delight. He thinks that he is controlling the car, but really he is doing nothing." "That is brilliant! Not only have you satisfied your son, but you have built a miniature model of the universe right here in your car." "Really?! My good friend Yerachmiel. You have always had a good imagination. Please explain to me how my car is a miniature model of the universe." "With pleasure, Ephraim. First, let me ask you a simple question. Who is in control of the universe?" "Hashem." "Right. However, He is very tsnuah (modest). He does not show off. He does not reveal Himself openly. Rather, He controls everything in a clever, subtle, hidden way called 'nature.' He sets the sun, moon, and stars in motion. He guides the wind and rain to provide water. He populates the earth with plants and animals. Every one appears to function by itself, but they are

all part of the master plan. Then He sets us down here on this earth with a set of instructions to fulfill called the 613 mitzvos. We plow the land, we plant the seeds, we harvest the crop, we drill for the oil, we generate the electricity, and we cook the food. We can hold a small device in our hands which enables us to talk to anyone anywhere in the world at any time. It appears that we are controlling the world. We have tremendous power at our fingertips. However, we must not be fooled. We are really sitting in the passenger seat of your car. Our steering wheel and pedals do not control the car. They just appear to have power. The driver is really sitting in the other seat.” The driver is, of course, Hashem.” “Right. He creates the illusion that we are in control, when we are really just turning a fake wheel.” “Why does He do that?” “To give us free will. If He revealed Himself openly, everyone would instantaneously realize that He is The Only Power. They would do all of His mitzvos without question. By hiding Himself, he makes us work hard at having emunah (faith) in Him. We have to work; therefore we will be rewarded for our work. It is all for our own good.” “I see.” “Two of the basic mitzvos are mentioned in this week’s parasha in the Aseres HaDibros (Ten Commandments). The Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 1:5,6) explains as follows. Know that Hashem exists, as the verse says, ‘I am Hashem your G-d.’ He is The Ruler, Who is unlimited in His existence and His power. Know that there is no other power besides Him, as the verse says, ‘You shall have no other gods’ (Shemos 20:2,3). Anyone or anything that appears to be in control is just as powerless as the dummy steering wheel in your car.”

y good friend, Yerachmiel, you have really strengthened my emunah. You have shown me that my simple car is really not so simple. It is a model of the universe. Every time that I sit behind the wheel, I will be reminded that I am not the one who is making the car go, rather it is The Almighty. He controls this car, as well as everything else in the universe. The idea that anything else has any power is just an illusion.” “You’ve got it Ephraim. B’ezras Hashem we can all strengthen our emunah, just as you have.” “Amen.”

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem is everything. He created this world from nothing. He set up the ‘laws of nature.’ He uses them to control the world. However, do not be fooled. The sun has no power of its own. The wind is nothing without Hashem. The car and bus cannot go without Him pushing them. All of the marvels of modern technology – the microwave, the cell phone, the computer, the MP3, and the digital camera are just pieces of useless junk with Him controlling them. Therefore, do not be fooled. Do not think that they have any power. He is the only power in the universe. The only One Who controls everything. “I am Hashem your G-d. You shall have no other.”

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/pArchive.asp?eventType=17&eventName=Yitro>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

[http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Embarrassing\\_Others.asp](http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Embarrassing_Others.asp)

**Yitro** (Exodus 18-20)  
**Embarrassing Others**

## From this week's Torah Portion

In this week's Torah portion, we learn the famous Ten Commandments that God gave us on Mt. Sinai. One of these is not to murder. Thankfully, most normal people would never consider murdering anyone, yet our sages teach that to publicly humiliate someone -- or 'murder' their reputation -- is so harmful that it is, in a way, almost as destructive as actually murdering them. Therefore, we should be super careful not to embarrass others.

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### Story

*In our story, a kid has to decide whether or not to destroy another kid's pride.*

#### THUMBS UP

"Okay, guys. We'll be there in about an hour and a half. I want every one of you kids to behave, or else." Kevin, the teacher's assistant sternly warned as the bus taking Marc and his classmates on their school trip pulled out of the school parking lot.

Though the trip had barely started, Marc had already heard more than enough from this bossy Kevin. True he was two grades older than they were, but did that give him the right to order them around treat them like babies?

"Slide over, kid. I'm taking the window seat -- assistant's privilege." Marc turned to face the voice and groaned. Of all the seats on the bus, Kevin had decided to sit right next to him! The boy begrudgingly moved over. He'd already taken out his camera and had planned to take a lot of pictures of the passing scenery through the bus window, but now he'd just have to sit there like a dummy next to this guy who thought he was so cool.

The trip went along and as they were about to pass by a famous waterfall, Marc decided to ask Kevin if he could at least switch seats with him for a minute so he could get one good picture. As he turned, he got a big surprise -- the obnoxious bigger kid had fallen asleep and was sucking his thumb like a toddler!

Forgetting about the waterfall, Marc pulled out his digital camera and took a couple of choice photos of this hilarious scene. He could hardly wait until the next rest stop, when he'd show these embarrassing pics around to the rest of the class. Kevin would never be able to live them down -- or be able to act like a boss over them again...

"Okay, guys -- you've got exactly five-minutes before everyone has to be back to the bus. I hope you all know how to tell time!" Kevin chortled as the kids piled off at the rest stop. Marc smiled to himself, knowing that was the last put-down that kid was going to make. The secret picture he took of him would kill his 'cool guy' reputation and put him in his place once and for all.

Most of the class had gathered in front of the drink stand and Marc -- camera in hand -- began jogging over their way. He couldn't wait to...WHOA!... Suddenly, stepping on a patch of ice, his feet slipped out from underneath him and he found himself flat on his face, sprawled out like a rag doll.

As he stood up and brushed himself off Marc was happy he was okay, but even happier that none of the kids had seen him fall. They'd have had a good laugh at his expense, and he would have felt totally embarrassed and foolish.

He checked his camera to make sure his fall hadn't caused the precious pictures to get erased. Nope, Kevin's 'baby picture' was still on the screen. Marc marched closer to the group, but surprisingly felt his feet slowing down. *Is this really okay?* he thought to himself. *If I was just so happy no one saw me take that embarrassing fall -- everyone seeing Kevin sucking his thumb is going to embarrass him a hundred times as much. With each step Marc took, the idea of putting Kevin in his place was starting to feel less heroic and more just plain hurtful. True, Kevin was obnoxious, but did that justify humiliating him like this?*

"Hey, Marc, cool-looking camera, man. You got any good shots of the trip so far?" asked his friend Ron as Marc reached to the group. The boy took a deep breath.

"Nah, nothing yet." he said. Nothing -- Marc thought to himself -- *except for those two pictures he'd just permanently deleted, saving Kevin his reputation and saving himself from doing something very wrong.*

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## Discussion Questions

### Ages 3-5

Q. How did Marc feel at first about showing the embarrassing pictures?

A. He felt it was okay and the Kevin deserved it.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. After his fall, Marc realized how much it hurts to get embarrassed and didn't want to do it to anyone else.

### Ages 6-9

Q. What life-lesson do you think Marc learned that day?

A. When he caught Kevin in an embarrassing position, his first thought was to use it to knock the kid down -- then he realized that humiliating someone is no joke, but rather a very serious and extremely harmful thing to do -- and thankfully he stopped himself in time.

Q. What should a person do if he sees someone in an embarrassing situation?

A. If there is any way he can help, without embarrassing the person further, he should. Otherwise, he should simply turn or walk away and act as if he'd never seen it.

### **Ages 10 and Up**

Q. Our sages compare humiliating someone with murdering them. How can you understand these harsh terms?

A. A human being is more than just his physical body. Each person also has thoughts and emotions that are just as real as his body. When a person gets humiliated, true, his body may live on, but inside, even if he doesn't show it, he has just suffered a devastating blow that could cause him intense pain for the rest of his life. Who would want to be responsible for doing that to someone?

Q. Do you think it is ever justified to publicly embarrass another person?

A. While in general it is certainly wrong, if there is someone whose improper conduct or values may seriously endanger those around him and more subtle methods won't get him to stop, there are times that embarrassing him into stopping or to prevent others from being influenced by him may be in order. But these cases are few and far between.

## **Parsha Games**

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

## **K-2**

The story is told that all the mountains boasted about their attributes and thought that they were the best choice for the giving of the Torah. Har Sinai (Mt. Sinai) did not join in and was sure that it was too ordinary to be chosen

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Being modest is best**

### **Activity**

**The following is a well known song about the mountains. The children may know the tune, but if not it also works to the tune of Rock-a-bye Baby. The children should do actions to show the tall and wide mountains and small and humble Har Sinai.**

I am a mountain so very high  
I can reach way up to the sky  
The Torah should be given on me  
For I am as tall as can be

Oh no, I'm much taller than you  
And there are so many things I can do  
The Torah should be given on me  
For I am as great as can be

But little Har Sinai just stood there and sighed  
I know I'm not tall, I know I'm not wide  
The Torah can't be given on me  
For I am so plain, you see

But from all the mountains Hashem chose Sinai  
Because it did not hold itself high  
It had such simple and humble ways  
So we learn that humbleness pays

**Or**

Hashem gave us the 10 commandments  
10 commandments, 10 commandments,  
Hashem gave us the 10 commandments  
And this is what they say

Listen to your Mum and Dad, do what they say  
Have a nice rest on the Shabbat day  
Never take other people's things away  
It's all in the 10 commandments

## **3-4**

The parashah is about the ten commandments. It's important that we follow the laws that the Torah tells us.

**Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Living by Jewish rules**

### **Activity**

**Play “Moshe Omare”. It’s like “Simon says” but with Moshe’s name. Use English or Hebrew words. Play the games: Follow the Leader, or Moshe May I?**

## **5-6**

Yitro was Moshe's father-in-law. When he saw that Moshe did not have enough time to solve everybody's problems, he suggested appointing judges to help with the easier cases. Moshe realised this was good advice and appointed judges

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Listening to advice**

### **Activity**

**Moshe took Yitro's advice, but many people do not want to listen to advice from others.**

**Is it always right to offer advice?**

**Are there different ways of giving advice so that people will respond positively to it?**

**Are there times when one should hold back from giving advice?**

**Put these issues to the group. In groups of two the children should act out good and bad ways of giving advice in different situations.**