

TORAH THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

PARSHAS YISRO

Copied from AISH HATORAH

“United or Untied”

“And Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain.” (Ex. 19:2)

In the Pesach Haggadah it states, "Had He (G-d) brought us before Har Sinai, but not given us the Torah, it would have been sufficient." These words are difficult to understand, for what would simply arriving at Har Sinai accomplish if it would not have resulted in our receiving the Torah?

Rashi points out that the word "vayichan" is in the singular, despite the fact that the Torah was describing the encampment of millions of Jews. Rashi explains that at this particular encampment the Jewish people were united - "as one man, with one heart." Upon arriving in the desert of Sinai, they put an end to all quarrelling, cleansing their hearts from all ill will, and they shared a deep love for one another. The unity that the Jewish people achieved would have been worthwhile even had they not received the Torah!

For Israel to rise to its highest calling, for us to reach perfection, we must act as one entity and not as a bunch of individuals. Furthermore, when people are united, G-d does not harm them. As we see in the story of the tower of Babel, the Torah tells us that G-d said, "Behold, they are one people with one language for all." Since they were united G-d did not destroy them. Instead, He said, "Come let us descend there and confuse their language." Because they could not understand each other, the builders of the tower began to fight, became untied, and Hashem then harmed them.(1)

Unity comes about when one puts his personal worries to the side and concerns himself with his friend. The difference between united and untied is where you place the "I". When you place the "I" to the side and you are more concerned for your friend - unity is the result.

NOTES

1. Pele Yoetz, Achdus.