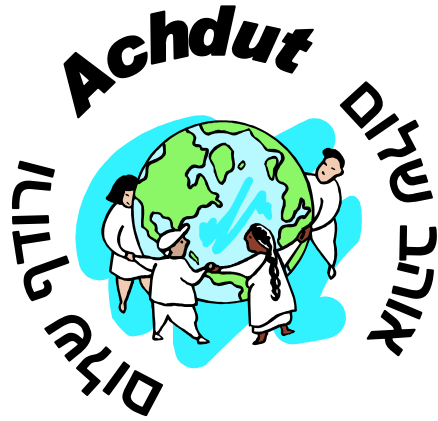


## Parshat Yitro

### National Achdut at Har Sinai

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In Parshat Yitro, the recently redeemed Jews continue to wander in the desert. After many encampments, they finally reach Sinai, the destiny of the Jewish people. Regarding this climactic encampment, the Torah says: "**va'yichan** sham Yisrael neged ha'har"- "Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain." (Shemot 15:2) Rashi comments on the usage of the singular verb "**va'yichan**" - "*k'ish echad b'lev echad*"- "like one person, with one heart."

The Mechilta points out a contrast between this encampment at Sinai and the previous encampments. The previous encampments were marred by complaints, arguments, and disunity, whereas by Sinai the Jewish people came together as one. Rav Aharon Kotler takes it one step further. He explains that only in a state of complete unity is the Jewish nation worthy of accepting the Torah.

Hashem told Moshe to warn the people not to go on the mountain. The Mechilta explains that Hashem meant that even if one Jew would die, it would be as big a tragedy to Him as if all of them had died. Rav Kotler explains further, based on this, that Hashem considers the value of each and every individual Jew significantly more important when all Jews are united together as one, as they were by Sinai.

The Torah is teaching us an important lesson. Achdus is a crucial aspect of our national identity. We must learn to appreciate the good in each other. Instead of focusing on the negatives, one should highlight the positives. The introduction to "*Chofetz Chaim - A Lesson a Day*" explains that the advantages of such an approach are two-fold. In addition to encouraging one's friend to succeed, by thinking about the positives, one will also become a much happier, more content, person. This will express itself in one's being less prone to criticize others, and less likely to become angry. By taking this lesson and applying it daily, we can improve the quality of our lives and the lives of others.

Just as the Jewish people merited the Torah at Sinai, so, too, may we merit the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.