

Parsha in Practice: Life Lessons from Parsha Yitro

Nugget #1: You Don't Receive Torah Alone

Theme: Wisdom Can Come from Outside

Primary Text: Shemot 18:1, 5-6 *JPS 2023 Translation, [Sefara.org](https://www.sefara.org)*

(1) Jethro priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel - God's people: how the ETERNAL had brought Israel out from Egypt.

(5) Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought Moses' sons and wife to him in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God.

(6) He sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons."

Supporting Text: Pirkei Avot 4:1 *Dr. Joshua Kulp Translation, Sefara.org*

Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? He who learns from every man, as it is said: "From all who taught me have I gained understanding" (Psalms 119:99).

Takeaway: Growth often comes through unexpected teachers. You never outgrow the need for other voices.

Nugget #2: Burnout Is Not Holy

Theme: Sustainable Leadership Is Sacred

Primary Text: Shemot 18:17-18 *JPS 2023 Translation, Sefara.org*

(17) But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing you are doing is not right;

(18) you will surely wear yourself out, and these people as well. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

Takeaway: Exhaustion is not a badge of holiness. Torah leadership is meant to sustain life, not drain it.

Nugget #3: Let Them

Theme: Release control, allow others agency

Primary Text: Shemot 18:22 *JPS 2023 Translation, Sefara.org*

let them judge the people at all times. Have them bring every major dispute to you, but let them decide every minor dispute themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them share the burden with you.

Takeaway: When you “let them,” you create space for growth, dignity, and sustainable leadership.

Nugget #4: Prepare to Receive

Theme: Revelation Requires Readiness

Primary Text: Shemot 19:10–11 *JPS 2023 Translation, Sefara.org*

(10) and GOD said to Moses, “Go to the people and warn them to stay pure today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothes.

(11) Let them be ready for the third day; for on the third day GOD will come down, in the sight of all the people, on Mount Sinai.

Takeaway: Meaning and holiness require preparation. We do not stumble into revelation.

Nugget #5: Boundaries Create Encounter

Theme: Limits Make Holiness Possible

Primary Text: Shemot 19:12 *JPS 2023 Translation, Sefara.org*

You shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, ‘Beware of going up the mountain or touching the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death

Takeaway: Boundaries protect what is sacred. Holiness is not chaos, but contained fire.

May we stay open to wisdom, honor our limits without guilt, have the courage to let others grow, prepare ourselves for what is sacred, and build the boundaries that let Torah live fully in our everyday lives.

Shabbat shalom