

# Beha'alotecha - Seeing and Faith - 5783

Source Sheet by Rabbi Marina Yergin

Based on a text sheet by Rabbi Batsheva Appel entitled "A Verse of Torah - Beha'alotecha 5780"

## במדבר י':כ"ט-ל"ד

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹבָב בֶּן־רְעוּאֵל הַמִּדְיָנִי חֵתָן מֹשֶׁה נֹסְעִים | אֲנַחְנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר  
אָמַר יְהוָה אֲתוּ אִתָּנוּ לָכֶם לָכֶה אֲתָנוּ וְהִטְבַּנוּ לָךְ כִּי־יְהוָה דִּבְרָטוֹב עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לֹא אֵלָיךְ כִּי אִם־אֶל־אַרְצִי וְאֶל־מוֹלְדֹתַי אֵלָיךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא תַעֲזֹב  
אֲתָנוּ כִּי | עַל־כֵּן יָדַעְתָּ חֲנִיתָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהִיִּיתָ לָנוּ לְעֵינָיִם: וְהָיָה כִּי־תֵלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ  
וְהָיָה | הַטּוֹב הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִיטִיב יְהוָה עִמָּנוּ וְהִטְבַּנוּ לָךְ: וַיִּסְעוּ מִהָרַ יְהוָה דָּרָךְ  
שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְאַרְזוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה נִסַּע לְפָנֵיהֶם דָּרָךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לְתוֹר לָהֶם מִנוֹחָה:  
וַעֲנֹן יְהוָה עָלֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בְּנִסְעֵם מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה: {ס}

### Numbers 10:29-34

Moses said to Hobab, son of Reuel the Midianite (Yitro), Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which *יהוה Adonai* has said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will be generous with you; for *יהוה Adonai* has promised to be generous to Israel." "I will not go," he replied to him, "but will return to my native land." He said, "Please do not leave us, inasmuch as you know where we should camp in the wilderness and can be our guide. So if you come with us, we will extend to you the same bounty that *יהוה Adonai* grants us." They marched from the mountain of *יהוה Adonai* a distance of three days. The Ark of the Covenant of *יהוה Adonai* traveled in front of them on that three days' journey to seek out a resting place for them; and *יהוה's Adonai's* cloud kept above them by day, as they moved on from camp.

**What does it mean in verse 31 that Yitro knows where the Israelites should camp in the wilderness?**

### Rashi on Numbers 10:31:2

For (כי) it is fitting for you to do this, because (על כן) you have known our encampments in the wilderness and you have seen the miracles and the mighty deeds that have been wrought for us.

**Rashbam on Numbers 10:31:1**

While you have been with us in the desert you have become as indispensable as our eyes.

**Rashi on Numbers 10:31:4**

“You have been our eyes.” or “You can be our guide” — The verb (תִּהְיֶה) is in the past tense and we have to understand it just as the Targum renders it: “and all the mighty deeds that have been wrought for us you have seen with your own eyes.” Another explanation is that it is the future tense: whatever things will be hidden from our eyes, you will enlighten our eyes about it....

**The Israelites had been taking direction from God, so why is Moses pleading with Yitro so much?****Rabbeinu Bahya, Bamidbar 10:31:1-2**

(1) “you will act as our eyes,” to show us the way. Seeing that the Israelites had been journeying exclusively at the direction of the cloud and the cloud showed them the way, what need was there to employ the services of Yitro? The reason Moses said the words quoted was to reinforce the minds and hearts of the people whose faith in the miraculous guidance of the cloud was somewhat limited, people who preferred to rely on leaders of flesh and blood. Another meaning of the words: “you will be our eyes” was that they referred to Yitro testifying to the Gentiles what he had observed while traveling with the Jewish people. Yitro was to report all the miracles he had observed while traveling with the Jewish people. Upon hearing all this it was hoped that more Gentiles would be moved to convert to Judaism.

(2) A Midrashic approach (Sifri Behaalotcha 80) the words “you will be our eyes” mean that “anything which had thus far been concealed from our eyes you will reveal to our eyes.” Still another approach: “you (Yitro) will be as dear to us as our own eyeballs.” The background to such a sentiment is the commandment in Deut. 10:19: “You shall love the proselyte.”