

Yitro: Parts of the Kol

The magnificent description of the Decalogue in this week's *sidra* is introduced by the following verse: (Shemot 20:1) "And God spoke all these words (*kol hadevarim ha-eleh*) saying..." Rashi, concerned about the seeming redundancy of the words, comments on the use of *kol*, "all these words." He suggests that that Hashem spoke all these words to the Jewish People in a single expression, (*dibur ehad*) something quite impossible for human beings. Rav Soloveitchik, *zatzal*, (quoted in Besdin's *Reflections of the Rav*, Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1979, page 193) brilliantly analyzes this Rashi as teaching us that the Decalogue is an organic unity. It is really one commandment with ten aspects. These parts are interdependent and integral to each other.

We often forget this essential truth in Jewish life. One cannot separate ritual observance and belief in Hashem from ethical and moral behavior. Someone who davens with kavana and molests young people cannot claim to be fully observant. One who is scrupulous about glatt kosher and cheats in business is not truly frum.

The Decalogue, indeed the Torah itself, must be seen as an integrated guideline to a full and rich religious life. We cannot separate faith, morality, observance and learning from each other. They are all parts of the *kol*.

Shabbat Shalom!

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