

Parshat Yitro 5780

In the 6th Aliyah in Parshas Yisro the Bnei Yisrael were encamped at Har Sinai for the giving of the Torah, an event so central to who we are as Jews. Given their centrality, it is interesting to note that the Aseres Hadibros does not have a part in our davening like Krias Shema or Oz Yoshir does. Why is this the case? The Mishna in Maseches Tamid in the 5th perek states that the kohanim in the Beis Hamikdash would recite the Aseres Hadibros in their daily service and other tefillos as well. So why were they not included in our tefillos as well outside of the Beis Hamikdash?

The Gemara in Maseches Brachos daf 12a states that Chazal did consider adding the Aseres Hadibros into our daily tefillos, however they ended up rejecting this because they were concerned about attacks from heretics which could come about from including the Aseres Hadibros. Rashi explains on this gemara that if ignorant people saw that the Aseres Hadibros were given special consideration in the tefillos it could lead them to think that they are the only true and divine parts of the Torah, which is of course not true at all. So, to ensure that these misconceptions were avoided, Chazal chose to exclude them from our tefillos.

The Rambam in his responsa number 263 extends this and says that we should not stand up when listening to the Aseres Hadibros read during the Torah reading on Shabbos. This would also cause people to think they were being highlighted as being directly from Hashem to the exclusion of other areas of Torah and thus cause people to have an incorrect Emunah.

However, we do have the minhag to stand for the Aseres Hadibros so how do we explain seemingly highlighting the Aseres Hadibros? Rav Ovadia Yosef actually says that it is possible many early poskim were

not aware of the responsa of the Rambam and had they seen it they would have accepted his opinion. Rav Ovadia himself therefore states one should follow the Rambam's view on this. The Chida in his responsa Tov Ayin siman 11, offers a justification for our practice, in that as we read the Torah every Shabbos and even on the Shabbos where we read the Aseres Hadibros, we read the whole of parshas Yisro, we demonstrate that we accept the whole Torah as being true and our standing therefore just demonstrates the centrality of the Aseres Hadibros rather than negating the truth of the rest of the Torah.

Rav Moshe Feinstein's son asked his father this question and presented him with 2 answers, one of which Rav Moshe Feinstein rejected and one he accepted. The first answer he gave was similar to that of the Chida, however Rav Feinstein disagreed with this answer because he said even in the Beis Hamikdash they read other parts of the Torah and yet Chazal still did not allow the Aseres Hadibros to be included in our tefillos. The second answer he gave was that we do at times stand up for readings of other parts of the Torah such as Oz Yoshir and the concluding posuk of each sefer, such that it is clear that standing for the Aseres HaDibros is not saying that this is the only true part of the Torah. This Rav Feinstein accepted; in his responsa (Orach Chaim 4:22) he says that the gemara limited this restriction to davening and believed that this was a circumstantial restriction given that there was a specific trend at the time for the heretics to misinterpret the inclusion of the Aseres Hadibros in davening, but that this concern is not so great today. He nonetheless offers a way to avoid the problem all together by standing up for the whole of leining or even just for that aliya as the standing therefore doesn't directly demonstrate the extra importance of the Aseres Hadibros.

Based on a shiur by Rav Yamin Goldsmith Director of Sha'alvim for Women.