

The Torah Sparks

SHABBOS COMPANION

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

The Parshah discusses dozens of man-to-man related commandments, such as the laws concerning slaves, assault, theft, illicit and idolatrous behavior, helping the poor, respecting leaders, judicial laws, shabbos and yom tov, and more. Hashem promises the dispersion of enemies and the conquest of the Land. The Jewish people finally enter into covenant with Hashem and receive the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

QUICK VORT

Strangely, smack in middle of the Torah's discussion of the events at Har Sinai, the Torah digresses and discusses dozens of laws concerning human relationships.

What happened? The Jews were on such a high, experiencing the giving of the Torah, having a one on One with the Creator, and then, just like that, the experience is interrupted for us - the reader - to talk about slaves, damages, and other mundane matters.

One of the messages we are taught is that the Torah is not UP THERE; rather; it's meant for us - humans - DOWN HERE in our world of physicality, in our world of human relationships. No part of our lives is devoid of Torah.

Rav Jaeger shlit"a, Rosh Yeshiva of Shor Yashiv, once pointed out that the words נעשה ונשמע were said in Perek 24, Verse 7, teaching us that Torah is 24/7, a constant!

Have a holy Shabbos!

PARSHAH STATS

118	1462	5313	53
Pesukim	Words	Letters	Mitzvos

GEMATRIA

Hashem says עבדי הם - *They are my slaves: "Don't be a slave to man. Be a slave directly to me!"*

Interestingly, the words עבדי הם have the gematria of 131, the same as אצל, which means "next to me," perhaps an allusion to this notion of closeness with Hashem.

May we all merit closeness to our Creator!

CHASSIDUS

Reb Yaakov Yitzchok of Lublin, in the Sefer Zikaron Zos, explains that before we do anything physical - such as eating and working - we should say "I am eating this food to give me strength to better serve Hashem" or "I'm working to support my family."

Just saying this will help spiritually channel these physical things.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rav Naftali Jaeger shlit"a pointed out that the words "We will do and we will listen" appear in Chapter 24, Verse 7, thus hinting to the fact that Torah must be a constant in our lives, 24/7!

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The Jewish slave who decides to stay with his master gets a hole put in his ear, since he heard Hashem say "You will be slaves to Me" yet he went and chose a human master of flesh and blood.

INSPOGRAPHIC CORNER



TORAH IS NOT EDUCATION; IT'S TRANSFORMATION
 (REBBETZIN DENA WEINBERG)

Dvar Torah for Parshas Mishpatim

Cop in the Rear-View



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A Tremendous Lack of Respect



I'm sure you've been there before. You are driving in a car and minding your own business, when all of a sudden you see a cop in your rear-view mirror. Immediately, in a matter of milliseconds, all of your Driver's Ed knowledge – like every single bit of information about driving safely – comes back to your conscious memory. You slow down and make sure your seat belt is buckled. You grab the steering wheel with both hands. You glance back, hoping and secretly praying that the cop switch lanes and drive away.

But the cop is still there. Your heart begins to thump. Anxiety and a minor depression settle in.

And then you run through a quick mental checklist: 1. Did I just kill someone? No. Phew! 2. Did I just rob a bank? No. So far so good! 3. Do I even have a license? Yes. Woohoo! 4. Is this my car? Umm. Yes! Victory!

In a fascinating article, Pacific Standard: The Psychological Impact of Driving Among Police Cars, the author discusses this seemingly automatic mental fear that we – as drivers – have when we see a cop driving near us. He explains that the fact that we drive a little slower around cops shows how little we respect them.

Our reaction to their presence shows how little we worry about them when they are not around. Yes, in their presence, we are conforming, but only until the cop is out of sight. Then we go back to our "old" ways. If we thought the cops were always around, we'd always drive slowly, always make sure our seat belts were on, and never check our phones.

Many times, we look through the rear-view mirror of our lives and we mistakenly see Hashem as the Cop lurking to get us, to catch us red handed, to punish us. But this couldn't be further from the truth.

In Judaism, we understand that Hashem is not some scary law-enforcement personnel. He is the Creator of the Universe, and He is our Father, holding us, guiding us, protecting us, and loving us every second of our life's journey.

Dovid Hamelech in Tehillim (121:4) writes: הַגִּבּוֹר לֹא יִנּוּם וְלֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל – See, the Guardian of the Jews, neither slumbers nor sleeps.

The Radak explains that Hashem always watches us, even during the lengthy exile. Even when we sleep, Hashem does not.

Hashem is always around, always watching us, and always there for us. It is this knowledge of His constant presence that shouldn't scare us, but should rather comfort us, as well as afford us the incredible opportunity of carrying out His will every single day of our lives.

Parshas Mishpatim is replete with Man-to-Man commandments. The more we realize that Hashem is watching and a part of our lives, the more we see that our commitment to Man-to-Man commandments are actually the greatest testimony to our belief, faith, and trust in Hashem.

Have a holy Shabbos!

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