

The Torah Sparks

SHABBOS COMPANION

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Hashem speaks to Moshe Rabbeinu about the redemption of the Jewish people. Moshe and Aharon are appointed as the redeemers, and Hashem promises to harden Pharaoh's heart. Aharon performs a miracle in front of Pharaoh. The Ten Plagues begin: Blood, frogs, lice, wild animals, death of cattle, boils, and hail. Hashem hardens the heart of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh still refuses to send out the Jewish people.

QUICK VORT

We can learn a valuable lesson from the passage in the Torah that tells us the Jewish people experienced קצר רוח ועבדה קשה - *shortness of breath and hard labor*.

On some level, perhaps the phrase קצר רוח ועבדה קשה can be understood as an if-you-do-this-then-this can happen.

The Jewish people are successful when their spiritual intake and focus is up to G-d's par, so-to-speak.

When we are experiencing קצר רוח - a shortness, a limitation, a reduction of רוח, i.e., spirituality, then that is a recipe for a life of עבדה קשה, great hardship and toiling, ch'v.

The more spiritually focused we are in life, the easier our "work" is going to be, because the more we include Hashem in our lives, the more He helps us along the way.

Have a holy Shabbos!

"TO BUILD A SOCIETY OF FREEDOM, YOU HAVE TO LET GO OF HATE."

(RABBI J. SACKS ZT"L)

PARSHAH STATS

121
Pesukim

1748
Words

6701
Letters

0
Mitzvos

GEMATRIA

The gematria of קשה רוח ומעבדה קשה is 1,176.

One of the messages of this phrase (see quick vort) is the importance of not limiting one's spirituality. קצר רוח - when there is a limitation and reduction of spirituality, then עבדה קשה - we often experience hardship, i.e. a life stripped away from meaning and spirituality is a life of suffering.

The passuk in Tehilim (116:17) - לך-אזבח, - also has the gematria of 1,176. Instead of limiting our spirituality, let us increase our spirituality and connection with Hashem!

CHASSIDUS

Likutei Moharan teaches that the words מקצר רוח ומעבדה קשה are referring to their being of little faith, and ergo, needing *avoda kasha*, difficult devotions, fasting, etc.

When there is "smallness" and blemished faith, one has to perform difficult work.

May we work on instilling proper faith in Hashem, which makes us bigger, not smaller!

DID YOU KNOW?

The Makkos were meant to HIT the Egyptians; but more importantly, they were meant to HIT us, the Jewish people. They "hit" us with a message of G-d's love for the Jewish people

Chasam Sofer says that because Klal Yisroel stopped keeping Shabbos, they were unable to hear Moshe Rabbeinu. This is the deeper understanding of 6:9, that the Jews didn't listen to Moshe because of "shortness of breath and hard labor."

The more the Egyptians hit the frog, the more frogs were produced!

INSPOGRAPHIC CORNER

Sorry for the inconvenience, elevator UP button not working properly. Press Down button to go up.

Maint. Facilities.

The Vending Machine



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A Story about Jury Duty, Vending Machines, and Mt. Dew



A lady walked over to the vending machine, paid for a bottle of cold Mt. Dew, and upon being dispensed, she took the soda and started to walk back to her seat, when suddenly, thump! A second bottle of Mt. Dew was dispensed. Shocked, she returned to the vending machine, happily picked up the second bottle, and once again, started to walk back to her seat, when suddenly, thump! A third bottle of Mt. Dew was dispensed. She returned to the vending machine, ecstatically picked up the third bottle, and again, started to walk to her seat, when suddenly, thump! A fourth bottle of Mt. Dew was dispensed!

If I were to arrange My Top 3 Most-Boring Things To Do list, it would look like this (not in any particular order): 1. Jury Duty, 2. Jury Duty, and 3. Jury Duty.

About a year ago, I paid duty to my civil rights and partook in Jury Duty. I had a high number, 3063, and I knew that I would likely be waiting around in the waiting room (because that is what you do in a waiting room, you wwwaaaaaaaiiiiiittttt) for a long time.

Of course, I did my best to make use of the waiting time, and I learned a bit and was able to get some work done as well.

I am not familiar with all court houses around the country, but the Jury Duty location in Maryland at the Mitchell Courthouse in Downtown Baltimore, has multiple vending machines in the waiting room, which, if you are waiting somewhere for a long time, can become a great source of solid excitement, not necessarily to purchase goods, but more so to be entertained by observing others purchase goods.

Pretty much all types of feelings and emotions were evoked in my heart during the process of observing others at the vending machine at the courthouse.

I felt feelings of validation upon seeing a man staring at the vending machine for around 10 minutes, as he was contemplating, deliberating, and considering what to purchase, only to walk away with nothing, as he couldn't make up his mind. I felt feelings of pridefulness and "nachas" upon seeing a man purchase a nutrition fig bar instead of the Mike 'n Ikes box. I felt feelings of sadness upon seeing a lady pay for her bag of pretzels, only to watch as the vending machine did not dispense her product.

There was one incident, though, that stuck out to me, that made me feel particularly happy and inspired.

This time, though, the vending machine stopped giving her free Mt. Dew, and she returned to her seat with the biggest smile on her face. A victory, indeed.

Besides for being an amusing story, it is very relatable. As yidden, our experience and relationship with Hashem can be somewhat analogous to the vending machine giving out "extra" things.

You see, in life, of course we must do our part. We must put our foot forwards and do our basic *hishtadlus*. We have to "pay" for the "Mt. Dew." But after that, we leave it up to Hashem to make things actually work out.

In His Loving Kindness, Hashem deals with us with tremendous mercy that is in far greater proportion to what we "paid." Hashem goes "above and beyond," לפנים משורת הדין.

Why? Why does He do that? Simple. Because He is our Father who loves us dearly. My friends, this is the deeper secret of why Hashem didn't just take the Jewish people out of Egypt as a mere payback of His promise that he made to Abraham many years prior. If it was just in order to keep a deal, He did not have to do it the way He did. The fact that Hashem took us out of Egypt with great miracles, fanfare, and pizzaz, showcased for us His level of love that He had/has to the Jewish people.

Of course, a vending machine that gives out extra goods is a broken system. We all know that.

However, when it comes to Hashem, when He deals with us with kindness and goodness that goes beyond the letter of the law, that is by no means a broken system at all, rather it is Hashem's way of showing His deep love and care for us, His chosen people.

Have a holy Shabbos!
R' Ori Strum

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