

This week's issue sponsored by
The Vago Family
 In honor of the marriage of
Tzeril to Yitzy Greenspan.
 May you build a bayis ne'eman
 b'Yisrael l'shaim u'l'tiferes.

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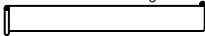
A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:18 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:36 - שקיעה
- 8:50 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:26 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:20 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:39 - שקיעה
- 6:21 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:51 - צאת 72

Tuesday 5:39:00 PM - מולד אדר
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Did You Know?

Parshas Mishpatim contains numerous laws and rulings of all sorts. We find two pesukim that seem interrelated, yet there is a third posuk, seemingly unrelated, placed between them.

The first posuk says that one who hits his father or mother shall be put to death. The next posuk says that one who kidnaps another and sells him shall be put to death. Then, the next posuk reverts to the topic of parents, and says that one who curses his parents shall be put to death. Why is the posuk about kidnapping inserted here, interpolated between these two references to parents?

R' Shimon Schwab z"l gives an insightful explanation. One who hits his parents is to die. But parents, be aware that if you treat your children as captives, stifling them and dousing their youthful aspirations and dreams, you are setting yourself and your children up for a rebellion, where they will come to hate you and curse you. Instead, we must give our children the chance to spread their wings and take flight. Do not restrain them -- guide them.

Thought of the week:
Put someone on a pedestal and he will climb even higher on his own.

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"והגישו אדניו אל האלהים והגישו הדלת או אל המזוזה ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע..." (כ"א:ו)

His master must bring him to the judges and then bring him next to the door, or to the doorpost, and shall pierce his ear with an awl. He then serves his master forever.

The Torah begins the mitzvos in Parshas Mishpatim with the case of the Jewish slave as the Jews had recently been freed from slavery themselves and could empathize. This is a fellow who stole, and, because he could not repay what he had taken, was sold into bondage by the Rabbinical Court. He is to work for his master for six years and go free in the seventh.

The purpose of this bondage is rehabilitation. Unlike the common scenario where a criminal is sent to jail, where he learns even how to perform even more heinous acts when he gets out, the Jewish criminal is "sold" into a Jewish home which must support him and his family, and make sure that he is treated even better than his master. If there is but one pillow in the house, the slave gets it, not the master. He is supposed to learn from this how to treat others, and to never steal again.

It is understandable that such a person might be happy in his situation because he is treated so well. With all his physical needs met, why should he ever wish to leave? The answer is that as a Jew, he is not only a physical being, but a spiritual one, and he is supposed to serve one master only: the Ribono Shel Olam, the Master of the Universe.

When this slave says he wishes to stay, his ear is pierced by the doorway. We find that the slave is "brought close" twice in this verse: once to the judges and once to the door. What is the significance of these two that he is brought to them, especially since there are other words which could have been used? "V'higisho," connotes closeness; some connection that should be obvious.

Perhaps, this slave sees himself as a purely physical being, and since his needs are met, he feels no reason to leave. That is why we bring him to the Bais Din. The word used for judges is elohim, and the Ramban says this word refers to the Heavenly presence which joins and sits in judgment with the Rabbinical Court. The message, perhaps, is that this fellow, too, can share a spiritual closeness with HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and he should not give that up for a "good master."

Then, we take him to the door, next to the mezuzah. Rabbeinu Bachya says this signifies the door with blood on its post through which we left Egypt and became the servants of G-d. If he has gone to the judges and seen their connection to the Al-mighty yet still wishes to remain a slave, it may be because he feels that he bears no similarity to such holy people. They may have a relationship and partnership with HaShem, but he does not. He is too distant. Therefore, we bring him to the door and remind him that in Egypt we wallowed in the depths of impurity, yet were able to pass out of that situation and become the chosen people of G-d. Now, too, the door is open for this fellow to leave bondage and become a free man, serving only HaShem.

In our lives, we often come across people who feel that they are not good enough to relate to HaShem. They feel that they are too far gone. Worse, we often feel that they are too far gone. However, none is so righteous that he has never sinned, and as such, we should all be able to relate and empathize with the sinner, as the Jews empathized with the enslaved fellow.

Therefore, when we see people making the mistake of thinking physical comfort and spiritual desolation is the best they can aspire to, our job is to help them recognize that they are valuable, spiritual, and able to come close to HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

A talmid of R' Noach Weinberg z"l, founder of Aish HaTorah, recounted how one evening, R' Noach invited him home to help put up his sukkah and have dinner. When they got there, R' Noach's seven-year old son was trying to climb a pipe in the corner of the living room. The boy was about six feet off the ground and not getting any higher.

Knowing what would happen in his home, the student braced himself as R' Noach approached the boy, sure that the child would get into trouble. But he was in for a surprise. R' Noach got right next to his son, bent over a bit and said, "Stand on my shoulders and I'll help you reach the ceiling."

That's how he treated every Jew, and that's why he was a giant in Kiruv. He didn't scold; he helped everyone reach for the ceiling.