



Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

A Torah Infused Life

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Throughout the majority of Parshas Mishpatim, we are taught about many of the monetary and interpersonal laws that govern day-to-day societal life. For example, we are taught about the responsibilities of one who borrows another's belongings, how to calculate payment for damages, and the responsibilities of one who encounters a lost object.

While much of Parshas Mishpatim falls within the realm of what we, as humans, can appreciate as logical, what is most perplexing about this Parsha is *where* it is placed in the Torah. The verses immediately preceding Parshas Mishpatim deal with the awesome experience of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. It was there that Hashem spoke to the Jewish people face to face and the people experienced Hashem in a way that was, and would remain, unparalleled. Why is the description of such an incredible, transformative experience followed by a Parsha that contains laws pertaining to the mundane and the ordinary?

The answer may be as follows. The giving of the Torah occupies a singular moment in history. While it was undoubtedly the loftiest spiritual experience possible in this world, it was meant to serve as a beacon and guide to how we live every moment of our lives. Parshas Mishpatim is teaching us that our every action, down to the most mundane and ordinary, is to be governed by the Torah and will of the very Hashem who descended from the heavens and spoke to us at Sinai. Every moment of our daily lives can be infused with the same holiness and spirituality that we experienced at Sinai. How? By acting according to His will and by keeping in mind that Hashem cares about each of our actions. With such an outlook and focus, we have the opportunity of living a life of spirituality and holiness, regardless of our situation, stage in life, or profession.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

But if the servant shall say... I do not want to go free, then his master shall bring him to the judges...and his master shall bore a hole through his ear... (21:5-6)

Why is the ear bored? Rav Yochanan ben Zakai said, "The ear that heard on Har Sinai 'lo signov' (do not steal) and nonetheless stole, let it be bored..." (Rashi)

Why do we wait to bore the ear of the servant only after he refuses to leave? Shouldn't the boring have been done after he stole? In addition, why did Rav Yochanan ben Zakai quote the posuk of 'lo signov' (Yisro) which prohibits the stealing of people (kidnapping), and does not quote 'lo signovu' (Va'eschanan) which prohibits stealing money?

PARSHA RIDDLE

How can one kill a person accidentally and not be obligated to run to an *ir miklat*?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How many of the 613 mitzvahs can we perform today?

Answer: 270. The others can only be performed if the Bais Hamikdash is standing (Chofetz Chaim).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Mishpatim*, the Torah declares that if a Hebrew servant declines to leave his life of servitude at the end of his term, "his master shall bore his ear through with an awl" (*Shemos* 21:5-6). Rashi explains that the ear is singled out for the performance of this ritual to underscore that the servant has forgotten what he has heard at Mt. Sinai – one who sells himself as a servant (and then voluntarily extends his servitude) has forgotten Hashem's asseveration that Jews are free, and servants to no one but Him: "For unto Me the children of Israel are servants; they are My servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am Hashem your G-d" (*Vayikra* 25:55).

Hashem's declaration that Jews are "My servants" – and not servants to servants" has various applications throughout the *halachah* of employment:

- The Talmud declares that "an employee may quit in the middle of the day" (*Bava Metzia* 10a). While the precise scope and details of this right are complex, it is clear that it grants an employee (as opposed to a contract worker) special privileges with regard to reneging on an employment contract.

- Rabbeinu Tam rules that an insolvent debtor, or a husband unable to maintain his wife, cannot be compelled to accept employment in order to satisfy his obligations. One basis for this position is the principle that Jews are not, and cannot be compelled to become, "servants to servants" (see *Tosafos Kesubos* 63a s.v. *Be'Omer* and *Shut. Ha'Rosh* 78:2). [Rabbeinu Eliyahu, however, disagrees with R. Tam.]

- Some authorities maintain that it is prohibited to enter into an employment commitment of too long a term (opinions differ over the maximum permitted length - see *Shulchan Aruch CM* 333:3; *Levush*; *Sema*; *Taz*; *Shach*; *Shut. Chasam Sofer OC* #206). This prohibition is limited to an employee who rooms and boards with his employer (*Pischei Choshen Sechirus* 7:1 and n. 3), or one for whom these expenses are paid by his employer and who is required to reside in the vicinity of his employer (*Shut. Chasam Sofer CM* end of #172). Others reject this entire restriction (see *Shach ibid.*).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I wasn't chosen for my height.
2. I caused a backward response.
3. I was like a barrel.
4. Almost a mass grave.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am doubled.
2. I give you a small and a large.
3. You'll have lots of lots.
4. I delay Passover.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 Yisro (I was in law; I am in the Law; Fleeing was my idea; Sometimes I am 'More')

#2 The letters on the Luchos (We were the first suspension; Where is the front?; We were see-through; We caused wealth.)

Congratulations to Rabbi Biberfeld's 4th & 6th graders and others for answering last week's questions correctly!

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to



Mini Table
Top Pool
Table Set

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
MARCH 29th!

Answer as many as you can. Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!
Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

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Horeb: The Power of Mitzvos

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