



## Hashem's Nudge

By David Benhamu, 12th Grade

In the beginning of Parshat Mishpatim we begin to learn the details of the Torah. It starts off teaching us the laws of a Jewish servant. It says that if you buy a Jewish servant he will serve you for six years and go free on the seventh free of charge. If the servant declares that he loves his master, his wife, and his children and he wants to stay for life, his master must take him before the court and have his ear pierced on a door post. Only then will he be able to be a servant for life. So the question is why begin here. There are 613 mitzvot, so why would Hashem start with this one?

The answer is obvious. Right before this story the Bnei Yisroel were slaves in Egypt, which makes it seem as though there must be a reason why this happened. Hashem knew this slavery would occur years earlier. Hashem had previously told Avraham that his descendants would be slaves in a strange land for 400 years. It seems that Hashem thought this was a necessary first experience for the Jewish people. From the beginning of time, Hashem was constantly trying to allow humans the ability to be free and one after the other they abused that privilege. From Adam and Chava to Migdal Bavel each generation abused its freedom. So Hashem started over with just Avraham and his family. But freedom is hard to define. We each try to find it and we deny freedom to others whose ideas of freedom conflict with ours. We can even see that in Avraham's family. Just three generations down the line, the Shvatim were willing to sell Yosef away to slavery. It took a collective experience of slavery by all of Bnei Yisrael to understand the value of freedom. We must always remind ourselves not to sell our brothers and sisters and to start a free society. So it is now obvious why we start with that law.

This leads to another question: if Hashem hates slavery so much why allow it to

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## The Proper Way To Teach

By Zachary Rosenberg, Layout Editor, 11th Grade

In this week's parsha, there are many new laws that are taught to the Jewish people. The first pasuk of the parsha says, "And these are the judgments that you should place before them." A Gemara in Masechet Eruvin tells the story of Rabbi Pridah, who used to teach his student everything 400 times, until he completely understood it. One time, the student was distracted because he knew that Rabbi Pridah had to leave; since he was distracted, he didn't understand it even after 400 times. Rabbi Pridah, therefore, told him to concentrate and went on to teach it another 400 times until the student understood. A Bas Kol then came out and asked Rabbi Pridah which reward he preferred: 400 years added to his lifetime or that his entire generation would merit Olam Haba. When he chose the latter, Hashem decided to grant him both rewards.

However, the Meforshim ask the following: Why was he only rewarded after the second round of the 400 teachings, but not after the first 400? Rabbi Pridah could have learned a lot in that time, but he gave up his personal growth to teach his student! One potential answer is that even though the student had limited capabilities, he was a big seeker and didn't give up on learning Torah. Therefore, Rabbi Pridah was almost obligated to teach him. This is similar to the way Rashi explains the first pasuk in Parshas Mishpatim: Hashem told Moshe

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**Torah Teasers**

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

**Parshas Mishpatim  
Questions**

1. In this parsha, which law refers to a door? What incident in the Book of Genesis mentions a door?
2. Which person in the Torah is specifically referred to as "the Hebrew slave"?
3. In this parsha, which two laws mention a tooth?
4. In this parsha, which law involves the number 30?
5. In this parsha, several laws pertain to the treatment of a widow. Who in the Torah is actually referred to as a widow?
6. Which insect appears in this parsha?
7. What precious stone is mentioned in this parsha? Where else in the Torah is that same precious stone mentioned?
8. In what two contexts is fire mentioned in this parsha?

**Answers**

1. If a Jewish slave wishes to work more than six years, his ear must be pierced near a door (Exodus 21:6). In parshas Vayera, when Lot closes the door behind the angels who come to visit, the people of Sodom try to break down the door (Genesis 19:6, 9, 10).
2. In parshas Vayeshev, the wife of Potiphar refers to Yosef as "the Hebrew slave" (Genesis 39:17).
3. The verse states "a tooth for a tooth": one must pay for the value of a tooth which one knocks out of another's mouth (Exodus 21:24). Further, a master must set his non-Jewish servant free if he had knocked out the servant's tooth (Exodus 21:27).
4. If an ox gores and kills a non-Jewish slave, the owner of the ox must pay the master of the slave 30 shekels as compensation (Exodus 21:32).
5. In parshas Vayeshev, Tamar is called a widow after the death of her second husband, Onan (Genesis 16:14).
6. The Torah states that the hornet (*tzireh*) will be sent before the Jews to drive away the enemy (Exodus 23:28).
7. The sapphire stone is mentioned as being beneath the legs of Hashem on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:10). In parshas Teztaveh, the sapphire was one of the 12 stones to be placed on the breastplate of the High Priest (Exodus 28:18).
8. Fire is mentioned with regards to a person damaging property via fire (Exodus 22:5). Fire is part of the description of Mount Sinai during the giving of the Torah (Exodus 24:17).

**ALIYAH SUMMARY**

**First Aliyah:** An Eved Ivri is released after six years of service. If he wants to stay by his master longer, then the master pierces his ear with an awl by the doorpost. The Torah continues with the laws of the Israelite maidservant, and her terms of release. Other laws contained in this aliyah include a husband's obligations towards his wife, punishments for murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, abusing parents, and the penalties of payment when a person injures another.

**Second Aliyah:** This aliyah continues with laws of personal injury: the punishment for one who kills or injures his servant and for one who causes a woman to miscarry. The Torah then discusses damages done by an ox and one who leaves his pit uncovered. The Torah then discusses the penalties for stealing.

**Third Aliyah:** One is liable for damages caused by a fire that he ignites. The Torah then details the potential liabilities of one who undertakes a position of a guardian, a borrower, or a renter, of someone else's possessions. The Torah then discusses the punishment for seducing a young woman, sorcery, bestiality, and offering an idolatrous sacrifice. The Torah also discusses the prohibitions against harassing a convert, widow, or orphan. We are also commanded with the mitzvah of lending money to the poor and the prohibition against lending with interest.

**Fourth Aliyah:** One may not curse a judge or leader, consume meat that was not "shechted," or offer a sacrifice before the animal was eight days old. The Torah also discusses committing perjury and judicial corruption. The Torah's commandments to separate all agricultural tithes in their proper order, sanctify the first-born son, return a lost animal to its owner, and help unload an overburdened animal, are all discussed here.

**Fifth Aliyah:** We are commanded not to lie or take a bribe. The mitzvah of the Shemitah, a 7-year cycle of one year of rest, is introduced. This is similar to the weekly cycle of Shabbos. We are forbidden to mention the name of other g-

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“When a fish is flopping out of the water, put it back in and it will swim again.”

- David Nisanov, DRS GO President



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# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Ari Keller

## Meat & Milk

In regards to eating meat and milk, the main question that often arises is how long should one wait between eating the two? There are many different opinions- 1 hour, 3 hours, into the 6th, 6 hours- but where do they come from?

This all starts from the Gemarah in Chulin which tells us that Mar Ukva's father would wait a whole day after eating meat to eat dairy, whereas Mar Ukva himself would eat dairy at the next meal. The Gemarah then says one who eats meat cannot eat cheese. Does this mean that you are never allowed to eat cheese? It must be what the Gemarah said about Mar Ukva. Either you should wait 24 hours, like his father, or wait from meal to meal like Mar Ukva. But how long is meal to meal?

There are a few different wait times that are quoted in the Rishonim. The Rabeinu Tam says that there is no wait time, but you just have to wash out your mouth. The Rambam and Rif say that you wait the amount of time that you normally have between each meal, which is 6 hours. The Shulchan Aruch paskins like this as well. However, the Rama quotes 3 alternative Shitos. First, you don't have to wait any amount of time, and you should just clean out your mouth and Bentsh. Second, what people do in his town is wait 1 hour. Lastly, those who are strict wait 6 hours. The Rama favors the last possibility and that's the opinion we should ideally follow.

Now, where does the 1 hour opinion come from? The Zohar says that within 1 hour one should not eat meat and dairy together. The Gra says that this means you can't eat them together in the same hour and that you should wait 1 hour between them. However, many people disagree with this explanation of the Zohar.

We just explained the 1 hour and 6 hours Minhagim, but where does the 3 hour Minhag come from? The Darchei Teshuva says that during the winter time, the time one waits between meals is shorter and can even be as little as 3 to 4 hours. Therefore, one would wait 3 hours after having meat to eat dairy.

Where does "into the 5th" Minhag come from? The Rambam says that the amount of time between each meal is "K'mo Shesh Shaos"- "Like 6 hours". This could then be 5 and a little bit hours. The Meiri even says that one should wait 6 or 5 hours between meat and dairy because that's the amount of time between meals.

However, because the Shulchan Aruch paskins that we should wait 6 hours, it is best that we do so. But in a case where you are in doubt about how much time has passed since you ate meat, you can be Makil and rely on any of the other opinions.

*(Aliyah Summary- Continued from page 2)*

ds. We are commanded to celebrate Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos and to go up to the Beis HaMikdash on these occasions. Finally, we are told not to cook meat in its mother's milk.

**Sixth Aliyah:** Hashem informed the Jews that He would dispatch an angel to lead them into Canaan. This angel would not tolerate disobedience. If, however, the Israelites would hearken to the angel, and eradicate idolatry from Eretz Yisrael, then they will be greatly rewarded: their Canaanite enemies will fall before them and Hashem will bless them with food and drink. Hashem will also remove illness from their midst.

**Seventh Aliyah:** This section continues describing the blessings the Israelites will receive if they faithfully serve Hashem: no miscarriages or barren women, longevity, wide spacious borders, and supernatural assistance in their quest to conquer Eretz Yisrael. Hashem warns the Jews against entering into treaties with the Canaanite natives or allowing them to remain in the land after the Israelite invasion. The Torah now relates some of the events that occurred in the days immediately prior to the giving of the Torah: Moshe went up to Har Sinai and received a message from God which he communicated to the people. The Jews enthusiastically committed themselves to follow all of His laws. After reading the Sefer HaBris, the Jews responded "Na'aseh V'Nishma." Then, together with the firstborns, Moshe offered sacrifices and sprinkled the blood on the people, bringing them into a covenant with God. Hashem then summons Moshe to ascend the mountain where he would remain for forty days and nights, and would then be given the luchos.

# SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Max  
Blumenthal*

Chazal relate a mashal about a group of thieves (thrown into prison by the king) who dug a tunnel, crawled through and escaped, but left one of them behind. When the prison guard arrived and saw the lone prisoner, he hit him with a stick and said: "You are having a bad day! The tunnel is dug before you, how were you not quick enough to run for your life?!"

Our parsha, Mishpatim, begins by relating the law of an Eved Ivri, a Jewish slave who refuses to accept his freedom after six years of servitude. This Eved became a slave because of certain aveiros that he violated. The Torah says that the master should drill a hole in this slave's ear and then he shall serve the master forever. On this pasuk, Rashi quotes Chazal and explains this strange mitzvah as "this ear that heard at Har Sinai the issur of stealing and still, he went and stole, and because of this a hole should be drilled into his ear. And if he sold himself, then an ear that heard at Har Sinai Hashem say, "for the Children of Israel are slaves unto Me" and he went and acquired a master for himself, let it be drilled."

This begs the question: if this slave is getting a hole in his ear because he transgressed the words of the Torah, then why do we bore his ear only after he refuses to go out free, why do we not bore his ear immediately after he stole/sold himself as a slave? Furthermore, we have to explain how this mitzvah is different from all the other mitzvos, as we do not drill the ear of a person who transgressed any other mitzvah in the Torah?

Each person was created to do the will of his Maker, however, the yetzer harah inside every person overpowers him every day. But, even when a person lets the yetzer harah win, we must know and believe that we have the power to defeat this challenge in our lives and be free of it, and try to think that it's not relevant to you! Our minds must be focused on the service of Hashem, the desire to do the will of Hashem, and therefore, if a person 'stumbles' and transgresses a sin, we are still certain that this is not his or even Hashem's will, rather, we stumbled because of the enticing yetzer harah. However, this person who chooses to be a slave reveals with this that when he committed a sin and stole or sold himself as a slave, he did this willingly, he chose to walk in the path of the yetzer harah, and now he chooses to remain captive to it.

To take this idea even further let's recall the aforementioned mashal of the thieves. If you have an opening to escape, then run! Raise your voice, shout, declare, make known that we are truly slaves, but not of the Inclination, rather, we are slaves of the King of all Kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu! And this is what these last six holy weeks of Shovavim are all about. Yes, it's true that we have moments in our lives that we let the yetzer harah win, but as long as you always remember that we aren't slaves to the yetzer harah because we have a loving and caring master, Hashem, everything will always be okay. Like the Gemara in Meseches Brachos says, Kol d'avid rachmana l'tav avid - everything that Hashem does is for the good!!

DOVIE HIRSCH

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DOGS

10TH GRADE

In last week's parsha of Yisro, the Jews received the Torah. Subsequently, in this week's parsha, Mishpatim, we learn about the many laws that are decreed in the Torah. In Shemos (22:30) the Torah says: "V'anshei Kodosh tihyun li u'basar basedeh treifah lo socheilu lakelev tashlichoon oso" - And you shall be holy people to Me, and flesh torn in the field you shall not eat; you shall throw it to the dogs.

This pasuk is troubling at first glance. Firstly, why is the treif meat specifically given to the dogs and not another animal? And what is so special about dogs?

This brings us back to Makkos Bechoros. Hashem commanded the dogs not to bark, even though it's their natural inclination to do so. What does this come to teach us? According to Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu in Divrei Mordechai, Hashem wants us to learn a lesson from dogs: even though they wanted to bark, they were able to control their natural inclinations because Hashem asked them to do so. Hashem wants us to learn a lesson from the dogs. We Jews, who have a stronger connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu than animals, have many desires and often need to fight our very nature. If the dogs, who are spiritually lower than us, can overcome their natural tendencies, why can't we?

We've now established why we give this meat to dogs, but this begs another question: why give the meat that we can't eat to them? How does this make us holy? To answer this, Rashi cites the Pasuk 11:7: U'lichol Bnei Yisrael lo yechratz kelev l'shono lmeish v'ad beheima l'maan taidun asher yafleh Hashem bein Mitzrayim u'vein Yisrael. During Makkos Bechoros, many cries were heard throughout Mitzrayim, but the dogs remained silent for the sake of Bnei Yisrael. Rashi says that as a reward for their silence, they were given the treif meat from the field.

By giving the meat to the dogs, we become holy. While we may have a desire to eat this meat, by going against our natural inclinations we become holy by choosing Hashem. Just as the dog was able to go against its nature, we can also go against ours to serve Hashem and become closer to Him.

*(David Benhamu- Continued from page 1)*

continue in any form? Why not just abolish it completely? Is it possible that the all powerful Hashem cannot change human behavior for the better? Let's go back to freedom, because in order to create such an environment you must have very little constructs and a free space to allow a person to make a choice. The old economic model was based on that fact that when people are left to their own devices they will make rational decisions. This has been proven to be wrong as people are more likely to make irrational choices in those situations. So then how can you give someone freedom yet have them make the right choices? To do this you must "nudge" them in the right direction. An example is in a cafeteria if you put the healthy foods in a more noticeable place while the junk food is in a hard to see place, it will nudge people to eat healthier foods. Hashem does the same thing. He allows slavery on a minute basis and puts it on a path that result in mankind destroying it in the future.

But why must people abolish it themselves? Why did Hashem choose this path? This is because in order to be free, people must choose to abolish slavery. In Rousseau's book The Social Contract he writes that people must be forced to be free. But that is a contradiction in and of itself because one cannot be free unless he chooses so, which in a sense is its own freedom.

The Rambam explains that Hashem can change nature, but He chooses not to change nature. Rather Hashem gives us a nudge to signal that something must be changed. It can take time and even, in the case of slavery, wars, for these truths to be discovered, but eventually they do come to fruition. Have a great Shabbos!



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## STORIES OF GREATNESS

### TOLD OVER BY: YOSEF SCHAFLER

A young boy once lay feverishly ill. His doctor, fearing for the young boy's life, prescribed vomit-inducing herbs and ordered that the boy be made to expel no less than 10 times. "Please, doctor," pleaded the boy's father. "My son is very delicate, and if he takes even one or two of those herbs, I am sure he will be overcome." "I know, I know, after all, I am the doctor," replied the physician. "But if you do not follow my instructions, the boy will soon die. Quick, get me a quill and paper, and I will write down the herbs and spices that I require."

The father watched with horror as the doctor filled the page with a fine script, but he had no choice but to dispatch a messenger to the market to bring back the prescribed drugs. When the messenger returned, laden with bundles, packets and bottles, the doctor asked that a table be brought to the sickroom, upon which he would prepare the remedies.

As the doctor began to cut and grind the pungent drugs, their strong odors entered the boy's nostrils, and he was nauseated to the point of vomiting, once, twice and again. Undeterred, the doctor continued to work with the herbs, until the boy had expelled 10 times, just as the doctor had wished, and was soon on his way to restored health.

"Now you understand," said the doctor. "I never expected the boy to ingest these medications, for I knew that he could not stomach them. Furthermore, if I actually wanted him to ingest the medications, I would have never ordered so many. Verily, just one or two would have sufficed. Rather, I intended for their odor to cause him to vomit, and for that I needed many herbs."

This explains the long litany of horrible punishments the Torah describes to us as awaiting those who disregard G-d's commands. Why so many? Not because He intends to administer them all, for surely one or two would have sufficed. Rather, He hopes that when we read the many ways that a person may suffer for his or her sins, their very "odor" will be enough to inspire us to expel the evil from our midst and mend our ways.

*(Zachary Rosenberg- Continued from page 1)*

that he should teach the Jews the Torah over and over until they understood the reason of each law and its significance. It was, therefore, only once the student didn't pay attention, yet Rabbi Pridah still taught him another 400 times, was he rewarded for his actions.

There is also a Gemara in Masechet Chagiga that displays us with an important lesson about teaching. The Gemara says that if the rav is like an angel, you should learn Torah from him; otherwise you should not learn from him. The Sefer Hamakneh explains that a human being rises to higher and higher levels through involvement in Torah, while Melachim are static and stay at the same level. The Gemara is informing us that when a rav is teaching his students, he must be completely devoted to raising their level, and he must not take his own growth into account during that time. If he is concerned with his own growth, it will be detrimental to the development of his talmidim. That is why when teaching, the rebbe must act as a malach who technically doesn't grow. Also, in Parshas Yisro the midrash says that Moshe didn't turn to his own dealings when coming down from Har Sinai; rather, he went straight to the people instead. The meforshim explain that this means that he could have delved into the depths of Torah and raised himself to higher levels, but he ignored his personal growth in order to teach Torah to Klal Yisrael.

However, there will still be a reward for the rebbe in the end. There is a pasuk in Tehillim that says, "A Tzadik will flourish as a date palm and he will grow tall as a cedar in Lebanon." The Chasam Sofer notes that a date palm is the shortest of palms because it produces fruit which holds back its growth. The pasuk is saying that a rebbe should produce talmidim without being concerned for his personal growth, because in the end, he will rise as high as a cedar tree and he will not lose anything as a result of the efforts he put into his talmidim.

# The Thief's Embarrassment

By Aiden Buchbinder, 9th Grade

When a thief steals an ox, the halacha is that he must pay 5 times the animal's value, whereas when a thief steals a sheep, he pays only 4 times the value. Why the difference? Rashi famously quotes Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai who says that the difference between the ox and sheep is that when the thief steals the ox, it is in a dignified manner because the ox walks on its own. However, by the sheep, the thief must carry the sheep on his shoulders in an undignified fashion. Thus, the Torah has compassion for the dishonored thief and requires him to pay less. However, Rashi continues with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, who says that it is based on the animal's working power. Since an ox works the field he is valued more than the sheep, therefore warranting a larger penalty.

The Divrei Dovid explains the difference of opinion. Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai holds that really by both animals the thief must pay 5 times the value, however by the sheep the Torah gives the thief a discount based on his discomfort and he pays 4 times the value. Conversely, Rabbi Meir holds that the penalty for both animals is 4 times the value, however the Torah has compassion on the owner of the ox who was deprived of a working animal, and charges the thief the extra multiple.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe asks on Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai's explanation: surely the sheep thief is stealing at a time where nobody is present, and as such why does the Torah give him a reduction based on his embarrassment? Surely there is no embarrassment if nobody is around to witness the crime?

He answers that the embarrassment actually takes place after the thief is caught, when the crime becomes public knowledge. This is incredibly embarrassing because he sought to cover his tracks by going at night and in secrecy, yet people still found out about his wrongdoing. Additionally, the public knows that in order to steal the sheep, he must have acted in an undignified manner. As such the Torah has compassion.

We can learn from the Torah that even the lowest thief, who defies the will of Hashem, merits compassion, how much more so should we give compassion to others!

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# An Eye For An Eye

Baer Boczko

10th Grade

"An eye for an eye" - Shemot 21:24 compared to whipping. When the punishment of whipping is administered, if the convicted party is judged unfit to receive all thirty-nine lashes, he receives less down to as few as three for the weakest individuals.

Much has been written to prove that the expression "an eye for an eye" really implies a monetary settlement. Yet we offer additional logical proofs, despite the fact that we already believe that this phrase refers to monetary compensation. Chazal (Bama Kamma, 84) explained that if "an eye for an eye" meant a literal eye being used for the punishment, it is possible that the perpetrator could die from his punishment and end up giving "an eye and a life" for the eye he removed. There are some who attempt to refute this by comparing the situation to "whipping," where the physical condition of the individual is assessed before any punishment is given. This is done to see whether or not the individual will be able to withstand all thirty-nine lashes. Yet, there are some who hold gouging an eye cannot be

With "an eye for an eye," however, there is no middle ground. It is impossible to give a punishment in a partial manner. Many who have knocked out eyes would remain unpunished if the punishment didn't kill them. Thus the law would not be equal for all unless monetary compensation is accepted as the true interpretation of this Pasuk. Another proof can be brought from the words "a burn for a burn." The victim's burn can never be reproduced on the perpetrator in exactly the same measurements. Even though we can guarantee the burn's length and width will be the same, we cannot ascertain the depth.

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