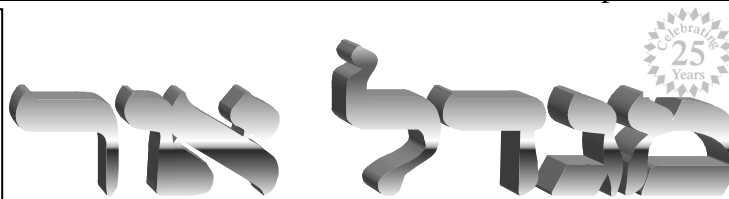


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Wishing a very happy birthday to the author of this august publication.

We are so proud of the work you put into this sheet each week, and marvel at your dedication to spreading the joy of Torah. From your loving family.

A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:20 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:38 - שקיעה
- 8:44 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:25 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:20 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:39 - שקיעה
- 6:21* - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:52 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

מולד אדר Thursday 7:02:00 PM

Rosh Chodesh is Friday and Shabbos
Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com and Chabad.org

Now You Know!

Straight from Har Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments, the Torah begins many other laws which were also given at Sinai or just before.

The very first one in Parshas Mishpatim is that of the Eved Ivri, the Jewish slave who was sold into servitude for having stolen and he did not have the wherewithal to repay it.

How often did this come up?

Most likely some of the other situations such as an animal that caused damage were more common. Why then would Hashem choose this to be the introductory mitzvah of this parsha?

Mishpatim means "judgments." Judgment is a dangerous thing because it is difficult to differentiate between the sin and the sinner. Instead of condemning an act, we often condemn the person.

Therefore, the Torah begins with the Jewish slave, who did something wrong. Instead of throwing him in jail and ruining him for life, we take him into our homes and treat him very well. In this way we rehabilitate him.

The very poignant lesson is that the Torah's judgments are a not a way to identify bad people, but a way to ensure that the good inside people is allowed to shine forth.

Thought of the week:
Building a better you is the first step in building a better world. In fact, it's the only one you control.

”ושתי את גבלך מים סוף ועד ים פלשתים וממדבר עד הנהר... וגרשתמו מפניך” (שמות כג:ל)

“And I will set your borders from the Reed Sea to the [Mediterranean] and from the desert to the [Euphrates] River, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hands and cast them out from before you.” (Shmos 23:31)

The Torah was given at Sinai amidst noise and lightning, yet the whole world was silent and awestruck by it. The Jews, for their part, were quick to accept Hashem's Torah and His role for them in the world. The nations of the earth were fearful, but the wicked prophet Bilaam assured them that Torah was just for the Jews and they didn't need to be concerned with it.

Even before Moshe went up to spend forty days on the mountain receiving the Torah, Hashem told the Jews that their destiny was to inherit the Land of Israel, center of the world, which was promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, to be given to their children.

Here, the Torah tells us that any indigenous people would be cast out, not by the Jews, but by Hashem, Himself. This is, as the very first Rashi in the Torah tells us, because the world belongs to Hashem and He can take land from anyone and give it to whomever He wishes.

In fact, in history, there really were no indigenous peoples, because at various times, conquerors came and moved people from place to place. This was done partly so the Jews would not feel bad when they were exiled. However, the rationale for giving the Jews this land, and the means for them to stay in it, are very specific.

In order for the Jews to merit the Land of Israel, we must follow the Torah and live up to Hashem's plan for us. We must do the mitzvos and study the Torah, as alluded to this week when we said, “Naaseh V'Nishma,” we will do (the mitzvos) and listen (to words of Torah.) This is also suggested by the borders given of Eretz Yisrael.

The four landmarks given for the land's borders are very specific. There are three bodies of water, the Reed Sea, the Mediterranean (here referred to as the Sea of the Philistines, *known as the Gazan shoreline, today*), and the Euphrates River. Water is a euphemism for Torah, which quenches our thirst for knowledge, purifies us, and is our source of life.

The fourth border is the desert, the one in which the Jews wandered for forty years. However, they didn't wander aimlessly. Rather, they were guided specifically by the Providence of Hashem. It is where we learned to rely on Him and trust that He can and will provide all our needs.

Perhaps Hashem wanted us to know, at the beginning of our journey, that our ultimate destination was a world in which we look to Him for everything and seek to fulfill his will. Our goals are framed by these guideposts, which remind us of why we are on this planet. That is how we merited the land in the past, and how we will one day soon merit it again, may that be speedily and in our days.

In Radin, there was a widow who lived in a rented house with her young children. When she couldn't pay her rent, the landlord told her to leave. Winter was approaching and she had nowhere else to go so she pleaded with him to let her stay. The heartless man removed the roof of the shack and she had no choice but to leave.

The townspeople were aghast and went to the Chofetz Chaim. He said one word: “Wait.”

Years later, this landlord's son died of a very contagious disease. The Chevra Kadisha was afraid to touch the dead body for fear of contamination. In the freezing cold, the man had to dig a grave and bury his son with his own hands.

“Hashem does not just let things go,” said the Chofetz Chaim. “He is very methodical but gives people time to repent. Eventually, though, if he does not make amends for his sins, a person will be punished as he deserves.”