

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תרפ"ו RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS MISHPATIM

THE SECOND CROWN OF NISHMAH

In Tanna D'bai Ailyahu (chapter 17) it says that when *Am Yisrael* proclaimed their two word commitment of *נעשה ונשמע*, Hashem responded with the words *ביתוך ושכנתי בתוכם* build for me a holy residence and I will dwell within you. The obvious question is what in *נעשה ונשמע* triggered the response of Hashem's dwelling by *Yidden*?

The *parsha* begins with the laws of *Eved Ivri*. Whether he was sold by *Beis Din* in order to pay restitution for theft, or he sold himself due to financial duress, when the seventh year of *Shemita* comes he must be sent free from his bondage. If he chooses to remain under the dominion of his master, a certain ritual takes place. He is brought to *Beis Din* and his ear is drilled by the *Mezuzah* and he remains in servitude until the *Yovel* year.

When *Chazal* discuss this ritual of boring his ear they say that that the reason is because (if he sold himself) his ear heard at *Har Sinai* that one must be a servant to Hashem and to no one else. Therefore, the ear which corresponds to the sense of hearing, is found to be blemished spiritually so *Beis Din* blemishes his ear physically in order to bring to his consciousness his shortcoming. In the case where *Beis Din* sold him because of his theft, his ear is bored because he heard on Sinai you shall not steal and nevertheless he went and stole, and his ear is thusly punished.

The Sfas Emes (Mishpatim תרנז) sheds new light in understanding this ritual on the ear. When *Am Yisrael* declared their commitment of *נעשה ונשמע* what they intended by adding the unnecessary *נשמע* was to demonstrate their willingness and readiness to hear more and not merely to be satisfied with a minimum productive spirituality. They declared that any further instructions from Hashem, His *Neveim*, or the *Rabbanan*, they accept wholeheartedly. Whatever brings *nachas ruach* to Hashem they will gladly take upon themselves and fulfill it.

According to his interpretation of the Sfas Emes we can answer the *meforshim's* question in Shabbos 88 why when *Yisrael* said *נעשה ונשמע* they received two crowns on their heads, one for *נעשה* and the other for *נשמע*. They deserved one crown for *preceding* the commitment of *נעשה* before even hearing to what they were committing themselves. But why was there a reward for the *נשמע* for hearing and learning to what they committed to? That is normal behavior! However according to the Sfas Emes the *נשמע* that *Yidden* committed to, possesses its own merit that of accepting to **maximize** their relationship with Hashem and not just to be *yotzei*, or free themselves from any new obligations. For this addition they deserve a second crown.

With this Sfas Emes we can also answer our original question why did our declaration of *נעשה ונשמע* trigger Hashem's decision to anchor His dwelling in the *Mishkan* in the encampment of *Am Yisrael*. Since *Yisrael* revealed their deep desire to always be close with Hashem which is the essence

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of נשמת, Hashem facilitated that experience by dwelling amongst His admirers. In this way the bonding in the relationship will develop into a continuously growing spiritual consciousness and intimacy for those who seek *dveikus* with Hashem.

Now we can have a deeper insight into the ritual of boring the ear of the *Eved Ivri*. By selling your services and dependency to another Yid you are allowing yourself to compromise your *avodas Hashem* changing it from *Lechatchilah* to *Bedieved*. Total reliance on anyone other than Hashem is a form of spiritual bondage. One's commitment to נשמת which conveyed to be always ready to hear more, to upgrade, improve one's *avodas Hashem*, was proven futile by the *Eved Ivri* who desires to continue his servitude with one who himself is an *eved* to Hashem. For one's initial act of being sold as a slave due to extreme poverty and financial duress, the Torah does not label you with a sentence to be immediately punishable. However, after six years when one's dire situation lost its bite and yet we find the *eved* declaring that he loves his master his new wife and children and that he is not leaving, this demonstrates retroactively that in the first place he really did not mind becoming a slave and accepting another yoke upon himself besides Hashem. Basically by agreeing to the ritual done to his body he publicly is not abashed of his former misdemeanors of stealing, even though he heard directly from Hashem that stealing is abhorrent.

There is one more point we would like to make. The drilling in his ear is executed by a utensil called a מרצע which is *gematriah 400*. The Daas Zekainim explains that *Yidden* were slaves in *Mitzrayim* for 400 years and yet Hashem took them out with the message "I want you to be slaves to me". Yet they acquired for themselves other masters. We could add to this explanation that *Am Yisrael* were supposed to have servitude for 400 years but Hashem redeemed them **earlier** the total of 190 years in order to hurry them to receive the Torah at Sinai. Hashem did the same thing with the *din* of *eved ivri* that He let you be released from servitude at *Shemitta*. If you refuse to leave after years of realizing that being a slave to another human instead of being totally dependent on Hashem, compromises your relationship with Hashem and stunts your spiritual growth, you should have stayed in *Mitzrayim* as a slave for the full term of 400 years.

The *sefarim* tell us that עבד עברי is *gematriah משיח*. The barometer of how quickly will *Moshiach* come to redeem us is dependent upon what type of *Eved Ivri* we are. When the signs of *geulah* are apparent yet we say to ourselves I love the amenities and luxuries of my *galus* and I am not willing to surrender them, you are prolonging his coming.

Seder night the custom is to open the door for *Aliyahu Hanavi*. Did you ever think to yourself why bother to open the door when he is a *malach* and can enter even through the wall? The answer is that the opening of the door is not for **his sake** but rather for **you** in order to demonstrate that you are ready and committed to go with him **now**.

Gut Shabbos, Rav Brazil