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Parshah Mishpatim
by Julie Zhuk on 2023-02-18

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Last week's parsha was Yisro and this week the parsha is Mishpatim. These two are connected, they were divided into two parts. The second part is extended into the parsha of Mishpatim. G-d didn't just want the Jews to get the Torah, the whole purpose behind that was for the people to become a holy nation. The Torah was an ancient narrative expressing Divine Wisdom. G-d wanted Moses to teach the Jewish people to "grow into a kingdom of priests and become a holy nation." In this parsha we are introduced to some laws about keeping kosher.

Jews stand out from other religions and cultures because we don't mix dairy and meat together. We learn from the Torah early on to not boil a kid in its mother's milk and this specifically refers to separating dairy from meat. Growing up I had always known that a cheeseburger was a huge no-no. Over the years of studying Judaism I have learned that after eating meat, we are required to wait six hours before eating anything that has dairy in it. Eating anything with dairy and then eating anything with meat has less wait time.

The parsha explains that dairy represents kindness and meat represents discipline. From a spiritual aspect, the two have opposing effects and that is why Jews don't mix them. If adults see children acting out of line, such as hitting each other or being verbally abusive should they do anything about it? The parsha tells asks these questions because it is not suggesting to be the bad guy or the good guy, or to rock the boat. Intervening is important, but it's the way that adults go about it with children, they have to tread very carefully. The parsha says it is important to do both, be the good and bad guy at the same time. By doing this we are showing a sign of kindness and then we use discipline. There was a specific comment about this topic coming from the Jewish source, Nachmanadies he was known as a great scholar and rabbi.

He said that by Jews separating meat from dairy when eating we are not becoming a cruel people. By not eating both dairy and meat together we are not cooking a kid in its mother's milk. In Kabbalistic terms, meat represents the Divine attribute of having strict judgment. Milk represents the attribute of kindness. Another reason to not mix dairy and meat would call for a correspondence of opposing spiritual forces. Judgment and kindness have been known to have opposite effects, by blending them together their mixture would corrupt the spiritual forces that they form when together. This is why mixing dairy and meat is a dangerous thing for Jews to do it also will mess with us being a holy nation. We have to be careful in the physical world and the spiritual one as well.