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Parsha Mishpatim
by Julie Zhuk on 2024-02-10

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From last week's Parsha, G-d had a plan for the Jews to become a holy Nation. G-d had said to the Jewish people, "If you listen to Me and keep My Ways then you will be a precious treasure to Me among all the peoples. G-d told the Jewish people, "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This was G-d's narrative of giving the Jews the Torah. This was from last week's Parsha when He started to give the Torah to the Jews. It continues in this week's Torah portion called Mishpatim. G-d's idea of becoming a holy nation, is His action plan the Torah, an ancient narrative expressing Divine wisdom. The Jews had seen the Revelation of G-d and it was a lot for them to take in. There were laws about indentured servants, Jews learned about what penalties if anyone was to be murdered, kidnapped, or assaulted, then there were laws about how to separate meat and dairy. So there were a lot of information for them to take in. This Parsha had fifty-two different rules for them to observe, twenty three imperative rules and thirty things that they were not allowed to do.

In this Parsha, G-d promised to bring the Jews to the Holy Land. He warned them against going against the Pagan ways. The Jews promised to do as G-d commanded. They left Aaron and Hur in the Israelite camp and Moses went up to Mount Sinai. He stayed there for forty days and forty nights. It was there that he got the Torah from G-d. In this week's Parsha, we can spark enthusiasm in the simplest way by understanding a scene from Mount Sinai. It comes at the end of this week's Parsha. The glory of G-d had rested on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered Mount Sinai. The appearance of G-d it was like a consuming fire. From the Chabad perspective of Rebbe Schneerson at the top of the mountain, nothing grows there. The consuming fire represented the burning desire of the Jews wanting to leave the confines of corporeal existence and go up to their Creator. Normally, there is smoke when there is some kind of fuel present. At the top of the Mount Sinai, with G-d present He had suspended normal reality and made a "consuming fire." This fire came from a rock itself. Jews learn that "inanimate" parts of our lives can spark enthusiasm. People may think that enthusiasm or "fire" is reserved only for special occasions or only for Torah studies. We learn from this Parsha that we are holy people.

Another thing to take away from this week's Parsha is that Dairy represents kindness and meat . The Kaballah teaches that every creation and every being has an inner and spiritual dimension. There is a differing in physical characteristics that express a deeper difference from their spiritual source. From the spiritual source, G-dly traits have kindness and discipline. These are two ways that G-d gives to the world. G-d does this with expansiveness and benevolence, and He is also using graciousness. G-d is also being discreet, using discipline, and being harsh when He needs to. The spiritual sources are also reflected in the natural colors of the two materials.

It comes from the word discipline, it's a bright color red and it's harsh. The color that comes from dairy is white and it is soft. When speaking about food this week's Parsha tells us that dairy represents kindness and meat represents discipline. The most important thing to walk away from the Parsha here is that kindness always wins. We should always be gracious and loving. If we ever need to discipline anyone, we have to figure out a way to sweeten and soften the blow.