

## Parshas Mishpatim

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## Our Incredible Influence!

The Rabbainu B'chaya discussed the unusual idea of the nirtzeh - the slave that wants to stay with his master past the requisite 6 years. He explains that both the master and the slave share the blame for this process! The Rabbainu B'chaya points out that people hate being slaves, and this slave wanting to stay as a slave is very strange and unnatural. To have only Hashem as your master is desirable! We therefore want to make it clear from the ceremony that this isn't a good thing and they are both at fault. **So by nailing the slave's ear to the doorpost, they both reinforce that they need to serve Hashem only, and not be a servant to anyone else.**

We can ask, why does it matter that it is weird and unnatural that we need to straighten it out? Why would it be different if it wasn't weird that he wants to continue being a slave? It seems that there are two points that the Rabbainu B'chaya is highlighting - that this is unnatural and that both the slave and the master are at fault. It seems from here that if the master had acted like a proper Jew, then a slave wouldn't now want to be free. If the master would have shown the slave the beauty of the Torah and Mitzvos and serving Hashem, then it would be impossible that the slave would have wanted to stay as a slave. Otherwise, the slaves natural desire to be free would be in control of his desire to get free meals and lodging, and he would want to be a servant to Hashem alone. Therefore the master needs to do the actual action of piercing his slave's ear, to send an equal message to himself that he needs to shape up as well!

**We see from here that a Jew is very susceptible to being inspired to serve Hashem!** Even this slave, who has a very big desire to stay as a slave, if the master would have acted properly, it would be unnatural for the slave to want to be a slave. We also see from here the tremendous responsibility people who are in the position to influence others, like Rebbeim and parents have on their students and children. We don't see anywhere that the master actively made the slave not actively enjoy serving Hashem, rather from being around him, the slave failed to be inspired. **The way we act is picked up by people, especially children and students, and we are held responsible for their actions.** It is incumbent upon us to always strive to become better people, even if we never actively give this to our children and students, and be walking role models. **We must never forget how much we affect those around us by simply doing what is right**