

PARSHAT MISHPATIM
EXODUS 21:1-24:18
25 SH'VAT 5782/27 JANUARY 2022



Paris, the Place de L'Europe On A Rainy Day
Painting by Gustave Caillebotte

BEYOND THE FRAME

1. *“And God said to Moses....Moses took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, ‘All that God has said we shall do and we shall hear’....Then God said, ‘Come up to Me on the mountain...’”* (Exodus 24:1-12)

This passage [Exodus 24:1-12] was said before the Ten Commandments. (Rashi)

Moses came and told the people all the words of God and all the laws. (Exodus 24:3)

“All the laws” refers to the seven Noachide laws and others that were given to them at Marah [Exodus 15:25]. (Rashi)

And Moses wrote all the words of God. (Exodus 24:4)

Moses wrote from Creation to the giving of Torah. He also wrote down the commandments they were given at Marah. (Rashi)

2. How can the moment of arrival in the wilderness, a moment before Torah was given, serve as a paradigm of the eternal freshness of the words of Torah? Before the process of Revelation begins, there is a spontaneous understanding that their relation to law has been inadequate. There is a resolve to imbue old forms with new meanings, as the expression of God's will. They realize they have done nothing, for all was habit and convention. (Maor VaShemesh)

3. The new era dawns, therefore, *before* the Torah is given. The Torah comes to answer a human readiness for a revisioning of culture....God as transformative Presence comes, commanding from outside. But the desire for Him comes from within human consciousness. (Avivah Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*)

4. Abraham
Jacob
Moses