

Parshas Mishpatim in a Nutshell
(Exodus 21:1–24:18)

Following the revelation at Sinai, G-d legislates a series of laws for the people of Israel. These include the laws of the indentured servant; the penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault and theft; civil laws pertaining to redress of damages, the granting of loans and the responsibilities of the "Four Guardians"; and the rules governing the conduct of justice by courts of law.

Also included are laws warning against mistreatment of foreigners; the observance of the seasonal festivals, and the agricultural gifts that are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem; the prohibition against cooking meat with milk; and the mitzvah of prayer. Altogether, the Parshah of Mishpatim contains 53 mitzvot — 23 imperative commandments and 30 prohibitions.

G-d promises to bring the people of Israel to the Holy Land, and warns them against assuming the pagan ways of its current inhabitants.

(continued next column)



The bulk of the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch (the Code of Jewish Law) has nothing to do with synagogue worship. Instead, it deals with living Jewishly in our everyday lives, conducting ourselves according to G-d's will within the down-to-earth realities that we confront at home, in our workplaces, and in our relations with others. — *The Rebbe*

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The people of Israel proclaim, "We will do and we will hear all that G-d commands us." Leaving Aaron and Hur in charge in the Israelite camp, Moses ascends Mount Sinai and remains there for forty days and forty nights to receive the Torah from G-d. ❖

**Join us
each weekday morning
Mon-Fri
as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

*When the month of
Adar enters, we
increase in joy.
--Talmud, Taanit 29a.*

**Thank You to:
The Baal Korei,
and the
Security Volunteers**

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, February 13, 2021
Eastern Standard Time
Earliest Tallis 5:56 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:29 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:38 PM
Plag Hamincha 4:26 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 5:58 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Feb 12 / Shevat 3

Rosh Chodesh – Day 1

Candle Lighting.....5:10 pm

Mincha5:10 pm

Shabbos Day – Feb 13 / Adar 1

Rosh Chodesh – Day 2

Shacharis..... 9:30 am*

Torah Reading 10:30 am

Rabbi Drasha 11:05 am

Mincha5:15 pm

Rabbi's Drasha.....5:30 pm

Shabbos Ends6:11 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:29 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin

*This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
The Shul.*

Chassidic Masters

Keeping In Touch Vol. 2: Mishpatim

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

This week's Torah reading speaks about the Jews' **acceptance** of the Torah. Last week's Torah reading spoke about the **giving** of the Torah. So why the repetition?

There are two dimensions to the event at Sinai: G-d's perspective and ours. Parshas Yisro relates that He gave the Torah, making it possible for man to relate to Him on His frequency. Until the Torah was given, there was an unbreachable chasm dividing man from G-d. For there is no other channel through which a finite man can relate to G-d in His infinity. By giving the Torah, G-d reached out to man and granted him the opportunity to connect himself to G-d on G-d's terms.

Parshas Mishpatim focuses on man's response to G-d's initiative. To what extent are we willing to commit ourselves to Him?

There are some who are prepared to do what G-d says when it makes sense. If there is a Divine commandment that they appreciate and feel a connection to, they will observe it. If they do not understand, then they will pass.

Is there anything wrong with that approach? Well, such a person is not bad. He or she may indeed be quite refined & pleasant company.

Nevertheless, if the decision whether or not to follow a mitzvah is based on the person's logic or desires, he is not making a com-

mitment to G-d; he is basically serving himself. He is his own man, not G-d's.

That can lead to a difficulty, for a person who is determining what is right or wrong on his own can easily err. Self-love is the most powerful bribe there is, and it is possible that it will warp a person's perception until he will confuse good and evil, defining values solely on the basis of his own self-interest.

Moreover, even when the person does not fall prey to such failings and is able to maintain exemplary standards of conduct, something is missing. The word mitzvah relates to the word tzavsa, meaning "connection." When a person fulfills a mitzvah only because of the dictates of mortal wisdom, his observance lacks the fundamental awareness of the bond with G-d that the mitzvah establishes.

At Sinai, the Jews accepted the Torah by saying: "We will do and we will listen," expressing their commitment to follow G-d's will even before they heard — let alone understood — what He would command. By doing so, they adopted an objective standard of good and evil, for it would be the Torah's guidelines and not their own subjective feelings that would determine their values.

But more than that, giving such a spiritual blank check is the most appropriate way to respond to G-d's initiative. It implies that just as He is boundless and unlimited, we are prepared to open ourselves to Him in an boundless and unlimited way. This enables the Torah to bring about a complete bond with Him, tying us not only to the dimensions of Him that we can comprehend,

but to His infinite aspects which defy all human understanding.

When speaking about the era of the Redemption, Maimonides emphasizes that: "In [Mashiach's] days, all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times.... This is the main thrust of the matter: This Torah, with its statutes and laws, is everlasting." Maimonides is ostensibly teaching us something about the era of the Redemption, that the giving of the Torah will not be repeated; there will not be a new covenant. In doing so, however, he is teaching us something about the Torah.

By highlighting that Mashiach will not introduce a new truth to man, he heightens our awareness of what the Torah is. Man will not need a deeper and more encompassing truth in the era of the Redemption, because that is not a possibility. The Torah is perfect G-dly truth. It cannot be augmented or improved.

In the era of the Redemption, this truth will be embraced by all mankind and this will be the catalyst for the environment of peace, prosperity, and knowledge that will characterize that age.

This leads to a further point. If the fundamental thrust of the era of the Redemption is that "This Torah, with its statutes and laws, is everlasting," then by making the Torah the fundamental thrust of our lives, we can anticipate and actually create the mindset that will prevail in the era of the Redemption. This will expand the frontiers encompassed by this approach, helping it spread until it becomes man's universal framework of reference. ❖

Why Is Adar a Month of Happiness?

By Naftali Silberberg

The month that was reversed for them from grief to joy. – Megillas Esther 9:22

There are many joyous dates on the Jewish calendar, but besides Purim, none of them affect the entire month, causing it to be auspicious and joyous. What is the intrinsic connection between Purim and Adar? Perhaps a comprehension of the unique nature of Purim will allow us to understand why its joy extends throughout the entire month of Adar.

Haman thought to take advantage of the Jews when they were at their lowest point. After nearly a millennium of freedom, independence, and constant reliance on miracles, they were now banished from their land, helpless and seemingly at the mercy of the laws of nature. This was a completely new experience for the Jewish nation. Their spiritual status was also significantly affected. The Temple in Jerusalem where G-d's presence was manifest, a symbol of the special relationship He shares with His chosen nation, laid in ruins. As for the prospects of its reconstruction — even the gentiles were aware of Jeremiah's prophesy that after seventy years of exile G-d would return the Jews to their land and rebuild the Temple. Seventy years had elapsed (or so everyone thought, due to erroneous calculations), and the awaited redemption had not arrived.

"The timing has never been better," Haman thought. "Surely the Chosen People have lost their exalted status. Now is the perfect moment to implement the Final Solution."

Haman, however, was not yet satisfied. He needed one more sign indicating the Jews' vulnerability. The lottery would have the final say. And indeed, the lottery provided the exact sign he anxiously awaited. The lottery designated Adar to be the month when his nefarious plan would be put into motion. The Talmud tells us that Haman was overjoyed by this favorable omen. "My lottery fell on the month when Moses died," he exclaimed. The demise of Moses, the "head" of the Jewish nation, was surely a metaphor for the demise of the entire nation!

Haman successfully pinpointed the moment when the Jews were at their lowest point — historically as well as calendar-wise — to implement his plan... But his plan still did not succeed.

Why?

The history of our nation is very much compared to the human lifespan. Through the course of a lifetime every person undergoes drastic changes; fluctuation being the most consistent feature of life. The helpless newborn has virtually nothing in common with the independent, talented personality which will emerge years down the line. Adulthood, too, has ups and downs, happy days and depressing days, fulfilling days and seemingly wasted days. There is, however, one constant: the very identity and essence of the person. John Doe remains John Doe from the day he is born until the day he dies.

The same is true with our nation. We have ups and downs, both spiritually and materially, but our very identity, the fact that we are G-d's chosen nation, is never affected.

It can actually be argued that, in a certain sense, our perpetual relationship with G-d is more evident when we are exiled and downtrodden due to our sins, and G-d still interferes on our behalf, as was demonstrated by the Purim miracle. This phenomenon demonstrates the durability of our relationship; the ability of our essential identity to survive no matter our external state.

(Continued next page)

Why Is Adar a Month of Happiness? (continued)

All other holidays celebrate the "highs" of our nation. And therefore their joy is limited, because highs don't last. Purim celebrates a time when we were at a low point in our history – but our relationship with G-d remained intact. Its joy is therefore greater than the joy of any other holiday, because it demonstrates the essential nature of our relationship with G-d — and that is a constant.

The month of Adar, the month which Haman understood to be the most inauspicious month for the Jews, is the happiest month of the year—the month when we bear in mind that "inauspicious" has absolutely no bearing on our relationship with G-d. ❖

From Our Sages

G-d And these are the laws which you shall set before them (Exodus 21:1)

The phrase "and these" (ve'eileh) implies that they are a continuation of what is written before. This is to teach us that just as the laws written above (the Ten Commandments) are from Sinai, these too are from Sinai.

-- (Mechilta; Rashi)

Since the majority of laws set forth in the Parshah of Mishpatim are logical laws, the Torah wishes to emphasize that these too are divinely ordained.

-- (Commentaries)

He shall pay for the loss of his work, and he shall fully heal him (Exodus 21:19)

From here is derived that a physician is allowed to heal [and we do not say that since G-d afflicted the person, it is forbidden to cure him].

-- (Talmud, Bava Kamma 85a)

The young wife of Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch had fallen ill, and the doctors were unanimous in their opinion that there was no hope of her recovery.

When her father-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, was told of the doctors' verdict, he said: "The Talmud specifically derives from the Torah that 'a physician is allowed to heal.' But nowhere has a doctor been given the right to declare a human being incurable."

He shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep (Exodus 21:37)

Said Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai: G-d is considerate of a person's dignity. For an ox, which the thief leads on foot and is not thereby degraded, he pays fivefold. For a sheep, which the thief had to carry on his shoulders, he pays only four times its value, since he was degraded by it.

Said Rabbi Meir: See how valuable work is. For an ox, whose theft deprived the owner of its labor, the thief pays fivefold. For the theft of a sheep, which caused no such loss of labor, he pays only four times.

-- (Mechilta; Rashi)

Haftorah for Shabbos Shekalim in a Nutshell

II Kings 11:17-12:17

The Parshat Shekalim Torah reading discusses the annual obligation for every Jew to give half a shekel to the Temple coffers. The haftorah discusses the efforts of King Jehoash (9th century BCE) to earmark these communal funds for the upkeep of the first Holy Temple.

Background for this haftorah: Because of an alliance with the Northern Kingdom of Israel, idol worship had become rampant in the erstwhile righteous Davidic dynasty-controlled Southern Kingdom. When the king of the Southern Kingdom, Ahaziah, was killed, his mother Athaliah murdered the remainder of the royal family and seized the throne. During her brief reign, she actively promoted idolatry. Unbeknownst to her, one of Ahaziah's sons, a small baby, was hidden and survived. When he became seven years of age, Jehoiada the High Priest led a successful revolt against Athaliah, and installed the child king, Jehoash, as the new King of Judea.

The haftorah begins with the new king renewing the people's covenant with G-d. They destroyed all the pagan altars and statues and appointed officers to oversee the Holy Temple. Jehoash then instructed the priests regarding all the funds that were donated to the Temple. According to his plan, all the funds would be appropriated by the priests. In return, the priests would pay for the regular maintenance of the Temple. In the 23rd year of Jehoash's reign, the priests neglected to properly maintain the Temple. Jehoash then ordered that all monies should be placed in a special box that was placed near the Temple altar, and these funds were given directly to the workers and craftsmen who maintained the Temple.

Addition for Rosh Chodesh:

"So says the Lord, "The heavens are My throne, and the earth is My footstool; which is the house that you will build for Me, and which is the place of My rest? ...

"And they shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring for all flesh." ❖

*The greatness of the people of Israel was not that they were prepared to "blindly" do G-d's bidding without understanding (in which case they would have said only "we will do"), but that they placed their **doing** before their **understanding**. G-d desires that we should **do** as well as "hear" and **comprehend** His will, so that we serve Him not only with our hands and feet, but also with our minds and hearts. But our doing should serve as the basis of our understanding, rather than the other way around.*

-- (The Chassidic Masters).

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

