

Parshat Mishpatim

By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen

PARSHAT MISHPATIM

This week's parshah, begins with the words, "Ve'eileh hamishpatim - and these are the commandments."

Rashi Ha'kadosh (a"h) explains that our parshah begins with the phrase 'and' in order to connect these laws to the aforementioned Aseret Hadibrot. It is meant to teach us that all of the commandments originated at Har Sinai. Even the seemingly mundane laws have the raw power and energy to transform and elevate the person and bring him close to Hashem.

When discussing the laws of a thief's compensatory payment the Torah teaches the following: "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, five oxen he will pay for the ox and four sheep for the sheep" (Shemot 21:37).

At first glance, it would seem a bit difficult to see, within this commandment, the intense spiritual potential to draw close to the Creator, but let us look a little further. Rashi brings two opinions as to why the payment is five times the ox but only four times the sheep.

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai (a"h) explained that by the ox, the thief was able to lead his booty away in a relatively dignified manner. By the sheep, however, he had to somewhat humiliate himself by making his getaway carrying it on his

shoulders. That embarrassment is a part of his 'payment' and he therefore only pays four and not five times the amount that he stole.

Rabi Meir (a"h) looked at this pasuk and saw the great importance that the Torah Hakedoshah attaches to honest work. By stealing an ox, the thief caused the owner to be unable to plow his field and earn his livelihood - for that he must pay five times the amount stolen. By stealing a sheep, on the other hand, he was not impeding the owner's ability to work. He therefore only pays four times the amount stolen. We can see the value of an honest living.

There was once a Rabbi who would take his son with him to visit patients in their homes, often in extremely poor neighborhoods. Before they would go into the home, he would stress to his son that the people are extremely poor but work hard and honestly to earn their money.

"Always respect someone who works hard and earns an honest living," he would tell his son over and over.

It did not matter what a person's job was. When the little boy accompanied him to Long Island University where his father was a professor for close to thirty years there, he would introduce his son to the custodians the same way that he introduced him to the deans and department heads.

"Always respect someone who works hard and earns an honest living..."

This little boy's sister recalled a very revealing story about a teenage girl who would clean off the tables at a pizza place near where their father lived in Florida.

PARSHA

HALACHA

STORY

Q&A

SHIURIM

JOKE

RIDDLE

QUOTES

DAVEN FOR

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya
Michael ben Yonah
Ro'ee ben Rachel
May bat Ilana
Ben Tzvi ben Ilana
Gidon ben Esther
Ruchamah bat Chanah
Esther bat Mazal
Yosef ben Devorah
Yaffa bat Rivka
Baruch Chai ben Zoya
Rivkah bat Malkah
Nissan ben Liza
Gavriel ben Toviyo
David ben Liza

Baila Chava
bat
Sorka

Freida Leah
bat
Pesha Rachel

Yehoshuah Mordechai
ben
Leah Gita

Chaim Yehudah
ben
Aidel

The Rabbi would love to take the grandchildren there to eat. When this young lady heard of the Rav's passing, she began to cry. "Whenever he would come here, he would ask how I was, ask about my family and thank me for cleaning off the tables." The Mishna in Pirkei Avot teaches: "Who is honored? He who honors others."

For many people this becomes an arduous task. We do not necessarily see the great value in others but we nevertheless try to fulfill the words of the chachamim and honor all people.

Others of a greater stature, however, can look at a teenager working in a pizza place, understand that she probably has many friends who are on the streets and genuinely respect her for working hard and earning an honest living.

I would imagine that this is the true intent of the Mishna - to recognize the value that can be found in individuals and as a result, sincerely honor them. People are sensitive and know if they are being genuinely honored -anything short of that would fall short of what the Sages called "He who honors others."

Once one has taught oneself to focus on the value in others, even when there seems to be other aspects in those individuals that might not be so commendable, one can then move on to the next step.

To weather the difficulties and challenges that arise through life, we must first see the good in what Hashem has granted and then accept the possibility that ultimately we will understand how even the painful tragedies were actually a blessing.

But not before internalizing the 'mundane' law of paying five times for an ox...

HALACHAH CORNER

QUESTION: Can a sinner be called up to the Torah?

ANSWER: There is a well-known halachah codified in the Shulchan Aruch that a congregation should not call a father and son for successive aliyot to the Torah. Several different reasons are given for this halachah. The Maharam of Rotenberg (a"h) explained that calling a father and a son for aliyot one right after the other may cause an ayin ha'ra and therefore congregations who wish to give aliyot to a father and son should separate the aliyot.

A different reason is offered by the Orchot Chaim (a"h), who notes that the Torah is sometimes referred to as "testimony." Reading the Torah is likened to submitting testimony, and just as a father and son may not testify together, similarly, they should not read the Torah one after the other.

The Orchot Chaim's theory forms the basis of a ruling of the Peri Megadim (a"h), that a congregation should not call intentional Torah violators for an aliyah. Since willful Torah violators are disqualified as witnesses, they also should not be called to read from the Torah. The Peri Megadim cites this halachah from the Sefer "Besamim Rosh." This is also the position taken in the work "Megaleh Amukot,, who states that a person who shaves with a razor - which is a grave Torah violation - should not be called for an aliyah to the Torah.

The Ben Ish Chai (a"h), however, disagrees. He states that if we would begin making inquiries into a person's spiritual standing before agreeing to call him for an aliyah, this would create destructive strife and discord in shul. This is especially true, he adds, in the case of respected, upstanding members of the community who would be refused aliyot because of various allegations. We certainly do not want to create such tension and friction in shul and therefore we should not "investigate" congregants before calling them for an aliyah.

Ha'Rav Ovadiyah Yosef shlit"a, in his Sefer Yabia Omer, follows the ruling of

HALACHAH CORNER

Continued

the Ben Ish Chai, and writes that congregations should call people for aliyot without inquiring into their spiritual standing. He adds, however, that if a person publicly desecrates Shabat, he should not be given one of the seven principal aliyot on Shabat. Rather, the congregation should add an extra aliyah and call him up for that aliyah. Generally speaking, however, a person may be called for an aliyah even if he is not fully observant.

It might even be advisable to specifically invite violators for an aliyah for the section of the Torah that discusses the mitzvah they ignore. For example, if a person shaves with a razor, it might be a good idea to call him for the aliyah in Sefer Vayikra which mentions this prohibition. Doing this will inspire him to do teshuvah.

IMPRESSIONS

Patty O'Hara was Irish. That being so, it was quite puzzling that she lived for over 20 years in all places, Williamsburg.

She was once asked why an Irish Catholic woman would want to live right in the middle of a bunch of Orthodox Jews.

"Well," said Patty, "There is no safer place to live. Around here, I am never afraid. When a man comes walking towards me, he crosses the street long before we get anywhere near each other."



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A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

There will be a brighter tomorrow someday
We'll look up and the clouds will move away
And when we hear that trumpet's blast
We will know that to our real home we return at last.

There will be a brighter tomorrow someday
When we'll see the face of Mashiach in His glorified array
All of Hashem's children will be lifted up
among the angels in the air
While we all sing in harmony with a heartfelt prayer

There will be a brighter tomorrow someday
We await it with longing
and we will not be afraid
It will be a the greatest moment in the History of time
When Hashem will show the world
that no Jew was left behind.

QUOTES

** "Love is everywhere, it has no distance. All you have to do is stop the resistance." **

** "Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it."

** "Every situation, properly perceived, becomes an opportunity to heal." **

GREAT HUMILITY

Matzah allegorically represents humility. Its flat, plain appearance, simple ingredients and bland taste all reinforce the image of the humble, unassuming human being. Most of us would describe humble people as shy, bent over and soft spoken - maybe even afraid of their own shadows.

But Rabeinu Yonah (a"h) paints quite a different picture. "The essence of humility is a true understanding of one's self worth."

Moshe Rabeinu (a"h) was the greatest man of all time, yet the Torah praises him as the most humble of all. He did not underplay his true worth; therefore, insecurity did not compel him to prove his worth to others through showy, haughty behavior.

Each of us has our own insecurities. Very often the only way we can protect our ego is by knocking someone else down or by putting on false airs of greatness to impress our friends.

Insecurity is the source of haughtiness. We should realize that each of us was given a holy neshama and many talents to achieve



our personal perfection, our individual greatness in the world.

Our potential is immeasurable. Rather than surrendering to the urge to put someone down - think for a moment about yourself and how great you really could be if you would only build yourself and fulfill your potential rather than destroy someone else.

Take a new look at yourself. It will help you reach your full potential for greatness.

THE BABA SALI'S WATCH

Several years ago, the son of the Baba Sali, Baba Baruch, had a dream, in which his father revealed himself to him and requested of him to send a watch to Rav Mordechai Eliyahu. In the dream, he revealed to his son, that when the hands of the watch reach 12:00, Mashiach would come.

Initially, a gold watch was sent to Rav Eliyahu, but after a few months the Baba Sali returned to his son in a dream, and asked him to send a silver watch as well. The watch was at 3:00 when it arrived and many years later it stood at 11:45. The watches were broken – or rather, they move much slower than normal watches. According to *Mishpachah* magazine, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu's son related how the watches work:

"One day, the Baba Sali's son came to my father and presented him with a watch. He explained that his holy father had come to him in a dream and told him that he should look in a certain drawer in a certain desk, where he would find this watch. He told him that when the watch reached twelve o'clock, Mashiach would come. At that time, the watch's hands showed twenty minutes to eleven. Since then, my father keeps a very close eye on the watch, and found that sometimes it moves and at other times it just stops."

Rav Mordechai Eliyahu commented concerning the watches saying, "I was warned not to touch the watches. I don't open them. I'm afraid." He showed the reporter that the watches stood on 11:45 and explained that this means the process of geulah is now beginning. He also added that the gold watch is under the silver watch, with silver representing "rachamim" (mercy) and gold representing "din" (judgment).

The Rav explained, "I wanted that the silver watch should be on top so that Ha'kadosh Baruch Hu should assist that the geulah will be rapid and without pain or suffering. We must believe that Mashiach will come and through our maasim tovim, he will come even sooner!"

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THE BABA SALI'S WATCH

Continued

Sadly, the endeared Rishon Le'Tzion Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu passed away leaving his wife with both watches. Hundreds of thousands attended his levayah to pay their respects to this prominent Torah personality, one whose prominence crossed the usually community divisions that divide us, evident by the cross-section of Jews who were pained by his loss. The great Rav Shelomo Amar Shlit"a spoke for a few moments, expressing the personal loss as well as the loss of such a great tzaddik who filled all his living days with tefilot and concerns for Am Yisrael.

When Rav Mordechai Eliyahu was on his death bed slipping in and out of a coma his wife Rabanit Tzivia Chanah Eliyahu asked him, "The Baba Sali promised you that you will live to see the Mashiach, and you are about to leave this world to pass on to a world which is complete goodness, but what about the promise of the Baba Sali!?"

Rav Mordechai Eliyahu answered her, "You should know, that Mashiach was supposed to be here already but there are two tzadikim that are preventing him from coming in order to give people a chance to do teshuvah because once Mashiach comes there will be no more opportunity to do teshuvah. Everyone will remain on their level. And those who don't merit will not see the redemption as chazal say only 1/5th of the people will merit."

When the Rabanit asked her husband what we can do to help bring Mashiach speedily, he responded, "Tzniyut. The lack of modesty among the women in Klal Yisrael has become a disgrace and is unfortunately another reason that Mashiach doesn't reveal himself."

RIDDLE

If you are 8 feet away from a door and with each move you advance half the distance to the door.

How many moves will it take to reach the door?

Answer on page 9



JOKE

One sunny day Jake and John were driving down the road in Jakes car when he suddenly drove through a red light. John thought this was a bit odd. When Jake drove through the second red light, John decided to pipe up and ask him why he kept driving through lights when they are red.

Jake answered, "It was something my Dad taught me."

Then all of a sudden Jake came up to a green light and began slowing down. John asked, "Well, why are you slowing down for a green light?"

Jake smiled and said, "My Dad might be coming in the other direction."

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

**Only by mastering your
thoughts will you truly
experience freedom in
your life.**

**Rabbi Zelig Pliskin
"Growth Through Torah"**

**ATTENTION LADIES**

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(347) 430-5700

Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking on the following dates:

Date: February 22, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: March 19, 2017 / **Time:** 7:45pm
Place: 148 Copley Ave - Teaneck NJ

Date: March 22, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 4, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 26, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: April 29, 2017 - Shabat
Time: 5:00pm
Place: 1364 E7th - Brklyn, NY

Date: April 30, 2017
Time: 7:45pm
Place: 1100 Trafalgar St. – Teaneck NJ

Date: May 10, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: May 21, 2017
Time: 7:45pm
Place: 275 Taft Court, Paramus NJ

Date: May 24, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: June 07, 2017 / **Time:** 8:15pm
Place: 902 Ocean Prkwy - #6D, Brklyn, NY

Date: June ?? – To Be Announced
Time: 7:45pm
Place: Teaneck NJ

Date: July ?? – To Be Announced
Time: 7:45pm
Place: 1288 West Laurelton Parkway
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Date: August ?? – To Be Announced
Time: 7:45pm
Place: 115 Addison Rd.
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

INTRODUCING...

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HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS:

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4. Payment for the series is made at the commencement of your classes.
5. You are now ready to begin your enlightening journey!!

Below is the list of topics:

SHABAT
EMUNAH & BITACHON
THE SECRET OF THE MIKVEH
SHALOM BAYIT
TEFILAH
WOMEN IN JEWISH HISTORY
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second cycle

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Shiur To Post Thursday, Feb 23

“Parshat Mishpatim”
Jewish Law vs Secular Law

Log on and enjoy the live
lectures and be inspired.

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY 24 SHEVAT

ZACHARYAH'S PROPHECY (351 BCE)

"On the 24th day of the 11th month, which is the month of Shevat, in the second year of the reign of Darius (Daryavesh), the word of G-d came to Zacharyah the son of Berechyah the son of Ido the Navi, saying:

'...I will return to Yerushalayim in mercy, my house will be built within her...and G-d shall yet console Tzion and shall yet choose Yerushalayim'" (Zecharyah 1:7-17).

This was two years before the completion of the 2nd Bet Hamikdash on the 3rd of Adar, in the year 3412 of creation (349 BCE).



Q&A

Dear Rebetzin Cohen,
I am ashamed to admit this but it seems as though the love between my husband and me seems to be fading. Why is this happening and what can I do to repair the situation?

RESPONSE: Thank you for writing in. There is nothing to be ashamed of. The fact that you reached out is already a step towards a positive place. I am sorry that you and your husband are experiencing this bump in the road of your relationship and I pray that with Hashem's help I can help you come back towards a path of love and understanding.

Chachamim teach that there are two kinds of love. There is love from the womb; where a parent, by nature, loves a child. Or

siblings where from birth are bonded to one another.

The love came first and the conditions are a mere afterthought. Although the flame may burn quietly and they themselves may not recognize their love for one another - but it burns deep down. It may flicker, even hide within the coals, but it is there, always. This is the reason why children can't divorce their parents or their siblings, or their own child. Because with this love you were conceived, and with it you were born. And therefore it is not in your hands to extinguish.

Then there is the love between a husband and wife. This came long after this man and woman were born. Therefore, no matter how bright the flame or intense its heat, there are conditions by which it can be torn from its wick and disappear as though it never existed. That is why the Torah tells us about marriage first within the context of divorce. The Torah does not say, "This is how you marry - and if you must, this is how you divorce." Rather, it says, "If you marry, but then must divorce, this is how it shall be done." In the Gemara also, the masechet concerning divorce comes before the masechet concerning marriage. Why?

Because to keep a marriage together, you need to know that even if the flame holds tight to the wick today and leaps and crackles - tomorrow it may untie its bond and disappear. Every day that bond has to be reinforced, and the flame must be fed, fanned and treasured. There are times when you must run from love, when even the Torah tells you that this wick must be broken and the bond of marriage severed. But as long as those extreme conditions have not yet been met, a person must hold tight to that flame. Even if you cannot find its warmth any longer, you still hold the memory of that love.

Act with love, speak with love, think about how that love first came to be, and relive that love. Shield it through every storm, keep it burning even if the oil produces only a thin film that coats the lamp's basin.

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RESPONSE

Continued

Eventually, the flame will burn deep inside until it reaches your very soul. And there it will awaken another love, a love that never died, as permanent as that of a brother and sister, but with the fiery intensity of husband and wife.

Avraham Avinu (a"h) told Sarah Imeinu (a"h), "Say you are my sister." This helped to bind them together in an essential bond, a bonding of souls that cannot be broken. Because, in truth, the neshamot of a husband and wife are like a brother and sister - and even closer. Before they entered this world, they were a single being. Only as they descended to invest themselves within a body did they divide. If they can persist in their journey until they return to that place of oneness, a new sort of love will emerge. An unconditional love.

What is unconditional love? It doesn't mean that there are no boundaries, that everything is all right and nothing must be resolved. Love requires fuel and a haven from wind and storm so it can burn. Unconditional love simply means that no matter what, everything can be worked out. It means that at the core we are still one, so now let us be one at the fringes as well. Just like the waters mirror the face that gazes upon it, so too the heart of one person mirrors the heart of the other. Show unconditional love, and eventually you will receive the same.

ANSWER TO RIDDLE

You will never reach the door. It will always be half the distance, no matter how small.



SHABBAT SECRETS

A Series On Shabat & Its Holiness

Learning Torah After The Meal

The holy Sanzer Rav (a"h) said that Friday night is a momentous night. You should spend the evening learning Torah and singing Hashem's praises and not retire to bed before ten o'clock.

The Holy Skulener Rebbe said that one should not ask strangers, "Do you have a place to sleep?" You should instead ask, "Do you have a place to get up in the morning?" A Jew does not sleep for the sake of sleeping. He rests in order to get up in the morning and serve Hashem with energy and excitement. The Rebbe also objected to saying, "I'm going to lie down." You should instead say, "I'm going to rest," or "I'm going to retire." For a Jew never goes "down." He constantly ascends and moves up in kedushah.

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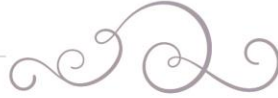
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Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!



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