

THE ChaBAD WEEKLY

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beverlyhillshabad.com

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Last week we read about the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This week, in the Torah portion of Parshat Mishpatim, we begin learning the specific commandments the Torah contains.

There are three categories of mitzvot in the Torah: Chukim (statutes) are commandments that are above our understanding. Eidot (testimonies) are mitzvot that we would not have arrived at without the Torah. However, once G-d commanded us to obey them, we are able to understand their rationale. Mishpatim (judgments) are simple commandments that are compelled by human logic, laws that society would keep even if the Torah had not commanded their observance.

Most of the Torah portion of Mishpatim deals with these seemingly self-evident laws. Which leads to the following question: After the extraordinary spectacle at Mount Sinai, why does the Torah stress the rational category of mitzvot, as opposed to the others? Furthermore, why was a supernatural revelation necessary for rules and regulations we would have figured out on our own?

The answer is that the Torah is teaching us how to relate to the whole concept of rational mitzvot. The natural inclination is to base these mitzvot on our intellectual understanding. It hardly seems even necessary to believe in G-d to arrive at the conclusion that it is wrong to harm others, or that we must compensate someone we have injured. These principles are patently obvious.

However, by enumerating the "logical" judgments first, the Torah emphasizes that even these mitzvot must be observed out of faith in G-d. We obey the Torah's rational laws not because they are logical, but because G-d has commanded us to obey them. Indeed, the only basis and source of all mitzvot, regardless of whether or not we understand them, is our Divinely-given Torah.

This is important for several reasons: A truly ethical life cannot be based on the human intellect, as it is simply too flexible and open to manipulation by the will. If a person really wants to do something, not only will he develop a philosophy by which such action is justified, but he will even turn it into a "mitzvah"! The human mind can also devise logical "proofs" for contradictory theorems. It is thus too unreliable a foundation for a moral existence.

Moreover, just as G-d is Infinite and without end, so too is His holy Torah. Even the simplest and most logical mitzvot are endlessly deep. If a Jew observes a mitzvah only because he understands it, he misses out on all its inner significance.

By basing our observance on faith, we ensure that our moral system will be stable and unwavering. We also connect ourselves to G-d through even the most "logical" of mitzvot. (From: Living with Moshiaich 5762 - moshiaich.net)

"If you will lend money... to the poor person among you..." [22:24] (The word used for 'money' is the word for 'silver.') The Tzemach Tzedek explained: silver (kesef in Hebrew, also meaning longing, desire etc) hints at the soul, because she always longs to rise up and be elevated higher and higher. "If you will borrow silver" - the soul is given to the person as a loan for a certain period of time. Everyone has an allotment of days and years, how long he will live in this world, and it is up to him to make the most of the time that this loan is in his possession. (HaYom-Yom) - www.ascent.org.il

WHEN THE REBBE CAN'T HELP

The Jews of Vitebsk, if you want to know the truth, were never known to be generous donors of money to charitable causes. Although they could always be counted on to provide food for the needy, it was not simple to extract hard currency out of them without applying a good deal of pressure. On the other hand, the Talmud concludes that giving ready-to-eat food is greater than giving money because it provides immediate relief, while the benefit of money is indirect.

Once a chassid from Vitebsk came to see the Tsemeh Tsedek, He told him how his only son was about to be drafted into the Russian army. Previously, only-sons were exempted automatically, but this year there was a new, tough policy and their precious only son was in danger. "Please, Rebbe," he entreated, "help us, save us."

The Tsemeh Tsedek replied: "I'm sorry, I cannot help you in this matter."

The chassid pleaded and cajoled every way he could think of, but the Rebbe's answer remained the same, "I cannot help you."

This chassid happened to be close with the Tsemeh Tsedek's youngest son, known as the Maharash, the only one of the Rebbe's six sons who still lived in Lubavitch. When he left the Rebbe's room, he hurried directly to call on the Maharash and told him his problem. The Maharash said he would do his best to influence his father, but when he went to him and spoke on the chassid's behalf, he too was told, "I cannot help him at all."

Two days before the draft was to take place, the chassid sent a representative to plead his case with the Rebbe once more, but again the Rebbe insisted there was absolutely nothing he could do. Shortly after, the Tsemeh Tsedek called in his son, the Maharash, and told him to bring him a Midrash Tanchuma. The Rebbe leafed through it to this week's reading of Mishpatim, and showed his son section 15 there, concerning the verse, "If money you will lend" (Ex. 22:24).

"Says the Holy One, blessed be He: 'A poor person was struggling for his life, to escape starvation, and you gave him a coin and saved his life. I promise that I will pay you back 'a life for a life': If tomorrow your son or daughter will be seriously ill or in any life-threatening situation, I will remember the good deed that you did...and I will pay you back 'a life for a life.'"

The Maharash was perplexed. What did his father have in mind that he wanted to show him this passage? In the following days, the news reached Lubavitch that the chassid's son had been released, and for no apparent reason. The Tsemeh Tsedek was visibly delighted by the report.

The Maharash was very curious to find out the course of events that had transpired, especially since the Tsemeh Tsedek had told the boy's father that he couldn't help him. The next time he had to be in Vitebsk, to see Dr. Hiebenthal, he told his driver to detour to the house of that chassid. The chassid was happy and honored to invite him in. The Maharash asked him to describe what had happened on that day his son was supposed to have been drafted.

"Nothing special," answered the chassid.

The Maharash requested that he ask his wife the same question, and she too said she didn't remember that anything unusual had taken place.

"Wait a moment!" she then exclaimed. "I do remember something! I'll tell you."

"That very day a poor person came to the house and asked us to give him something to eat. At first we told him that we were so worried about our son who was going to be drafted that day that we really couldn't deal with him. But then he pleaded with us: it had a long time since he had eaten anything at all and he was starving, and how could it be that a Jew did not have time or food for another Jew that was so hungry! We realized our mistake and served him a huge meal, from what we had prepared to be a special farewell meal for our son. None of us had the appetite to eat because we were so upset. Then..."

The Maharash interrupted her. "Thank you. I heard enough. Everything is clear now." [Translated-adapted by Yrachmiel Tilles (and first published in Kfar Chabad Magazine - English) from Peninei HaKeser vol. II, pp. 91-92.] - www.ascent.org.il

My father writes in one of his Maamarim: "Early chassidim resolved in their souls to refrain from anything that is permissible (by Torah Law) but for which they felt a desire and urge. This breaks the passion." (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, SHEVAT 27)

When you give to a worthy cause, it is really only a loan and G-d Himself is the guarantor.

The more you give, the more you get in return.

I don't mean this figuratively. I say it so you will test and see for yourself.

-From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; Compiled by Tzvi Freeman

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukka (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasidus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

SHABBAT PARSHAT MISHPATIM
Shabbos Mevorchim-Shabbos Shekalim
February 8, 2002

Candlelighting: 5:12 PM
Friday Mincha: 5:25 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:26 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- Tehillim 8:00 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen
- Chumash 4:30 PM
- Mincha 5:05 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 6:12 PM

Kiddush this week is sponsored by Rabbi and Mrs. Shusterman in memory of the yartzheit of Rabbi Shusterman's father.

Yartzeits: Rabbi Hershel Shusterman - Adar 3

Happy Birthday to Chaya Mushka Shusterman, Sara Malka Mayberg, Bat Sheva Lipsker, Robert Tananbaum, Yoel Gabbai.

Mazel Tov to Mendy and Chanie Weunch on the birth of their baby daughter Gittel, and to the grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Alan Dauer.

Mazel Tov to Marty Biegel on the birth of a great grandson.

Mazel Tov to the Rav-Noy family on the upcoming marriage of Racheli to Dov Muchnick.

Mazel Tov to Mr. and Mrs. Hertzel Gabai on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Yehoshua Ezra

GOOD SHABBOS!


DAILY MINYONIM

Shacharis: Mon -Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM

Sunday: 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 PM

There will be no classes on Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, Feb. 11, 13 & 14.



A Sefer Torah is being written in memory of the fathers of Rabbi & Mrs. Shusterman.

Anyone who is interested in participating should contact Mendel Shusterman at (310) 497-2643