



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL

פרשת משפטים

כ"ד שבט תשפ"ה 22.2.25

1 The weekly Torah portion, Parshat Mishpatim, is the sixth parsha in the Book of Exodus. Since the beginning of Exodus, we've read about the enslavement in Egypt, the ten plagues, the exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea, and the revelation at Mount Sinai. After all these dramatic events, this week's portion is completely different: it presents various instructions, commandments, and laws that relate to everyday life. In total, the portion contains 53(!) commandments out of the 613 commandments in the Torah.

2 The topics in this parsha are very diverse: labor relations, neighbors, family, charity, holidays, kashrut (dietary laws), treatment of the poor, orphans and widows, repayment of debts, entering the Land of Israel, and much more. Because our Torah is a Torah of life, dealing with all aspects of life.

3 Towards the end of the parsha, Moshe reads the Torah to the people, and they proclaim the famous two words: "Na'aseh V'nishma" (We will do and we will hear/understand). The Jewish people first do, first fulfill the commandments, and this is their secret - the doing. Afterwards, one can discuss, interpret, learn, and understand.

4 This Shabbat is called "Shabbat Mevarchim," because we bless the upcoming month of Adar, which will begin next week.

How does one maintain motivation and fulfill so many commandments as in this parsha? How does one succeed in doing things with joy? Our story this week will give us answers to these questions...

A STORY FOR SHABBAT

WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

On a sweltering summer's day, a group of workers stood in a stone quarry, wiping the sweat off their foreheads. Then they got back to work breaking rocks. Each man was holding a heavy hammer and striking a large rock. A passerby asked one of the workers: "What are you doing?" The worker explained his job in a simple and straightforward way: "I'm a stonecutter," he said. "And what are you doing?" the same man asked another worker, who replied, "I'm making a living." This worker had found purpose in his work. He was not just breaking rocks; he was earning money to buy himself food, clothes, and other things he needed in order to live. "And what are you doing?" the passerby asked a third worker. "I'm building a palace!" exclaimed the worker, his eyes sparkling. Unlike the other two workers, this worker understood the bigger picture and the ambitious goal he was trying to achieve. He realized that every detail of his daily work was important because, in the end, he would be building a palace.

(From the 'Ligdol' book series)

Food for Thought

Every small mitzvah we observe is our link to the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai; every small deed is an expression of our highest values. If we can keep this idea in mind, then it will be easier for us to appreciate the significance of even the smallest actions that we do. Out of the 613 mitzvot of the Torah, Parashat Mishpatim provides us with 53 small pieces, that when assembled together, will build a palace.





From left to right: My father, me (Yehonatan), Matan, Nehoray, and an elderly person from the nursing home.

FROM THE DIARY OF A CHEMED STUDENT TOUCHING HEARTS

My name is Yonatan, and I'd like to share why my family and I pray at a nursing home. It all started with my older brother Yosi, who got to know the Gabbai of the synagogue. Yosi fell in love with the synagogue and the people there, forming deep connections with the elderly members. Sadly, after some time, the gabbai passed away, but Yosi continued praying there and helping maintain the minyan. Because many nursing home residents are elderly and unable to attend prayers due to health challenges, it is difficult to sustain a minyan which requires at least 10 men. Yosi brought my brother Nehoray when he was 9 years old, and soon after, Matan and I joined as well. I began praying there at age 7, and over the past seven years, I've built strong bonds with the residents. Sadly, many have since passed away, which has been heartbreaking. Now, at 14, I fully understand the importance of our presence. Our prayers uplift the elderly and bring them joy, especially on Shabbat and holidays. I hope more people will strengthen and support the elderly—they truly value the connection and care we provide.

Yehontan Dahan, 9th Grade, Yeshivat Amit Beer Sheva

Around the Shabbat Table

- Why do you think it is important to help and connect with elderly people in our community?
- How do small actions make a big difference in people's lives?
- Aryeh tells us that when David pays money in the north, the money 'moves' and passes from person to person. Let's try to think of a similar example from our own lives - how can our purchases help so many people?

A CHAIN OF GOOD

Aryeh Ackerman has a guest villa in Kiryat Shmona. And this is what he writes: "When I asked David why they were coming to the north, he got choked up for a moment. I felt he was debating with himself whether to tell the truth... 'To support you financially', he told me. 'We've already seen the world, now we want to stay in the north, specifically supporting small businesses, eating at restaurants, buying clothes in the north, and the money we pay you and the restaurants will flow on to your employees, to your suppliers.' I was so touched. 'And it doesn't end here,' I told David. 'This profit continues to Itai at the garage, to Moshiko at the grocery store, to the children's after-school activities, to Miki from the nursery, to Maor the butcher, to Moshe from the bakery, there's no shortage... and from them it continues onward, because they also live and shop here. You understand? You place coins with me, and they move and move and sustain more and more families! This is so sweet. It's called 'conducting business in good faith.' And this is our redemption, friends. Instead of the 'national sport' being finding a cheap flight to Georgia, or being a champion at bargaining to get the guesthouse owner to reduce the price by another 100 shekels, the national sport will be healing, compassion, empathy. To understand that the periphery in the north and south paid a heavy price, that we were all the human shields of this country in the past year and a half. Our souls are wounded, the bank accounts of business owners here are wounded, and we don't want handouts or compensation. We want to work, to support our families with dignity. 'When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.' Be like David and his friends, come vacation in the north."



In the picture: David and friends, at Aryeh's villa in Kiryat Shmona



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
נשמת החיילים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואייל טויטו הי"ד



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