

Lamplighter

23 Shvat
Mishpatim
967
28 January
5771/2011

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

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

There are three categories of *mitzvot* (commandments) 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 "*mitzva*"! 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 *mitzva* 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*.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Rules

By Yanki Tauber

Before you switch on your laser printer, read this:

A laser is a device that produces an intense beam of light of a very pure single colour. This beam can be made potent enough to vaporize a diamond, and precise enough to deposit a dot of ink 1/600th of an inch across in exact juxtaposition with tens of thousands of similar dots to produce your office memo in 12 pt. Times New Roman (captions in 14 pt. Arial Narrow). Even more precise (and more expensive) are devices that yield a beam exact enough to perform eye surgery.

A laser beam is a beam of optic light — basically the same light produced by the flashlight you keep in the glove compartment of your car. The difference is that while the excited atoms in your flashlight bulb each emit light independently of each other and in many different wavelengths, a laser device stimulates a great number of atoms to emit light in a single frequency and in step with each other, thereby producing a light beam of great potency and accuracy.

As a rule, people don't like rules. We don't like being told that a food palatable to our taste buds is unhealthy for our body. We don't like being told that something desirable to ourselves is hurtful to another person. We don't like being told that a convenient habit is damaging to our environment. In other words, we don't like being told what to do. We don't like restrictions.

When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt, they were told that, in seven weeks' time, they will be given the Torah. They were so excited that they literally counted the days. At Mount Sinai, their souls flew from their bodies in ecstasy when they heard G-d proclaim the Ten Commandments.

On the face of it, their joy seems somewhat misplaced. After all, these were a people just emerging from several generations of slavery. The last thing they would want—one assumes—is a set of restrictions on their lives. Basically, that's what the Torah is. Seven of the Ten Commandments are "Thou Shalt Not"s, as are 365 out of the Torah's 613 *mitzvot* (the rest are "Thou Shall"s).

But the Jews *wanted* the Torah. The Midrash relates how G-d went to all the nations of the world asking them if they want a copy. "What does the Torah contain?" they asked. "Thou shalt not..." said G-d and was met with a no-thank-you almost before He could finish the sentence. The Jews, however, understood that this was no ordinary set of rules: this was a life regulator designed by the One who invented life and knows how it is best applied.

At Sinai, all the peoples of the world were given a choice. Take box A, and you get a life that expends its energies every which way, in whatever colour or frequency that strikes your fancy at any given moment. It'll even be able to do many useful things, like projecting animal shapes on the wall of a darkened room or finding those car keys you dropped in the bushes. Take box B, and you get a life that focuses its energies on the purpose to which it was created.

Many took the flashlight. We opted for the laser.



The Emotional Tale of Receiving a Kidney

As related by Yisrael Konstantini

Until twelve years ago, I was a regular guy with no health problems. Then I suddenly developed heart trouble and the doctors recommended a bypass operation. Unfortunately, the surgery did not go well. My heart failed completely and I experienced clinical death. A month after the operation I was still very weak and fatigued, when people older than me went home right after the surgery and were back on their feet. After a series of tests the doctors told me that if I wanted to remain alive I needed a heart transplant.

My state of mind was abysmal, but I refused to allow myself to lose hope.

After a few months, I got the call I was waiting for. They had a heart for me. I got up from the operation with a feeling of renewal. I felt my new heart was pumping fresh energy into me.

I returned to normal life. I went back to work in a jewellery factory and continued outreach work. I felt that this gave me the strength to continue. We went on to have two more children after the operation and life looked good.

The medicine I took to prevent my body from rejecting the heart transplant ruined my kidneys and I had to go on dialysis. I cannot describe to you how hard these treatments are. I had to do it three times a week but I suffered from it all week. I struggled to contend with the harsh side effects. It's hard to work before the dialysis and even harder to work afterward. And in the background the doctors were warning that my delicate medical condition was endangering my heart.

At first I thought that after half a year on dialysis my condition would improve, but I slowly realized that I would have to continue these treatments until I got a kidney transplant. When the doctors told me that I needed a new kidney, I wasn't completely surprised. I was anxious, but I thought I had been through the worst with a heart transplant and that a kidney transplant couldn't possibly be as bad. But I quickly learned how hard it is to get a kidney. My forty-year-old sister underwent all the tests and was found to be compatible, but at the last minute, before the transplant, they saw that her blood pressure was unstable and she was deemed unsuitable.

A friend referred me to Rabbi Avrohom Lieder, director of Ahavas Chesed in New York. R' Lieder spoke to me on the phone and said, "Come, and I will take care of you and do all I can to find you a donor." I made the arrangements with Kupat Cholim in Israel so they would pay for some of my treatment, and I came to New York, straight to Crown Heights, to Rabbi Lieder's house.

R' Lieder treated me like a king. At the same time, he spread the word that we were looking for a kidney donor.

And then I had my personal miracle. Two Lubavitchers who have type O blood like me, told R' Lieder they were willing to have themselves tested to see if they were a match. I was thrilled by this news, though I was also apprehensive lest they not be a match or they change their minds. I prayed that all would be well.

R' Lieder went with these two men for medical tests at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan. That same day I had to be in the hospital and was surprised to meet R' Lieder there with these two men. At the time, I simply assumed these were people R' Lieder was helping. Neither the doctors nor R' Lieder think it's a good idea for the patient to meet potential donors so there won't be pressure on them if they change their minds.

It was a few days later, when R' Lieder told me that R' Mendy Mathless, *shliach* (Chabad emissary) in Albany, NY was a match and he was willing to donate a kidney to me, that I realized that he was one of the men I had seen in the hospital. I was examined by some doctors and they declared my heart would be able to withstand the operation.

R' Lieder told me that Mendy is a 26 year old *shliach* and father of two. He was very impressed by him and saw that his decision to be a donor came from genuine Ahavas Yisrael (love to a fellow Jew) and the desire to save the life of another Jew. R' Lieder described Mendy as a man of truth, a real Chassid.

The period of time from when R' Lieder gave me the good news until the operation was not easy. On the one hand, I was thankful that I had found a donor; on the other hand, I was constantly plagued by the thought that he might back out.

During the waiting period, I went to "770" (Lubavitch world headquarters) one Friday and stood near the entrance. I suddenly saw one of the men I had seen the week before in the hospital. I had the feeling it was the unknown "Mendy" who had expressed his willingness to donate his kidney. I was very moved. I knew that according to the rules I wasn't supposed to talk to him but he stopped near me and

looked at me. Apparently he knew that I was the one who would be getting his kidney.

I couldn't restrain myself and I motioned to him to come over. I introduced myself and, after confirming that he was the potential donor, I asked him, with great trepidation, whether this was his final decision. He smiled reassuringly and said, "Definitely."

My entire body trembled in great emotion. I felt that a heavy stone had rolled off my heart.

We went to the hospital at 5:30 in the morning. Mendy arrived with his mother and I showed up with my brother Shlomo, who had come in from Israel and with my cousin who lives in New Jersey.

After the successful operation I thanked Hashem for His kindness and I wanted to thank Mendy, too, for the amazing thing he did in parting with one of his kidneys to help a Jew he did not even know. I was too overwhelmed with emotion to speak to him on the phone; I couldn't say a word.

At a certain point I felt that I could no longer hold back my feelings of gratitude. I got out of bed and looked for Mendy. I entered his room, crying, and asked everybody to leave so I could speak to him alone.

At first, I couldn't say anything. I hugged him and cried on his shoulder. Then Mendy said, "What makes me most happy is that the doctors said the operation was a success and you are a healthy man."

After I calmed down a little, I told Mendy that to me, he will always be the dearest person on earth, a good angel. I told him how he saved me from the pain of the dialysis treatment and a difficult, painful, limited life; how he gave me life itself. How he gave me and my family hope.

It's hard to believe there are people like this in the world; may there be many more pure people. I can just imagine what beautiful work he does as a *shliach* in Albany. I can never repay him on this scale and in any case, he refuses to accept even a small gift.

Mendy modestly told me that he did it with the belief that this is what should be done and that one should always think about others, about others' pain. He said, "I have two kidneys and I can live a full life with one. Why did G-D give me two kidneys? So that if I see a Jew in need of a kidney to live, I can give him one of mine. Thank G-D, I am healthy and don't make too much of it, I am not the first one in the world to do this. Seeing you healthy is my reward."

(On the fifth day of Chanuka December 6th 2010, Yisrael Konstantini celebrated his recovery.)

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 967

MOSHIACH MATTERS

It is incumbent to await the coming of Moshiach every single day, and all day long... It is not enough to believe in the coming of Moshiach, but each day one must await his coming. Furthermore, it is not enough to await his coming every day, but it is to be in the manner of our prayer, "we await Your salvation all the day," that is, to await and expect it every day, and all day long, literally every moment! (Chafetz Chaim al Hatorah)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Greeting and Blessing:

I just received your letter with enclosure. It was gratifying to read the good news that you succeeded in inducing the Federation to make an initial grant to the Chabad House in your city, thus breaking the ice, as it were, in getting it to begin to move towards supporting Torah-true Chinuch [Jewish education].

Here my thoughts turn to the recent miraculous rescue of the hostages from Uganda. One cannot fail to note the extraordinary aspects at both ends of the hijacking. On the one hand, the ease with which the four terrorists hijacked the airbus in Athens, and on the other, the extraordinary success of the rescue operation. In other words, both the initial crisis and the eventual delivery clearly point to the hand of G-d. And while every Jew is grateful to, and admires the mesiras nefesh [self-sacrifice] of the brave rescuers, we must not lose sight even for a moment of the warning and lesson at the bottom of it all, not just in regard to the danger of hijacking in the ordinary sense but, even more importantly,

In regard to the "spiritual hijacking" of so many of our younger generation by alien and freakish cultures which, unfortunately, capture so many of our innocent boys and girls in Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel] as well as in the Diaspora. With all anxiety and love which welled up in every Jewish heart for those unfortunate hostages at Entebbe Airport - surely no less concern should be shown for the spiritual hostages that are abducted daily, and no less mesiras nefesh, to save them. It is also particularly painful to contemplate the secularized education to considerable segments of Jewish youth in the land which even the nations of the world recognize as the Holy Land, where one would have reason to expect that all Jewish children would be brought up in an atmosphere of holiness befitting that Holy Land. It is for this reason that our Chabad people in Eretz Yisroel and everywhere else have undertaken special rescue operations in the area of Jewish education.

May the zechus [merit] of the participation in this work stand you in good stead in all your affairs, particularly to have ever-truer nachas [pleasure] from all your near and dear ones.

Last but not least, I was gratified to note that you commemorated the passing of your late wife, of blessed memory, by publishing one of our Holy Scriptures, the Book of Ruth, with a commentary, and with selected Midrashim of our Rabbis, our teachers, for all generations, in a way that makes it accessible to those who need chinuch and inspiration.

With blessing.

5730 [1970]

It has been brought to my attention that the Jewish community in Bombay is facing a serious crisis. According to my information, which apparently comes from a reliable source, there are at present about 450 Baghdadi Jews there, whereas the Bnei Israel community numbers about a couple of thousand, spread over the whole of India.

Of the three existing Jewish schools, two are expected to close in May 1970, partly for lack of funds, and partly because the number of students has fallen. The largest Jewish school is the Jacob Sassoon School, where about 300 children, including some Bnei Israel, receive more or less free education and free meals; however, because of lack of funds, free meals might soon be stopped, while snacks will be given only to the poorer children.

I am further informed that poor orphans and widows, and the aged, face increased hardships because of cuts in their monthly allowances etc. A case in point in the recently widowed wife of the Chazan [cantor] of the Magen David Synagogue, left with eight children and so placed that, unfortunately, she is no longer able to maintain the middle-class family life that they have been accustomed to.

Knowing of your keen personal interest in the Jewish community of India, especially Bombay, and of how much your ancestors have done to provide vital education and social services for our brethren there, I am confident that you will look into the present situation, and do all that you can, in the great tradition of your family.

Hoping this letter finds you in the best of health.

With blessing.

A WORD from the Director

This year is a leap year in the Jewish calendar and this Shabbat we bless the new month of the first Adar. Our Sages have taught that when the month of Adar begins we should increase in happiness.

Happiness is related to Moshiach in numerous ways. For starters, we are taught that "Happiness breaks through boundaries." Moshiach, too, is referred to as one who "breaks through boundaries."

Additionally, the word Moshiach, is sometimes spelled without the Hebrew letter yud. At these times it is the same letters as the Hebrew word for happiness - samayach. When we are samayach - happy, we bring Moshiach.

The story is told about one of the great sages of Poland that when he was a little boy he asked his father for an apple but was refused.

The enterprising youngster recited the blessing for fruit. His father could not possibly allow the blessing to be recited in vain and promptly handed his son an apple.

The Rebbe used this story to describe the relationship between happiness and the imminent Redemption. The Rebbe explained that, "If the Jewish people begin now to rejoice already in the Redemption, out of absolute trust that G-d will speedily send us Moshiach, this joy in itself will (as it were) compel our Father in heaven to fulfil His children's wish to redeem them from exile."

Why is happiness such an effective means of hastening the Redemption and preparing ourselves for Moshiach's imminent arrival? Again, let us look at the Rebbe's words.

"The nature of happiness is that it permeates through the entire scope of the person's existence. When a person is happy, he lives joyfully. This happiness affects the way he conducts his life and all the people with whom he comes in contact. The person shares happiness with those around him and his happiness brings him success in all matters."

Live Moshiach! Make someone happy today. It doesn't take much - a smile, a kind word, a phone call to say, "I was thinking of you." Have a good Shabbos!

J.I. Gutnick

Why must a Kosher home have two sets of dishes?

By Naftali Silberberg

The Torah prohibits cooking milk and meat together, or partaking of a dish which contains these two ingredients which were cooked together.

Obviously, the Torah is concerned that milk should not absorb the taste of meat or vice versa. At first glance one might think taste is only absorbed in and through foods. However, the Torah maintains that taste/food absorption applies to dishes as well.

Thus once dishes have absorbed the flavour of either meat loaf or pizza (for example), that plate, pan, fork etc maintains a meat or dairy flavour. For this reason you must have two sets of dishes to ensure that you don't end up preparing/eating a meat dish on dairy dishes or vice versa.

It Happened Once...



In the year 5333 (1573), there lived a humble, unlearned Jew in the holy city of Tsfat (Safed) in the north of Israel. This guileless man did not know how to study Torah, he could read only well enough to manage the prayer.

One night, after he had just completed reciting the midnight prayer of the pious lamenting the destroyed Holy Temple — he heard a knock on the door. He asked who was there, and the reply he heard was none other than, "It is *Eliyahu Hanavi* (Elijah, the prophet)." He quickly opened the door and as Eliyahu entered, the room suddenly shone with light and joy.

Eliyahu gazed at him for a moment and said, "I have come to divulge to you the wondrous secret of when *Mashiach* will come. But only on the condition that you first reveal to me what was the special meritorious act you did on the day of your Bar Mitzvah, for that is what moved the Heavenly Court to rule that you are worthy of hearing the revelation of this most hidden mystery."

The man answered simply, "What I did, I did only in honour of G-d. Therefore, it is not proper that I reveal it to others. If this means that you too will not divulge to me the secret of redemption, then I forgo that privilege. I shall remain true to my belief that a man's deeds should be solely for the glory of G-d."

As soon as the Tsfat man completed what he had to say, Eliyahu disappeared. In Heaven there was a great commotion, caused by the simple yet profound and sincere response of the Jew, indicating his devotion to G-d, even at the cost of losing the chance to learn one of the most important secrets of Heaven.

The Heavenly Court finally ruled that Eliyahu should anyway again appear to the man and teach him Torah and its secrets. After some time, this simple man became unique in his generation, but as he modestly wished, no one knew of his greatness. His deeds and achievements were solely for the glory of G-d.

When the time came for him to pass away, his pure soul came before the Heavenly Court. They pondered his case. In the end they decided that his reward would be to descend again to the physical world and be reborn. This time he would be forced to reveal his greatness, and his holy soul would contain the potential to initiate a new path in the service of G-d, infusing the world with holiness and purity. Thus would he glorify the Holy Name, fill the earth with wisdom and thereby hasten the ultimate redemption.

It was this soul of the simple sincere Jew of Tsfat that was reborn in Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov.

Rabbi Akiva had a daughter. But astrologers said to him, "On the day she enters the bridal chamber, a snake will bite her and she will die."

On the night of her marriage, she removed a brooch and stuck it into the wall. When she pulled it out the following morning, a poisonous snake came trailing after it; the pin had penetrated into the eye of the serpent.

"Was there anything special that you did yesterday?" her father asked her.

"A poor man came to our door in the evening," she replied. "Everybody was busy at the banquet, and there was none to attend to him. So I took the portion which was given to me and gave it to him."

Thereupon Rabbi Akiva went out and declared: "Charity delivers from death." And not just from an unnatural death, but from death itself.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

If you lend money - kesef. (Ex. 22:24)

The Tzemach Tzedek, the third Chabad-Lubavitch Rebbe, explained that the Hebrew word for "money" - "kesef" - comes from the root word meaning "longing and yearning." The soul, he explained, always yearns to go upward, attaining higher and higher levels of spirituality. "If you lend money" - G-d "lends" the eternal soul to each of us for a certain period of time, to dwell in a physical body in this world. It is up to the individual to utilize that loan to the fullest, taking advantage of every day that is granted on earth. (*Hayom Yom*)

You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. (Ex. 22:21)

Whenever Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev reached this verse he would cry out. "Master of the Universe! You instructed us in Your holy Torah to be kind to widows and orphans, and yet we are like orphans in this bitter exile! You must therefore take us out of this exile at once!"

If the stolen article is found in the thief's possession... he must make double restitution. (Ex. 22:3)

It is possible to utilize for G-d's service, according to the Torah, all behaviour-traits. This includes those traits that are unwholesome, and even those that are evil. For example, Rabbi Meshulam Zusya of Anipoli learned a number of methods of serving G-d from a thief: a) He works quietly without others knowing. b) He is ready to place himself in danger. c) The smallest detail is of great importance to him. d) He labours with great toil. e) Alacrity. f) He is confident and optimistic. g) If he does not succeed the first time, he tries again and again. (*Hayom Yom*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS MISHPATIM • 24 SHEVAT • 29 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:19 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:00 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	TEHILIM:	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR THE MONTH OF ADAR I	
	THURSDAY FEBRUARY 3:	
		11:16 AND 6 CHALAKIM AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:01 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:20 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	MAARIV:	9:10 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 28 JANUARY 2011



Begins	Ends
8:19	9:20
8:09	9:08
6:27	7:22
7:02	7:53
6:26	7:21
7:04	8:01
7:46	8:44
7:57	8:57
8:20	9:24
8:18	9:19
8:29	9:33

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.