

MISHPATIM

FEBRUARY 2, 2019 • 27 SHEVAT 5779
HERTZ P.306 HAFTARAH P. 992~ STONE P.416 HAFTARAH P. 1212

In this week's parshah, we learn of laws in the civil realm; what a person must do if he injures or kills another person or animal – murder or manslaughter, laws regarding and governing Jewish and non-Jewish slaves, sensitivity to the helpless and abandoned, and the laws concerning the Three Pilgrimage Festivals. In the following discussion, I will elaborate on some of the above laws.

It is very important to try and understand why the parshah begins with the conjunctive: "AND these are the ordinances..." instead of starting off by stating, "These are the ordinances." The Alshekh explains that in putting the conjunctive letter 'vav' in front of the first word, the parshah establishes a conceptual link with the preceding 10 commandments. Should a person believe that since the objective of Mishpatim, i.e. social legislation, is the establishment of peaceful and harmonious relationships between people, independent human civil law is EQUALLY acceptable in the eyes of God, the Torah says that this is not so. Only Divinely inspired civil legislation is guaranteed to bring about the peace and harmony God wishes to prevail amongst us. Human jurisprudence, at its best, does justice to what is perceivable by our five senses. Divine jurisprudence also takes into account the inter-relationship between the higher and lower world, about which we know very little. Anyone, who keeps a mitzvah even between man and fellow man, contributes to the harmony in God's universe including the spheres of the planets and the celestial regions. All this is based on the statement of the Mishnah in Avot 1, that the world is based on three pillars – truth, jurisprudence, and peace. The mere thought that social legislation, which is the result of people who are devoid of sanctity in their lives, could by itself preserve the world indefinitely is inconceivable. The reason, the Alshekh continues, that the Torah talks about 'mishpatim' – laws, in plural, is that only by studying a number of laws and rulings, can the fairness of the legislation become evident. A believing Jew could argue that the whole legislation is not needed, since our tradition teaches that God allocates to each individual a certain amount of material needs for each year – the amount to be determined at New Year. Hence, if someone loses money through theft, robbery, or any other cause, it was only an expression of God's will, and the thief would not be allowed to wind up with either more or less than had been allocated to him by God. This is because any decision made in a properly constituted Jewish court would merely reflect the judgement already made in a higher tribunal – in heavenly court.

With regard to slaves, we read of a slave who is a married man: "If he is the husband of a woman, his wife shall leave with him" (Exodus 21:3). The Or Hachayyim comments that one must accept the Mechilta Acharite de Rabbi Shimon who says that the wording implies that the master has to supply the needs of the wife only if she is an appropriate wife for the slave. Should the slave be married to a woman forbidden to him under Jewish law, even if the marriage was legal under Jewish law, his master has no obligation towards her. This raises the question why the master is allowed to assign a woman who is forbidden to this slave as stated specifically both in the Talmud and in ch.3 and ch.4 of Maimonides' Hilchot Avadim. Maimonides distinguishes between the right to live with such a woman and the master's obligation to provide for such a woman when she is not his slave. If the slave was betrothed to a woman, he is no longer characterized as single, and the master is entitled to assign a slave-woman to him while he is in his service. According to a discussion in Kiddushin 20, the same applies if the slave had children from a wife who had died in the time he had betrothed himself to another woman. He is then considered as fitting the definition of having both a wife and children so that the master can assign a slave-woman to him as a marital partner.

A very important mitzvah is for us to refrain from taunting or oppressing a stranger, a widow, an orphan, or those who are weak and helpless. Sensitivity to others is very important, and one must not jump to conclusions or judge others, unless they know the whole story. Even then, we should hold back from rendering judgement on someone's actions. The Lubavitcher Rebbe tells the following story: "You walk down the street and see a man on crutches leaving a doctor's office. You might think that the doctor was incompetent – the patient went to visit him, paid a substantial fee, followed the doctor's instructions perfectly, and took all the prescribed treatments and medicine. Obviously, this patient has the wool being pulled over his eyes! But your opinion will change if you are told that prior to visiting the doctor, the patient was hopelessly crippled and paralyzed. Now, at least, the doctor has been able to rehabilitate him to the extent that he can move under his own power. It may further be pointed out that he can not only move and walk (albeit with crutches), but that he is making significant progress. Hopefully, he will continue to improve and will ultimately be able to discard the crutches, if only he continues to follow the doctor's advice. By the same token, all people have certain built-in attributes from birth. By means of proper rehabilitation, through the influence of good teachers, and particularly through self-learning programs, the weaknesses and handicaps can be diminished and overcome. The weakness should NOT be ascribed to the ignorance of the individual, or to the doctor's advice. It is our obligation to see to it that we do not mock or ridicule or judge these individuals who are physically or mentally challenged. Rather, we should do whatever is in our power to make them feel welcome and help them find the resources that could help them with their quality of life.

Prepared by Devorah Abenheim

Navi Class

Friday nights at 7:30 pm
at the home of
Raizie and Rabbi Boruch Perton
5623 Melling Ave.

Taught by Rabbi Perton.

No Navi Class February 8

A \$36 sponsorship per class may be made to commemorate a yahrtzeit, a life cycle event, etc

Super Bowl Party (18+)

Sunday, February 3

Come join us for our eighth annual
Super Bowl party!
Experience the big game on a large screen
with a high quality HD feed!
Enjoy some great Super Bowl food like,
wings, chili, hot dogs, beer and more!!!
Play Super Bowl games like squares
for a chance to win CASH!!!
You don't want to miss it.
Get your tickets today!!!

At the Door \$35
Student Rate \$25

Youth Super Bowl Party

Sunday, February 3

\$5 Online/ \$10 at the Door
| Big Screen | Youth Lounge |
Doors Open at 6:00pm
Kickoff at 6:30pm
Hotdogs, Chili, Fries and More!

RSVP online
<https://bethzion.shulcloud.com/event/youthsuperbowl2019>

Chinese Shabbat Dinner

Friday, February 8

Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 5:00 pm
Chinese Shabbat Dinner 6:00 pm

Members: Adults \$28// Children 4-12 \$18
Non members: Adults \$32// children 4-12 \$22

Please register by Tuesday, February 5
<https://bethzion.shulcloud.com/event/chinesefeb2019> or 514-489-8411 or
bethzion@bethzion.com

Speed Dating

Thursday, February 14 7:30 pm

Open Bar and Light Snacks

Cover up to January 31:\$25
Thereafter: \$36

www.BZDATING.com

Mishenichnas Adar Marbim B'Simcha

Save the following March Dates

March 5 and 12
Rabbi Perton's Class
Themes in Megillat Esther
Personalities and
Hidden messages

March 9
Special Tish and Kiddush
with Chazan Rubin

March 9
Pajama Musical Havdala followed by pizza

March 17
Community Purim Carnival
at Adath

March 20
Purim Extravaganza
Megillah Reading
Free Festivities for all ages