

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT MISHPATIM

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
TAL Founder & Director

## HE'S WITH ME!

Times were tough in the government and the cutbacks were increasingly sharp. Money was scarce and they had to ration every last bit.

Joe - the Education Minister invited the Finance Minister to a tour with the top echelon of professors to several important education ministries and universities. After the tour the Finance Minister congratulated Joe on his achievements, yet was oblivious to the calls for further investment in the ailing education system.

"We really need more money; this is for the future of the nation. Education is vital for the economy", said Joe.

"I understand" countered the Finance Minister, "but we are all out of money, we have to keep a very tight budget."

Nothing was given and life continued to be harsh.

Soon after the Finance Minister was invited by Henry, the Minister for Health.

He took him around all the important hospitals and showed him how much money was needed. Disease was on the increase in certain areas, old people needed attending too, and due to population growth there was a massive increase in hospital beds

After the tour the Finance Minister issued Henry with all the money he needed.

The Finance Minister's secretary was stunned;

"How come he gave in to the demands of Henry, but didn't yield a penny to Joe," she asked?

The Finance Minister smiled towards the secretary and said - "you don't understand - I am never going to learn again in school!" He was only taking care of himself!

Such is life; we are created with a tendency to put our self as priority number one, even at the effects of others.

In the last of the Ten Commandments we are commanded not to be jealous.

The Torah has an interesting way of relating this.

"You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbour." (Shemot 20:14).

Rabbi Yakov Galinsky Shlita asks why all this seemingly lengthy wording to tell us the same thing.

The Torah could have just written don't be jealous of anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Why go through first each detail – his wife, his servant etc.?

He answers with a fascinating idea.

People are always looking around at others. We would prefer to have his car, his house, his job etc.

Hashem taught us that each and every one of us has been blessed with the correct tools to perform our purpose in life.

Hashem is saying, would you like his car, and business – then you should also focus on the other things this person has – "Whatever belongs to your neighbour" - perhaps a testing married life, tough time with his children, or difficult issues at business.

This is the meaning of the Pasuk; don't covet your neighbours wife and posses-

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Quiz

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sions, until you put yourself fully in his place. And once you do, you would understand that it's not worth it for you.

Rabbi Naftali of Rupshitz once said that when Mashiach will come he will call each person and tell them to place their open bag of life in a room. This bag will contain all their tools of life, blessings and trials. After everyone has placed their personal bags in the room, they will all be asked to go and chose whichever bag they wish. They could choose a rich man's bag, a lawyers bag, a sports stars bag etc.

At the end of the day - each one will choose their original bag!

We tend to look over the shoulder and desire, yet we should know Hashem has Blessed us with all that we need. Each person is different.

In this week's Parasha we are taught to give money to the poor.

Im Kesef Talve Et Ami, Et HeAni Imach - When you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you."

[Shemot 22:24]

Rashi questions why the need to say that the poor person is 'with you'? He

explains with a fundamental lesson in giving charity. You should see yourself as if you were poor!

It's not easy to place ourselves in other people's shoes, after all they live an entire life, and our picture of them is only for the short time that we meet them. Nevertheless we are told to try and place ourselves in their shoes and donate accordingly.

This idea to think of others is also present in prayer.

When we pray we are taught to have in mind that Hashem's Presence is in front of us.

Similarly R Yerucham ztsh explains that when it comes to dealing and talking about other people, we should view it as if they are in front of us.

Would our actions be the same?

We all have obligations at home. Imagine a family that distributes these obligations. The wife goes takes care of the kids and cooks, the father works hard to bring home money helping when he can with chores such as taking the kids to school, cleaning the house, taking out the dustbin. The daughter does the washing up and the son helps

with the little children.

Each one of these people views their chores as obligations.

Now imagine, they change their outlook.

They start to view these chores as a way to connect and build a wonderful relationship with their family. As the wife is cooking, the site of her husband eating her delicious food encompasses her mind. Her act is an act of love. As the husband takes the children to school, he sees this as a way to develop and nurture the relationship with the children. As the children help at home, they envisage the content of their acts by their exhausted parents.

Life completely changes.

G-d blessed us with the power of thought. All it takes is some time and real thought and the world looks completely different.

In a busy world, people tend to race off into marriage and family life, without taking time out to think outside the box at the development of their family.

Time and wisdom, two G-ds greatest blessings to mankind – use them wisely.



## RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

### WHY DESPAIR IS IMPOSSIBLE

In this week's Parashat Mishpatim, the Torah teaches: הַשֵּׁב תְּשִׁבּוּ לוֹ – return what is lost to its owner. The sages explain a deeper principle: the rules of Hashavat Avedah are not always simple. Normally, if a lost object has clear identifying marks, Simanim, we are obligated to return it. In crowded places, where most people are not Jewish, it is often assumed that the owner may have despaired. In such cases, the finder may keep it. Even when an owner is still looking, and even has some hope, sometimes Halacha recognizes the finder's claim. This is where the subtle principle of Yeush Shelo Mida'at comes in: despair that has not yet been consciously acknowledged is not real despair. Only when the owner knows the object is lost and consciously gives up can the finder claim it.

A story from Jewish life illustrates this principle beautifully. Dov Eisenman was a merchant who traveled each year to the fair in Leipzig. One year, illness prevented him from going, so he sent his wife, Chana Leah, to complete the purchase of merchandise and pay the suppliers. She worked tirelessly, negotiating deals, inspecting goods, arranging deliveries, and soon the mission was nearly complete.

Then disaster struck. When Chana Leah went to pay the suppliers, she realized the money was gone. Somewhere, amid the bustling streets and crowded markets of Leipzig, it had vanished. Panic set in. She retraced every step, asked every vendor, scanned every alley, but the money was nowhere.

Days later, a Jewish man, Yehonatan Berglovitz, found the lost sum. Chana Leah showed proof that it belonged to her, but he claimed, "She has given up. She despaired. The money is mine now." The case reached a great Rabbi, Rabbi Yitzhak Elchanan Spector, who ruled decisively that since the husband had

never known the money was lost. There had been no true Yeush, no conscious despair. Ownership remained with him, and the money was returned.

Reb Yerucham the Mashgiach of Mir Yeshiva said to his Talmidim that this story carries a spiritual lesson. Just as Chana Leah could not despair over money that was not hers to despair over, we cannot despair over our lives, our mission, or our potential. Each of us is a Shaliach, a messenger of Hashem. Our lives, our abilities, even our very bodies, are entrusted to us. They are not ours to abandon.

Life is full of setbacks, mistakes, and losses. But despair is never an option. Responsibility requires action, care, and perseverance. Repair, restore, continue, that is the work of the Shaliach. Even when calculations seem impossible, even when we feel depleted, we continue. Mistakes can be corrected. Losses can be recovered. Every life can shine. We are not owners, we are messengers. And messengers cannot despair.



## RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

*Tehillim for Our Times; Chapter 17: תפלה לְדוֹד שְׁמֵעָה יְהוָה צְדָק הַקְּשִׁיבָה רִנְתִּי הַאֲזִינָה תְּפִלְתִּי בְּלֹא שִׁפְתֵי מִרְמָה*

### YOUR SOUL - A PICTURE OF HASHEM (PART 2)

*"Guard me like the pupil of the eye, shelter me in the shadow of your wings" (ibid;8)*

Here, King David points out that his enemies seek both his physical and spiritual destruction.

The pupil is the hole which allows light into the eye. The construction of the eye is unfathomably sophisticated although particularly vulnerable, despite being essential for our proper functioning. King David uses the eye as a metaphor for the soul which is itself of subtle composition, susceptible to harm and central to man's existence. He pleads that his soul be protected from those who wish to prevent him from serving Hashem properly just as the eyelid covers and protects the eye.

King David concludes this section with a plea to be sheltered from those enemies who wish to harm him physically – to be sheltered under the "wings" of Hashem.

#### 2. A Prayer for Success

In this final section King David seeks to show that his approach to life is incomparably superior to that of his enemies.

*"The weak ones in your hand, the weak ones who are busy with this world, their portion is this life and they fill their insides with the next world so that their children are satisfied and they leave their inheritance and their wealth for their offspring" (ibid; 14)*

In the previous verse King David had referred to the wicked as the "sword" of Hashem. They are simply a tool in the hand of Hashem to attack those worthy of punishment. In this verse, King David tells us that the average man in the street (ממתים) is also in the "hand" of Hashem. The economy does not just run by itself. The fact that each person takes their place in various industries, trades and businesses -with the effect that any product one might need is readily available - is itself the wondrous work of Hashem.

Of particular interest to King David though, is the fact that the focus of the average man is on this temporary world (חלוד). They have no concern for their portion in the world to come and their only goal is ensuring that they get hold of everything they might need to live comfortably in their home. As a result, they "fill their insides" with the rewards not only of this world but also the rewards of the next world - ahead of time ( חלקם בחיים וצבורתך ). Since they show no concern for their portion in olam habah they receive all their earned reward in this world. In time, this

person will disappear without trace as they have not made provision for their soul to be sustained in the afterlife. Their only remnant will be the inheritance which they leave for their children.

*"I will behold your face with righteousness. I will be satisfied by the awakening of your picture" (ibid, 15)*

In contrast King David declares that his interest has always been in the next world only and that through the "righteousness" with which he is constantly engaged, he will "behold" "the Face" of Hashem, meaning that he will earn the right to bask in the light of Hashem and connect to Him. King David describes how each Jew has a "picture" of Hashem inside him, a divine spark manifest in his soul - except that it is asleep as long as it is contained within his body. This situation can be compared to the case of one who is truly asleep. Although the sleeping person is certainly alive, there is no external indication that their body is functioning properly. So too, although the soul is alive within the person, it is unnoticeable as long as it is restricted by the body. However, at the end of a person's life, it can "awaken" from its sleep. At that point, one who is deserving will see the fruits of all his hard work - the enjoyment of an eternal pleasure - the light of the divine presence.



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### Only Adult Males Count Toward a Minyan (Part 2)

Nevertheless, there were those who maintained that when necessary, a congregation may rely on Rabbenu Tam's opinion and count a child toward a Minyan. The Orhot Haim tells that Rabbenu Shimshon decreed excommunication upon a village that, in defiance of his strict ruling, counted minors toward a Minyan, but the Orhot Haim adds that this may be done when absolutely necessary, if the town is very small and otherwise will not have a Minyan. In fact, the Orhot Haim writes, the Ra'abad wrote that this was the custom in many communities.

By contrast, the Rosh (Rabbenu Asher Ben Yehiel, 1250-1327) cites Rabbenu Yishak as disputing Rabbenu Tam's position, noting that the Gemara brings Mor Zutra as disagreeing with Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi,

and asserting that Halacha follows the view of Mor Zutra. The Bet Yosef lists numerous Rishonim who concurred with this stringent ruling of Rabbenu Yishak, and indeed, in the Shulhan Aruch, he writes that a minor may not be counted toward a Minyan under any circumstances, even if otherwise there will not be a Minyan. This is the Halacha for Sepharadim.

The Rama (Rav Moshe Isserles, Cracow, d. 1572) ruled that since some Rishonim allowed counting minors toward a Minyan, this can be done when necessary. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Russia-New York, 1895-1986) accepted this ruling as normative Ashkenazic practice, and thus writes that if a congregation has no other option for praying with a Minyan, they may count a boy who has yet to reach the age of Bar-Misva. Other Ashkenazic Poskim,

however, disagreed. The Mishna Berura brings several Poskim who concurred with the Shulhan Aruch's stringent ruling, and disputed the Rama's leniency. Likewise, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Jerusalem, 1910-1995) ruled that a child may not be counted toward a Minyan under any circumstances, even if this means that the nine adults will stop coming to synagogue because they will assume there will not be a Minyan.

The Tur (Rabbenu Yaakov Ben Asher, Germany-Spain, 1269-1343) brings those who claimed that if a child holds a Humash in his hands, then he may be counted toward a Minyan. The Bet Yosef cites Rabbenu Tam as ridiculing this view, noting that holding a Humash makes no difference and has no impact upon a child's status. In any event, Halacha does not follow this opinion. If a Sepharadi finds himself together with

eight other Sepharadim who want to include a minor as the tenth person for the Minyan, he should leave in order to prevent them from doing so. Since this is not allowed according to accepted Sephardic custom, it is proper to walk away so that the others do not make this mistake which will result in the recitation of Berachot in vain. If a Sepharadi is with eight other Ashkenazim who, in accordance with the Rama's ruling, wish to count a minor as the tenth person in a Minyan, it is questionable whether he should answer "Amen" to the Berachot. Hacham Ovadia Yosef ruled that one may not answer "Amen" to a Beracha which, according to his custom, is recited in vain, even if the person recites it legitimately, following his community's custom. A common example is a Sepharadi praying in an Ashkenazi

Minyan on Rosh Hodesh, when Ashkenazim recite a Beracha over the recitation of Hallel but Sepharadim do not. According to Hacham Ovadia, the Sepharadi may not answer "Amen" to this Beracha. Another example is the Ashkenazic custom to recite a Beracha before placing the Tefillin Shel Rosh ("Al Misvat Tefillin"). Hacham Ovadia ruled that a Sepharadi who hears an Ashkenazi recite this blessing should not answer "Amen." According to this opinion, a Sepharadi praying with Ashkenazim who count a child toward the Minyan may not answer "Amen" to the Berachot of the Hazara (repetition of the Amida). By contrast, Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Jerusalem, 1924-1998) maintained that if an Ashkenazi recites a Beracha legitimately, following Ashkenazic practice, then a Sepharadi may

answer "Amen," even though this Beracha is not recited according to Sephardic custom. The Hacham Sevi (Rav Tzvi Ashkenazi, 1656-1718) addresses the question as to the status of a human being created with the Sefer Ha'yesira – a mystical book written by Abraham Abinu. This book contains secrets including the way one can create living creatures using certain Names of G-d. (Some explain on this basis how Abraham served his guests meat and butter – suggesting that the animal was created with the Sefer Ha'yesira, such that it wasn't actually an animal, and thus its meat was not Halachically-defined "Basar.") The Hacham Sevi writes that such a creature does not possess a human soul, and thus is not defined by Halacha as a Jewish person who can count toward a Minyan.



## WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Parshat Mishpatim

The Jewish People receive a series of laws concerning social justice. Topics include: Proper treatment of Jewish servants; a husband's obligations to his wife; penalties for hitting people and for cursing parents, judges, and leaders; financial responsibilities for damaging people or their property, either by oneself or by one's animate or inanimate property, or by pitfalls that one created; payments for theft; not returning an object

that one accepted responsibility to guard; the right to self-defense of a person being robbed.

Other topics include: Prohibitions against seduction; witchcraft, bestiality and sacrifices to idols. The Torah warns us to treat the convert, widow and orphan with dignity, and to avoid lying. Usury is forbidden and the rights over collateral are limited. Payment of obligations to the Temple should not be delayed, and the Jewish People must be

Holy, even concerning food. The Torah teaches the proper conduct for judges in court proceedings. The commandments of Shabbat and the Sabbatical year are outlined. Three times a year – for Pesach, Shavuot and Succot – we are to come to the Temple. The Torah concludes this listing of laws with a law of kashrut to not cook or mix meat and milk.

**Rabbi Sinclair,**  
Seasonsofthemoon.com

### Q

1. In what context is a mezuzah mentioned in this week's Parsha?
2. What special mitzvah does the Torah give to the master of a Hebrew maidservant?
3. What is the penalty for wounding one's father or mother?
4. "A" intentionally hits "B." As a result, B is close to death. Besides any monetary payments, what happens to A?
5. What is the penalty for someone who tries to murder a particular person, but accidentally kills another person instead? Give two opinions.

### A

1. 21:6 - If a Hebrew slave desires to remain enslaved his owner brings him "to the door post mezuzah" to pierce his ear.
2. 21:8-9 - To marry her.
3. 21:15 - Death by strangulation.
4. 21:19 - He is put in jail until "B" recovers or dies.
5. 21:23 - A) The murderer deserves the death penalty. B) The murderer is exempt from death but must compensate the heirs of his victim.

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