

# Torah Weekly

ת"ב

February 16-22, 2020  
21-27 Shevat, 5780  
First Torah: Mishpatim:  
Exodus 21:1 - 24:18 Second  
Torah: Parshat Shekalim:  
Exodus 30:11-16  
  
Haftorah:  
Kings II 11:17 - 12:17  
**PARSHAT MISHPATIM**

**Calendars**  
We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

**Family Programs**  
Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

**Grape Juice & Matzah**  
We offer free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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**ALEPH INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

**Why Should I? The Big Question:** A young lady once asked me why she should obey G-d's many instructions in the Torah. She understood that without G-d she would not exist, and felt that she owed her life to Him, but she also felt that G-d forced her into this bargain without asking her. Why did He do this, and why should she agree to this plan? I explained that I understood the question of "Why should I?" but that I thought that in life it is important to move from "why should I" to "why I should." I gave her the example of a person asked to donate a kidney. This person's first question is, "Why should I?" If he didn't feel that way, at least a little, I would be concerned for his sanity. But if he didn't move from "why should I" to "why I should," I would be concerned for his humanity. First this person says, I never asked to be this fellow's match, or for him to be in need. I'd rather keep both my kidneys, thank you very much, and I resent the suggestion that I'm selfish. Then he rethinks and realizes that, though he has a point from the perspective of self, he has a chance to become greater than self. If he does this, a part of him will live in the other, and his kidneys will keep two people alive. Being greater than self is why he should. When G-d tells us how He wants us to live, He is presenting us with an opportunity to become part of Him, to become larger than self, to play a role in His cosmic plan for creation, to be a fragment of eternity, a slice of infinity, a part of G-d! You ask, why should I; I tell you why you should. **Four Custodians** The Torah speaks of four custodians, each with a different degree of liability. There are unpaid custodians, whose sole motive is to benefit the owner of the item. There are paid custodians, who guard the object for the owner's sake, but who are remunerated for their efforts. There are renters, who take possession for their own

benefit but pay for the privilege. Then there are the borrowers, whose exclusive motive is self-gain; the owner gains nothing. The unpaid custodians and the borrowers are at the poles. The former's sole interest is the owner's gain. The latter's sole interest is self-gain. The paid custodians and renters are in between. Both of their arrangements are mutually beneficial to the custodian and to the owner. Liability should always be proportionally inverse to benefit. Unpaid custodians, whose custodianship is exclusively for the owner's sake, carry the least liability. Borrowers, whose custodianship is entirely to their benefit, carry the most liability. Paid custodians and renters are in between. Since they benefit from their custodianship, they carry more liability than unpaid custodians, but since the owner also benefits, they carry less liability than borrowers. (Accordingly, unpaid custodians are liable only for damages caused by negligence. Borrowers are liable for damages caused by circumstances beyond their control, such as armed robbery. Short of endangering themselves, there is little they can do to prevent such theft, and though they aren't expected to endanger themselves, they remain liable because of the conditions of their arrangement. Paid custodians and renters are in between. They are liable for theft and loss even if they behaved responsibly and weren't negligent, but they aren't liable for damages caused by circumstances beyond their control. See Exodus 22 6:14 and Babylonian Talmud, Baba Metzia 93a.) **Global Custodians** G-d created the world and appointed us its custodians. We guard the world through prayer, Torah study and observance of the commandments. In this merit the world is preserved. Furthermore, in this merit, the world becomes holy, and G-d's plan for creation

is realized. (Genesis 2:15. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 88a.) There are four kinds of custodians. Unpaid custodians ask for nothing in return. They view serving G-d as a privilege. Permeated with love for G-d, they feel that to do something for Him is the greatest reward. Paid custodians are happy to do G-d's bidding, but if they are going to work hard, they want to receive something in return. A good life, a nice house, a happy family, etc. Then come the renters. Their primary interest is living a good life, having a nice home, a happy family, etc. But they realize that to receive all the above, they need to do something for G-d. So, they happily pay for their reward by doing all the things that G-d asks of the Jew. There is a subtle yet significant distinction between the paid custodian and the renter. The former works for G-d, but seeks remuneration. The latter works for himself, but is willing to pay for it. Then come the borrowers. They want a good life and don't want to pay for it. As G-d's children, borrowers demand that G-d provide for them as a parent for a child. G-d does not turn these borrowers down. There is an entire category in the Torah for the borrower. One is permitted to enter into an arrangement that is exclusively self-beneficial. And if we may do this with our fellow, we may do it with G-d. However, once borrowers receive what they seek, they are completely liable. When they receive a loan from G-d, they must treat it as a Divine loan should be treated. When G-d provides us with a home, we must use it in a G-dly way, otherwise the home loses its G-dliness and its spirituality is damaged. When G-d provides us with money, we must use it in ways that G-d would approve of, otherwise the money is spiritually compromised. Although G-d extends the loan with no strings attached, we are

**February 16, 2020 – 21 Shevat, 5780**

**First Jew Granted Residence in England (1657)**

**Rabbi Moshe Galante (1689)**

Rabbi Moshe Galante II was born in Safed in 1620 and later moved to Jerusalem where he founded a large yeshivah. He was a grandson of the famed Rabbi Moshe Galante I, who was a student of Rabbi Yosef Karo. Rabbi Galante was the first rabbi endowed with the title *Rishon l'Tzion* ("the First of Zion"), a title traditionally conferred upon the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Jerusalem and later of the Land of Israel. This due to the profound love and esteem he was given by the Sephardic community in Jerusalem. He authored a number of works including *Elef HaMagen*, which includes 1,000 responsa on various topics; *Parpara'ot l'Chochmah*, a commentary on the Bible; and *Zevach HaShelamim* on the Talmud. Counted among his students was Rabbi Chizkiyah De Silva, rabbi of Hebron and author of the *Pri Chadash* (printed in the standard edition of the Code of Jewish Law).

**February 17, 2020 – 22 Shevat, 5780**

**Passing of Kotzker Rebbe (1859)**

Passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk (1787-1859), renowned Chassidic leader, and forerunner of the Ger chassidic dynasty and others.

**February 17, 2020 – 22 Shevat, 5780**

**Rebbetzin's Yahrtzeit (1988)**

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushkah Schneerson (b. 1901), wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, passed away on the 22nd of Shevat of the year 5748 (1988). For more on the Rebbetzin, see link below. Chabad's annual international conference of sheluchot (woman "emissaries") is held on or near this date.

**February 18, 2020 – 23 Shevat, 5780**

**War on Benjamin (circa 1228 BCE)**

Armies of the Tribes of Israel converged upon the tribe of Benjamin in the aftermath of the "Concubine at Givah" incident, in a war which nearly brought about the extinction of the Benjaminites (as related in the Book of Judges, chapters 19-2). The event occurred during the judgeship of Othniel ben Knaz, who led the people of Israel in the years 2533-2573 from creation (1228-1188 BCE).

**February 19, 2020 – 24 Shevat, 5780**

**Zachariah's Prophecy (351 BCE)**

"On the 24th day of the 11th month, which is the month of Shevat, in the second year of the reign of Darius, the word of G-d came to Zachariah the son of Berechiah the son of Ido the prophet, saying: '...I will return to Jerusalem in mercy, my house will be built within her...and the Lord shall yet console Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem.'" (Zechariah 1:7-17)

This was two years before the completion of the 2nd Temple on the 3rd of Adar, 3412 (349 BCE).

**February 19, 2020 – 24 Shevat, 5780**

**Passing of Rebbetzin Menuchah Rachel (1888)**

Rebbetzin Menuchah Rachel Slonim, daughter of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch and granddaughter of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, was born on Kislev 19, 5559 (1798) -- the very day on which her illustrious grandfather was freed from his imprisonment in the Peter-Paul Fortress in Petersburg; she was thus named "Menuchah", meaning "tranquility" (Rachel was the name of a daughter of Rabbi Schneur Zalman who died in her youth). The Rebbetzin's lifelong desire to live in the Holy Land was realized in 1845, when she and her husband, Rabbi Yaakov Culi Slonim (d. 1857), led a contingent of Chassidim who settled in Hebron. Famed for her wisdom, piety and erudition, she served as the matriarch of the Chassidic community in Hebron until her passing in her 90th year in 1888.

expected to return it at life's end with its holiness and spirituality intact. There is a subtle yet important difference between borrowers and renters. Renters believe that they should serve G-d to get what they want, borrowers believe that they are entitled. Thus, renters pay for what they receive with Torah and mitzvahs. Borrowers receive for free; their Torah and mitzvahs merely preserve what they received. **The Scale** The four custodians are not distinctive categories; they comprise a scale, a growing curve, that moves us from "why should I" to "why I should." From birth through toddlerhood we are borrowers: all we do is receive, with nary a thought of giving back. We must obey the rules, but beyond those rules, we receive for free. In childhood and our teenage years, we become renters: we learn that to reach our benchmarks, we must invest effort. If we want to succeed, we must work hard. In marriage, we transition from self to other and start thinking about how to be of service. At first, we are happy to serve so long as we are also served. I will make my spouse happy, if my spouse will make me happy. Ultimately, we reach a stage where making our spouse happy makes us happy. The effort is the reward. We no longer ask "why should I"; we say "why I should." If this is true in our relationships with others, it is certainly true in our relationship with G-d. *This essay is based on Likutei Sichot, v. 31, pp. 112-118. By Rabbi Lazer Gurkow*

**Is Religion Still Relevant?** Cyberspace, outer space, inner space. Genome maps, globalization, going to Mars. Smart cards, smart bombs, stem cells and cell phones. There is no denying it: we live in a new age. Science fiction has become scientific fact. And the question is asked: In this new world order, with science and technology changing the way we live, is religion still relevant? Do we still need to subscribe to an ancient and seemingly long-obsolete code of laws, when we are so much further advanced than our ancestors? But let me ask you: Have the Ten Commandments passed their "sell-by" date? Are faith and doubt, murder and adultery, thievery and jealousy out of fashion? Notwithstanding all our marvelous medical and scientific developments, has human nature itself really changed? Are not the very same moral issues that faced our ancestors still challenging our own generation? Whether it's an oxcart or a Mercedes, road rage or courteous coexistence is still a choice we must make. Looking after aged parents is not a new problem. The very same issues dealt with in the Bible—sibling rivalry, jealous spouses and warring nations—are still the stuff of newspaper headlines today. We still struggle with knowing the difference between right and wrong, moral or immoral, ethical or sneaky, and not even the most souped-up computer on earth is able to answer those questions for us. Science and technology address the how and what of life, but they do not answer the question of why. Why are we here in the first place? Why should I be nice to my neighbor? Why should my life be nobler than my pet Doberman's? Science and technology have unraveled many mysteries that puzzled us for centuries. But they have not answered a single moral question. Only Torah addresses the moral minefield. And those issues are perhaps more pressing today than ever before in history. Torah is truth, and truth is eternal. Scenarios come and go. Lifestyles change with the geography. The storylines are different, but the gut-level issues are all too familiar. If we ever needed a Torah—we need it equally today, and maybe more so. May we continue to find moral guidance and clarity in the eternal truths of our holy and eternal Torah. Amen.

*By Rabbi Yossi Goldman*

*\*Passover order forms have been sent to the Chaplains and Rabbis. Please begin speaking with your Chaplain about Passover*