

Torah Weekly

January 23 - 29, 2022
21 - 27 Shevat, 5782

Torah reading:
Exodus 21:1 - 24:18
Haftarah:
Jeremiah 34:8 - 22;
Jeremiah 33:25-26

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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No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

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

Help The Poor

Boy, you see your enemy's donkey (chamor) lying under its load, you might want to refrain from helping him; [however], you must surely help with him." (Exodus 23:5)

Before Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, known as the Alter Rebbe, became the first leader of Chabad, he once traveled to raise money for an important charitable

cause. He came to the home of a wealthy man who, sensing that he was not one of the ordinary charity collectors, offered to have him stay and teach his children in return for the entire sum he hoped to raise.

After a short stay, he informed his host that he was leaving because he could not tolerate the conduct of the people of the city. His host asked him what he meant, and Rabbi Schneur Zalman replied, "You torture the poor." The host thought that he was referring to a recent meeting to determine how to raise the money for a tax. It was decided that first the poor should give as much as they were able, and whatever was missing would be made up by the rich. He realized that Rabbi Schneur Zalman was right: the poor should not be bothered at all. Let the rich give as much as they can, and the poor won't have to give anything. Immediately he arranged a second meeting, and it was decided that the rich should first give what they could afford.

A few days later, Rabbi Schneur Zalman again gave notice that he was leaving, exclaiming again, "You torture the poor." Amazed, the host told his guest of the second meeting, and that the poor would not be bothered at all. Rabbi Schneur Zalman told him that he was not aware of the meetings, and had been referring to a different matter:

In the human body, there are "rich" organs and a "poor" organ. The "rich" organs are

the mind and the heart, and explained, the “poor” organ is the stomach. “In this city,” he “Instead of putting emphasis on the rich organs and engaging them in the study of Torah and concentrating on prayer to G-d, the approach is to constantly fast. Thus, the ‘poor’ organ, the stomach, is deprived and made to suffer for the person’s iniquities. I cannot tolerate this approach!”

This new philosophy was very intriguing to the host, and he asked Rabbi Schneur Zalman its source. He told him of the Baal Shem Tov and his teachings, which accentuate working with the mind and heart and not punishing the body.

“The Baal Shem Tov,” he continued, “bases his approach on a verse in the Torah portion of Mishpatim, and interprets it as follows: ‘If you see’—when you will come to the realization that—‘*chamor*’, the physical matter of the body (related to the word *chomer*, ‘physicality’) is ‘your enemy’—because he is engaged in attaining physical pleasures, and thus hates the soul which is striving for G-dliness and a high spiritual level—and the body is ‘lying under his burden,’ not wanting to get up and serve G-d—‘you might want to refrain from helping him’: you may think that you will begin to torture him and deny him the food he needs. Be advised that this is a wrong approach. Instead, ‘you must surely help with him’—give him his bodily needs and attune your mind and soul to worship G-d. Eventually, your body will become purified and cooperate in your divine service.”

Adar The Talmud declares in the month of Adar, "we increase in joy." For this is "the month that was transformed for them from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festivity" (Esther 9:22) by the great miracle and victory of Purim. Our sages advise that the month of Adar is an auspicious time for the Jewish people, so that if a Jew is faced with a challenging event (i.e., a court case, a medical procedure, etc.) he should endeavor to schedule it during Adar.

Sunday, January 23, 2022 --- 21 Shevat, 5782

First Jew Granted Residence in England (1657)

On February 4, 1657, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, issued the first residence permit to a Jew, Luis Carvajal, since the expulsion of all Jews from England by King Edward I in the year 1290. The edict of expulsion had been officially overturned in the previous year, 1656. The re-admittance of Jews into England was partially due to the efforts of the great scholar Rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel.

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).

Monday, January 24, 2022 --- 22 Shevat, 5782

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.

Rebbetzin's Yahrzeit (1988)

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

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 --- 23 Shevat, 5782

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).

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 --- 24 Shevat, 5782

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).

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.

Friday, January 28, 2022 --- 26 Shevat, 5782

Passing of the Taz (1667)

Shevat 26 is the yahrzeit (anniversary of the passing) of Rabbi David ben Shmuel Halevi (1586-1667), a primary Halachic authority, known as *Taz* after his work *Turei Zahav* ("Rows of Gold") -- a commentary on Rabbi Yosef Caro's *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law).

Shabbat, January 29, 2022 --- 27 Shevat, 5782

The "Simlah Chadashah" (1737)

Rabbi Alexander Sender Schorr was a direct descendant of Rabbi Yosef Bechor Schorr of Orleans, one of the most famous of the French Tosafists. At a young age he was already appointed Chief Justice of the Rabbinic Court in the town of Hovniv which is directly outside of Lviv, Ukraine.

He authored the classic work on the laws of ritual slaughter called *Simlah Chadashah*, as well as a deeper commentary on those laws called *Tevu'ot Shor*.

The *Simlah Chadashah* has been reprinted more than one hundred times and is the most widely used book to learn the laws of *shechitah* (ritual slaughter). Rabbi Alexander Sender Schorr passed away in the town of Zhovkva on the 27th of Shevat in the year 5497 (1737).