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- **Russian Website:** <http://www.boruh.info/> This website is in Russian, many articles and the parasha are posted on it every week.



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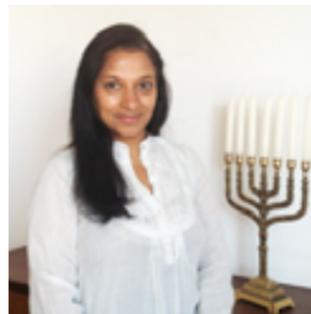
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Weekly  
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We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry. I suggest our partners to pray from February 26 through March 4 for the Jewish people and Messianic congregation in Jamaica. Let's pray for the believers and ministry which is currently running over there.



**NEWS**

**Pastors Meeting in Jamaica**

It was a privilege for Richard Elofer to be in Jamaica on February 12 through 20. There was a pastors meeting and training, a gathering of the more than 200 pastors of the Jamaican Union, The meeting was organized by the Inter-American Division, especially Samuel Telemaque, Global Mission director for that Division. The territory of this Division includes all the Central American countries and all the Caribbean islands, and it is working in three languages, English, French and Spanish.

The pastors were excited to learn more how to implement Jewish friendship ministry in Jamaica. Indeed, Jamaica has a great history of Jewish immigration which started at the very beginning of the discovery of this island, in 1494. The first Jews were Sephardic Jews who ran away from Spain and Portugal in order to keep their faith alive. But since the inquisition was very present in Jamaica, they practiced their religion secretly until the British Conquest in 1655, then a new page of the Jewish history started in Jamaica. The Jamaican society was a very open society, that is why mixed marriage occurred very often to the point that today they are 20,000 Jamaican who claim to be Jews, but are not recognized by the Jewish people because their mother is not Jewish, and a recent study has now estimated that nearly 424,000 Jamaicans are descendants of Jewish (Sephardic) immigrants to Jamaica from Portugal and Spain from 1494 to today. The Jewish people is a very small population,

only 15 million worldwide, this because the Jewish rabbis are very restrictive in their way to say who is a Jew. It is interesting to notice that the State of Israel does not have the same restriction, while the rabbis consider as Jew only those who can prove that they have a Jewish mother, the State of Israel has voted from the beginning of its existence that they will accept under the law of return any person who can prove that one of his parents or grand-parent (mother or father side) he is Jewish. That is why many Christians have altogether immigrated to Israel with Jews.

**Messianic Congregation in Jamaica**

For several years a Messianic congregation is running in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, this congregation started with the help of Pastor Alex Schushler, from Florida and was run by Dr. Anthony Levy, a lawyer living and working in Jamaica. Since the first-time Richard Elofer visited Kingston he was in contact with Dr. Levy and worked with him in order to maintain this congregation alive. But right now Dr. Levy feels that it is time for him to let this congregation to a new leadership, and has called the World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center to help him find and train a new leadership. That is why Richard Elofer met the current leaders of this congregation on the 15th of February and preached to this congregation on Friday 17 and Sabbath 18. After the worship on Shabbat, an *Oneg* (meal) was served, and a meeting of questions/answers was organized on the afternoon. Rabbi Mordechai Griffin, from Texas was present, and enjoyed all the meetings.

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Parasha Overview:  
**MISHPATIM**

- Israel receives 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



**SHABBAT SHEKALIM**

This Shabbat is a special one for the Jewish people. A Shabbat called *Shabbat Shekalim*, it is the last Shabbat before the last month of the religious or liturgical Jewish year, the month of *Adar*. Let's remember that according to the Bible the first month of the year is not the month of *Tisbri* (*Rosh Hashana*) but the month of *Nissan*, the month of Passover (Exodus 12:1). This year the month of *Adar* will start on Monday 27th of February 2017, and the first evening of Passover, which is on the 14th day of *Nissan*, will be on April 11.

For the Jewish people, the first month of the year is very important. According to scholars, the cycle of the *parashot*, did not start in the time of Jesus, after *Sukkoth* as it is done today, but on the month of *Nissan*. Thus to prepare the Jewish people for the coming feast of Passover and the month of *Nissan*, the last Sabbath before *Adar* starts a cycle of four *Shabbats* which are this year *Shabbat Shekalim* on February 25, *Shabbat*

*Zachor* on March 11, *Shabbat Parah* on March 18, and *Shabbat Hachodesh* (which means Shabbat of the month) on March 25.

To mark these special Shabbats, the Jewish people draw two Torah scrolls from the holy ark, the first one to read the regular parasha for the week, (this week, *Mishpatim*) and just after to read in the second scroll a short portion of *parashat shekalim* (Exodus 30:15-16) where G-d asks each member of his people to contribute to the expense of the Sanctuary (later the temple) half shekel.

Another modification of the liturgy of these four Shabbats is that the Haftarah (prophet reading) is not in connection with the regular parasha for the week but with the *Maftir* or second text read from the second Torah scroll.

**HOW TO APPRECIATE GOOD EXPERIENCES**

Before Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the stone Tablets, he and seventy elders were at the foot of the mountain. There: "Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and sev-

PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK  
**Mishpatim**  
משפטים  
**Exodus 21:1 - 24:18**

enty of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a brick of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness." (Exodus 24:9-10). Rashi comments that the "brick" was in the presence of the Almighty during the time the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt to remind Him of their suffering since they were forced to build with bricks in their slavery. "The essence of a clear sky" or "the very heaven for clearness" is a reminder that once they were liberated there was light and joy before the Almighty.

Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz comments that whenever the Torah tells us about the attributes of the Almighty, the purpose is to teach us how we should strive to emulate Him. When someone else suffers, it is not sufficient for us just to try to feel his suffering in the abstract, we should try to ease his suffering if we can. We should also do some concrete action that will clearly remind us of the person's suffering — rather than just forgetting it and continuing on with our lives.

Rabbi Packouz says, "even



at the time of redemption and joy, it is important to recall the previous suffering that one experienced. This adds an entire dimension to the joy. Many people would just like to forget all their suffering when it is over. The proper attitude is to remember it, and this will give a person an even greater appreciation for the good that he experiences."

**TORAH RECEIVED ON MOUNT SINAI**

At the end of this week's Parasha, *Mishpatim*, the Torah states, "The LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.'" (Exodus 24:12). The Parasha ends with this verse, "Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights." (Exodus 24:18). During these forty days which Moshe spent on Mount Sinai G-d taught him the

"God said to Moses, 'Come up to Me, to the mountain, and remain there. I will give you the stone tablets, the Torah and the commandment that I have written for [the people's] instruction.'" (Exodus 24:12).

entire Torah and its commandments.

Thus, this Parasha is connected to the previous one, *Yithro*, in which we read about the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Indeed, Parashat *Mishpatim* teaches that not only were the Ten commandments given at Mount Sinai, but the entire Torah.

The Torah has been the constant guide and companion of Israel. As mentioned last week the Ten Commandments correspond to the ten sayings with which G-d created the universe.

This teaches that the purpose of creation and the Torah is for the sake of God's people. Through observing G-d's commandments we achieve the purpose of creation.

**REST FOR THE SLAVES**

The Torah gives a special rule about the Hebrew or Israelite slave, it is written "Now these are the rules that you shall set before them. When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing." (Exo-

odus 21:1-2). God is the real Master of everyone, He is the Master of the freemen, and even more the Master of the Slaves, thus the Jewish law says that according to the Torah, the first master of a Jewish slave is G-d, and he must serve him first. That means the human master is forbidden to ask an Hebrew slave to break the laws of G-d. And must give him time to perform the mitzvot. In fact every believer is already a slave belonging to another master — Hashem. That is why G-d gives some rules to Israel G-d created the universe.

This teaches that the purpose of creation and the Torah is for the sake of God's people. Through observing G-d's commandments we achieve the purpose of creation.

**PIERCING THE EARS**

The Torah gives freedom to the Slave, to be free after a service of six years to his master, or to stay as his slave forever, indeed the Torah says: "And his master shall bore his ear with an awl, and he shall serve forever." (Exodus 21:6). Today people like piercing, they

in court proceedings.

The commandments of Shabbat and the Sabbatical year are outlined.

Three times a year — Pesach, Shavuot and Succot — we are to come to the Temple.

The Torah concludes this listing of laws with a law of kashrut — not to mix milk and meat.

G-d promises that He will lead the Jewish People to the Land of Israel, helping them conquer its inhabitants, and tells them that by fulfilling His commandments they will bring blessings to their nation.

The people promise to do and listen to everything that G-d says. Moshe writes the Book of the Covenant, and reads it to the people.

Moshe ascends the mountain to remain there for 40 days in order to receive the two Tablets of the Covenant.

## Haftarah Overview

### Jeremiah 33:25 - 34:22

This prophecy was given to Jeremiah when the Babylonians wanted to destroy Jerusalem and to deport its inhabitants: “The word that came to Jeremiah from the L-rd, when King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth and all the peoples under his dominion were fighting against Jerusalem and all its cities:” (Jeremiah 33:26).

G-d said to the King of Judah that Babylon will have victory over Israel and the King will be deported too. “Thus says the L-RD, the G-d of Israel: Go and speak to King Zedekiah of Judah and say to him: Thus says the L-RD: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. And you yourself shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be captured and handed over to him;” (Jeremiah 34:2-3).

G-d said to Jeremiah that one of the reasons of the deportation was because Israel did not accept to observe the sabbatical year “The word of the L-RD came to Jeremiah from the L-RD: Thus says the L-RD, the G-d of Israel: I myself made a covenant



have piercing in every part of their body, but people must realize that a piercing on the ear, is a sign of slavery, since it is not G-d who pierced their ears, they should ask themselves, who is their master, when someone ask a non believer to pierce his ear, his service is to whom? We are free to serve G-d or the satan, the adversary. Be careful to make the right choice.

### SIX THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY

The Jewish people, thinking about the meaning of these rules of Sabbatical year and especially on slavery today, as we don't possess anymore slaves, gives an application for our days, and said in the *Chasidic* book *Likutei Shichot*, that the six years of a Hebrew slave's servitude represent symbolically the six millennia of G-d's people existence in this world, between the creation and the coming of the Messiah. Then in “the seventh” millennium, symbolized by the Seventh-day Shabbat and Seventh year of Sabbatical year “he shall go free,” the Hebrew slave who represent the believer who will be “free” of the struggle to perform the *mitzvot* and will instead perform them naturally because he will be in the presence of the Messiah and G-d himself.

“As soon as Moses reached the mountain top, the cloud covered the mountain. God's glory rested on Mount Sinai, and it was covered by the cloud for six days. On the seventh day, He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. (Exodus 24:15,16)

Thus, the juxtaposition of the parasha concerning the giving of the Ten commandments and the laws about slavery suggests first that the believer should submit himself to serving *Hashem*, even though serving G-d and His will is not easy in our days. and secondly it suggests his longing for that “seventh” millennium, which will be inaugurated by the last coming of the Messiah. Then, when he will come, according to Maimonides and the Bible, the resurrection will be a reality, and we will all merit (thanks to the Messiah) a different mode of existence as it is said in the book of Revelation “Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Yeshua and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Mashiach for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4), each of the 6 days + 1 of the creation, and each year of the cycle of 6 years + 1 of the Sabbatical year represent the six thousand years of G-d's people existence on this earth and the “Seventh” day (Shabbat) or seventh year, which represents the seventh millennium, which will be a millennium of rest in the presence of the Messiah.

### A JEWISH WAY TO INTERPRET THE TORAH

The Torah states: “But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye,” (Exodus 21:23-24), but the Jewish people were not barbarians, they never took off the eye of anybody because he hurt or injured someone else's eye. The Jewish people have many ways to interpret the Bible, from literal reading, from counting the value of letters (Gematria) and also playing with the Hebrew alphabet, mixing the letters, reading them in a reverse way, or changing the position of the letters, using the Hebrew alphabet as modern spies are used to code their messages. Rashi, the great French commentator says that this verse (Exodus 21:24) means that the one who harm anyone's eyes must pay a monetary compensation. How did he arrived to this conclusion? In fact the Hebrew text says literally *Ayin tachat Ayin*, which means “eye under eye,” thus Jews put down the Hebrew alphabet, the three letters for “eye” are *Ayin*, *Yod* and *Nun*, thus looked at the letters “*Ta-chat*—under” these three letter, which were *Caf* (under the *Yod*) *Samech* (under the *Nun*), and *Fe* (under the *Ayin*) thus in repositioning these three letters together they read *Ke-sef*, which means money.

## APOSTOLIC WRITINGS — ACTS 23:5

There are at least four verses of *Mishpatim* which are quoted in the Apostolic Writings. One of them is a *mitzvah* mentioned in the chapter 22 of Exodus. It is written “You shall ... nor curse a ruler of your people.” (28). More important today than in the past, because today we have a natural tendency to distrust our leaders, not only leaders of the country or the city where we live, but also G-d's people leaders.

However, the quotation of this text in the Apostolic Writings is interesting, because it is Rabbi Shaul who pronounced it. Looking at the context we discover that Rabbi Shaul was arrested in the Temple of Jerusalem, he was presented before the Sanhedrin with a false accusation: “Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place.” (Acts 21:28).

This accusation was not true, Rabbi Shaul was respectful of the Temple, the Torah and the people of Israel and his leadership. That is why, when he was confused with someone else, an Egyptian terrorist (Acts 21:38) he had to justify himself and said: “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia.” (Acts 21:39). He clearly identified himself, publicly with the Jewish people, he was proud to be a Jew and affirmed it clearly. But who was Rabbi Shaul? He was a member of the Sanhedrin around the year 34, some authors think that his election to the Sanhedrin was a reward for zealous participation to the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), “After the death of Stephen, Saul was elected a member of the Sanhedrin council in consideration of the part he had acted on that occasion.” (AA102). Let's remember,

the role Shaul has played in this revolting murder. Reading Acts 6 we learn that Stephen was one of the first seven deacons of the early believing community in Yeshua *hamashiach*. He was a Jew, but not an Hebrew from the holy land, but a Jew from the diaspora. He was chosen to make a fair sharing of food and other resources among the Hebrew and Greek believers.

Thus, as it is a custom among the Jews, every Shabbat they joined a synagogue which fit their tradition. Today a Sephardic Jew joins on Shabbat a Sephardic synagogue and an Ashkenazic Jew joins an Ashkenazic synagogue. Thus the synagogue of Stephen was “the synagogue of the Freedmen... and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia,” (Acts 6:9). As he was in his synagogue, and shared his testimony about Yeshua, some of the members of his synagogue were not happy: “Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen ... rose up and disputed with Stephen.” (Acts 6:9-10). A bold discussion rose up between Stephen and the members of this synagogue. Let's remember that when Shaul made his defense before the Sanhedrin he said, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia” (Acts 21:39). He was a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, and the synagogue of Stephen was for “those from Cilicia and Asia,” (Acts 6:9), that means Stephen and Shaul were members of the same synagogue. And Shaul was a respected rabbi, full of diplomas, but Stephen was a simple man with no degree. How this man, who is nothing could teach others on the matter of the Messiah, and when Shaul heard him saying that Yeshua is the Messiah, he was furious and

reported this heresy to the Sanhedrin, the *Beth-Din* of Israel. The Sanhedrin heard Stephen and his defense in Acts 7, and he was condemned to death. Thus, he was stoned, and Shaul approved his death “And Saul approved of his execution.” (Acts 8:1). A few weeks or months later, Shaul was still enraged against the follower of Yeshua, “But Saul... went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” (Acts 9:1-2) On the way of Damascus he had an encounter which changed completely his life: “Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Yeshua, whom you are persecuting.” (Acts 9:3-5). This apparition, drove him to repentance and conversion to Yeshua, and since that day he was a follower of Yeshua and the Apostle to the Gentiles, but he was accused of apostasy: “This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place.” (Acts 21:28). When he was before the Sanhedrin, Shaul did not know that the man before him was the High priest and quoted by heart the verse of Exodus “for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’” (Acts 23:5). This quote demonstrates that Shaul, knew very well the Torah, in addition this text demonstrates that Shaul was willing to observe the Torah, and to keep the Mitzvot of the Law.

with your ancestors when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, saying, “Every seventh year each of you must set free any Hebrews who have been sold to you and have served you six years; you must set them free from your service.” But your ancestors did not listen to me or incline their ears to me.” (Jeremiah 34:12-14).

However, the L-rd loves his people and will continue to love him, the deportation is a way G-d used to help Israel to understand their mission towards the nations, to be a light to the nations and to help each individual to believe in the only one G-d. Thus before giving the reasons of this defeat, G-d assured Israel that he will bring them back to their country: “Thus says the L-RD: Only if I had not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, would I reject the offspring of Jacob and of my servant David and not choose any of his descendants as rulers over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes, and will have mercy upon them.” (Jeremiah 33:25-26)

## STORIES AND TRADITIONS

### THE THIEF

When a thief steals \$100, his intention is to gain \$100 for himself at the expense of \$100 to his victim. The punishments in the Torah are measure for measure. Therefore, by paying double (Exodus 22:3), the thief ends up losing \$100 and making the victim gain \$100. What is done to him is exactly what he planned to do to his fellow.

### THE RICH AND THE POOR

A rich man does not necessarily deserve his wealth, nor a poor person his poverty. Affluence and poverty derive from acts of Hashem designed to test the person.

The rich man should think that he is merely the caretaker of money which rightfully belongs to the poor man. It is placed in his custody to test him, to see if he will be blinded by riches. This is implied in the words, "The poor man's money is with you." When you extend a loan to him, you are really granting him access to his money. Consequently, charging him interest on his money is adding insult to his suffering of poverty.

### KOSHER OR NOT KOSHER

A story is told of a stranger who entered a "kosher" restaurant and inquired about its kashrut standards. The owner directed the visitor to a picture on the wall: "You see that man up there with the long beard

and peiyot (the Hebrew word for side-locks or side-curls); he was my father." The visitor said to him, "If your father with the beard and peiyot were standing here behind the counter and your picture were hanging on the wall, I would not ask any questions. Since the opposite is true, I have doubts and must investigate before I can eat here."

### SAYING THE TRUTH

There are many stories of sages who were so careful in their speech that they wouldn't say anything that could inadvertently turn out to be a lie. Upon coming home, if asked if it is raining, one rabbi would reply, "When I was outside it was, or it wasn't raining." He never simply said it is or it is not raining, because the conditions may have changed since he walked into the house.

### LIVING IN ISRAEL

Rabbi Yehuda ben B'teira, Rabbi Masia ben Cheres, Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yochanan were leaving Israel to settle abroad. When they came to their destination and remembered the Land of Israel they lifted their tear filled eyes, rented their garments and recited the verse, "You shall possess it, and dwell in it, for in it you can observe all the laws" (Deuteronomy 11:31). Then they turned around and went back, saying, "Living in the

Land of Israel is equivalent to performing all the commandments in the Torah!"

### IMMEDIACY OF TESHUVAH

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk once said to his students, "We say of A-mighty G-d" thanks to our teshuvah (Repentance) "as far as east from west, has he distanced our transgressions from us" (Psalms 103:12). Perhaps one of you can tell me how far east is from west?" The students grappled with this problem. Each one came up with a different astronomical figure. Suddenly, the Kotzker Rebbe interrupted them and declared, "You are all in error!" From east to west is only one swerve. When one stands facing east and turns around, instantly, he faces west. This is the immediacy of teshuvah.

### LOVE BOTH OF THEM

The previous Rebbe of Lubavitch, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, was like a father to many Jews and helped many non-observant Jews find their way back to faith. When asked why he spent so much time with non-religious people, he explained that when a father has two children, one is healthy and one sick, although he definitely loves the two of them equally, he usually spends more time with the sick one, in the hope of healing him.

## KIDS PARASHA MISHPATIM

מִשְׁפָּטִים



Exodus 21:1 - 24:18

"When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged. But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money. "When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (Exodus 21:20-25)

<http://www.bnai-tikkun.org.nz>

### Inspirational Corner

❖ Here was unmistakable evidence that their [Israel] leader was not Moses but the mighty Angel of whom the Lord had said, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice: ... for My name is in Him." Exodus 23:20, 21. (EP 292)

### Inspirational Corner

❖ From the very first communication of God with them at Sinai, they had been warned against idolatry. Immediately after the proclamation of the law the message was sent them by Moses concerning the nations of Canaan: "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee." Exodus 23:24, 25. The assurance was given that so long as they remained obedient. (PP 543)