

# NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Mishpatim

([http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh\\_TorahSummary.htm](http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm))

## Parsha Outline

- Social laws
- Sealing the Covenant
- Moshe ascends Har Sinai

## Parsha Summaries

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/359320/jewish/Mishpatim-Roundup.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/359320/jewish/Mishpatim-Roundup.htm)

### Mishpatim Roundup

Now that the Jews have received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai in last week's *parshah* (*Yitro*) and accepted the Torah, G-d teaches them the laws that are part of this Torah. In this *parshah*, we learn about 53 mitzvot (out of a total of 613) that G-d commands the Jews, so this *parshah* is basically a list of things you gotta do and can't do. Here goes:

#### **Servants**

The Torah gives very exact instructions about how one should treat his servant. First, how does a Jew become a servant? If someone steals and then doesn't have money to repay what he stole, the court sells him in order to pay it. Now that he's a servant, can his master do with him as he wishes, ordering him around and telling him to sleep in the barn? Not exactly. The Torah says that he must treat the servant like the others in his household--the same good food, clean bed, etc. The master must also support and provide these things for the servant's wife and children. Finally, a servant is only a servant for six years. At the end of that, he goes free.

#### **Crimes Against Others**

The punishment for murder, kidnapping, and hitting or cursing one's parents is the death penalty. If somebody hits somebody else and he gets hurt, he must pay damages that include: the value of that limb which was lost, all his doctor bills, his pain, the money he would have made from work that he missed, and any embarrassment the injury causes him.

Someone who accidentally kills somebody else must go to a special city called an *Ir Miklat* or City of Refuge, and he is exiled there.

### **Misbehaving Animals**

What happens if somebody's ox goes wild and kills somebody -- is the owner responsible? Not usually, but if the animal has done this before, then the owner should have known that he has to do something about this animal, and in that case he's responsible. If someone digs a pit and forgets to cover it up and an animal falls into it and dies, the person who dug the pit must pay the owner the full value of the animal.

If someone steals someone else's animal and kills or sells it, he has to pay back five times the amount he stole, or four times for a stolen sheep. If he steals something and still has it, he has to repay double.

### **Taking Care of Someone Else's Stuff**

If someone else's property is in our possession, we have to do everything we can to take care of it, and if we are irresponsible and something happens to it, we must pay for it. However, depending on what type of **guardian** we are, we might be more or less responsible if something happens and it's not really our fault.

An **unpaid guardian** is doing the guy a favor and watching his thing for him, so he's not responsible if something happens to it. A **paid guardian** is responsible if it gets lost or stolen, but not if it's stolen in an armed robbery. A **borrower** is responsible no matter what happens to it, except if the owner is with him when the object gets stolen or broken. The last type of guardian is a **renter**.

### **Different Ways We Must Be Nice**

The Torah demands that we be extra nice to strangers, widows, and orphans. These defenseless people especially deserve our kindness.

When we lend money to somebody, we are not allowed to charge interest. Jews are only allowed to give interest-free loans! Also, if you take something from the borrower to make sure he repays the loan, you have to give that thing back before the day is over-- because what if he needs it for the night?

We are not allowed to curse a judge or a prince. A newly-born animal may not be brought as a *korbon* until it is at least eight days old. We are not allowed to eat the flesh of a mortally wounded animal.

### **Laws for Courts and Judging**

Never testify falsely against somebody, and don't accept a false testimony from somebody else. Now here's something interesting: Even if someone is very poor, you're not allowed to rule in his favor just because you feel bad for him. Justice is justice no matter what our feelings are. Don't accept bribery.

### **Shemittah and the Holidays**

For six years we work can on the land--prepare the land, plant seeds, take care of the plants, and harvest the fruits and vegetables. But the seventh year, called **shemittah**, we must give the land a break and not do any work on it.

Six days of the week we can do work, but on the seventh day, **Shabbat**, we must rest.

There are three important festivals throughout the year: **Pesach**, **Shavuot**, and **Sukkot**.

### **Meat and Milk**

Finally, the last mitzvah given in this parshah is that we keep meat and milk separate. Now we know why kosher kitchens have two sets of everything, dishes, sinks, counters--one for meat and one for milk!

### **Conclusion**

G-d promises the land of Israel to the Jews and Moses goes up the mountain to get the Tablets from G-d. He remains there for forty days and forty nights.

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/628726/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/628726/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm)

## **Mishpatim Aliya Summary**

**General Overview:** This week's reading, *Mishpatim*, details many laws, including laws related to slaves, personal injury, loans, usury, and property damage. The end of the portion speaks of the preparations the Israelites made before receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

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**First Aliyah:** This section discusses laws pertaining to the Israelite servant, his mandatory release after six years of service, and the procedure followed when a servant expresses his desire to remain in his master's service. The Torah continues with the laws of the Israelite maidservant, and her terms of release. Other laws contained in this section: a husband's obligations towards his wife; punishments for murder, manslaughter, kidnapping and abusing parents; and the penalties accrued by a person who injures another.

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**Second Aliyah:** This section continues with laws of personal injury: the punishment for one who kills or injures his servant and for one who causes a woman to miscarry. The Torah then shifts its focus to a person's liabilities for damages caused by his possessions, such as an ox that goes; or his actions, such as leaving an open pit uncovered. A person who steals is liable to pay the capital plus punitive damages. The section concludes with a person's right to self-defense when facing a marauding thief.

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**Third Aliyah:** An arsonist is liable for damages caused by fires he ignites. The Torah then details the potential liabilities of an individual who undertakes to be a guardian of another's possessions, a borrower, and a renter. More laws: the punishment for seducing a young woman, sorcery, bestiality and offering an idolatrous sacrifice; prohibitions against harassing a foreigner, widow, or orphan; the mitzvah of lending money to the poor and the prohibition against lending with interest.

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**Fourth Aliyah:** This section, too, introduces us to many new mitzvot: the prohibitions against cursing a judge or leader, consuming meat that was not ritually slaughtered, offering a sacrifice before the animal is eight days old, perjury, and judicial corruption; the commandments to separate all agricultural tithes in their proper order, sanctify the first-born son, return a lost animal to its owner, and help unload an overburdened animal.

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**Fifth Aliyah:** We are commanded not to lie or take a bribe. The mitzvah of the Shemithah (Sabbatical year) is introduced: six years we work and harvest the land, and on the

seventh year we allow the land to rest. Similarly, on a weekly basis, six days we work and on the seventh day we – and our cattle and servants – must rest. We are forbidden to mention the name of other gods. We are commanded to celebrate the three festivals — Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot – and to make pilgrimages to the Holy Temple on these occasions. Finally, we are told not to cook meat in (its mother's) milk.

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**Sixth Aliyah:** G-d informed the Israelites that He would dispatch an angel to lead them into Canaan. This angel would not tolerate disobedience. If, however, the Israelites would hearken to the angel, and eradicate idolatry from the Promised Land, then they will be greatly rewarded. Their Canaanite enemies will fall before them and G-d "will bless your food and your drink, and will remove illness from your midst."

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**Seventh Aliyah:** This section continues describing the blessings the Israelites will receive if they faithfully serve G-d: no miscarriages or barren women, longevity, wide spacious borders and supernatural assistance in their quest to conquer the Holy Land. G-d warns the Israelites against entering into treaties with the Canaanite natives or allowing them to remain in the land after the Israelite invasion. The Torah now relates some of the events that occurred in the days immediately prior to the giving of the Torah. Moses went up the mountain and received a message from G-d which he communicated to the people. The Israelites enthusiastically committed themselves to following all of G-d's laws. Moses transcribed the "Book of the Covenant" and read it to the people. Then, together with the Israelite firstborn, Moses offered sacrifices and sprinkled the blood on the people, bringing them into a covenant with G-d. This section concludes with G-d summoning Moses – after the giving of the Torah – to ascend the mountain where he would remain for forty days and nights, and would then be given the Tablets.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/3377>

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 — 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.

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[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1)

## פרשת משפטים

(שמות כא-כד:יח)

### Selected Topics from *Mishpatim*:

#### ● עבד עברי – The Jewish Slave

A Jew can become an עבד if he either sells himself or if he is sold by the בית דין to pay back money he has stolen. In either case, he goes free after six years. If he volunteers to remain an עבד, then he has his ear pierced before the court, after which he remains an עבד until יובל.

#### ● Crimes Bearing the Death Penalty

*Parshat Mishpatim* lists several crimes that bear the death penalty. Among these are murder, striking (and injuring) a parent, cursing a parent, murder of an עבד כנעני, כישוף (“witchcraft”), and idolatry.

#### ● Responsibility for Damages

The Torah gives cases where a person is responsible for damages caused by his property or, indirectly, by his actions. This includes damage caused by his animal attacking, eating, or trampling another person’s property, fire, or an open pit.

#### ● ארבעה שומרים – The Four Guardians

The Torah describes four cases where a person has accepted responsibility for another person’s property and the differing degrees of responsibility in each case. The four cases are, שומר חנם – free guardian, שומר שכר – the paid guardian, שוכר – the renter, and שואל – the borrower.

#### ● Converts, Widows, and Orphans

The Torah commands us to be extra sensitive to the feelings of converts, widows, and orphans.

● **Rules for Judges**

The Torah lists several rules for judges, including a prohibition of favoritism (even towards the poor or against the unrighteous), accepting invalid testimony, and accepting bribes.

● **שליש רגלים – The Three Pilgrimages**

The Torah describes the three festivals when we are obligated to travel to Yerushalayim: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

● **נעשה ונשמע – “We Will Do and We Will Hear”**

The *sedrah* concludes with the famous declaration of the Jewish people, “כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע” – “All that Hashem has said, we will do and we will listen.” The Mishnah and the Midrash all place great emphasis on this declaration, particularly noting the order of the statement, placing נעשה (doing) before נשמע (listening). Many different explanations are given for this unique aspect of this verse.

## Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

[http://www.chabad.org/kids/article\\_cdo/aid/608073/jewish/Mishpatim.htm](http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/608073/jewish/Mishpatim.htm)

**Lyrics:**

All the laws, the mishpatim  
That Moshe Rabbeinu brought  
To us from Har Sinai  
To Am Yisroel he taught

**Chorus:**

Na'a'seh v'nishma, was our cry  
We will do and we will hear  
Without asking why  
Without asking why

When dealing with our friends  
Being fair in work or play  
These laws taught by Moshe  
Are with us today

Midvar sheker tirchak  
Never tell a lie  
To keep away from sheker  
We must always try

Chorus:  
Na'aseh V'nishma, was our cry  
We will do and we will hear  
Without asking why

## Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1520>

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1,](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1)

[http://www.chinuch.org/admin\\_topic\\_search.php?id=130,](http://www.chinuch.org/admin_topic_search.php?id=130)

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=7075](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=7075)

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

### K-2

#### Questions

1. What is an Eved Ivri and how does one become an Eved Ivri?
2. How does a master have to treat an Eved Ivri?
3. Are you allowed to charge interest to a Jew when you lent him money?
4. What is the law of letting the fields in Eretz Yisrael rest during the seventh year called?
5. What are we not allowed to eat together with meat?
6. Which verse teaches this law?
7. What is the Mitzvah of staying away from untrue statements called?
8. What is the Mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner called?
9. If you see a person who has an animal with a heavy load, what should you do?
10. Which three holidays are also known as Shalosh Regalim?

#### Answers

1. He is a Jewish slave and he became one because he stole and he could not pay back what he stole.
2. He has to treat him nicely.
3. No!
4. Shemitah.
5. Dairy.
6. Lo sevashel gedi bechalev immo.

7. Midvar Sheker Tirchak.
8. Hashavat Aveidah.
9. Help him unload the weight from the animal.
10. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot.

3-4

## Questions

1. What is an Eved Ivri and how does one become an Eved Ivri?
2. How does a master have to treat an Eved Ivri?
3. For how long is a person an eved (slave).
4. How could an eved (slave) stay longer if he wanted to?
5. Are you allowed to charge interest to a Jew when you lent him money?
6. What is the law of letting the fields in Eretz Yisrael rest during the seventh year called?
7. What are we not allowed to eat together with meat?
8. Which verse teaches this law?
9. What is the Mitzvah of staying away from untrue statements called?
10. What is the Mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner called?
11. If you see a person who has an animal with a heavy load, what should you do?
12. How many days was Moshe in shamayim (heaven)?
13. What is the general term that refers to all three Chagim?
14. What are these three holidays?
15. Why are these three holidays referred to as Shalosh Regalim?

## Answers

1. He is a Jewish slave and he became one because he stole and he could not pay back what he stole.
2. He has to treat him nicely.
3. Six years.
4. His ear is pierced and he works as a slave until the next Yovel (Jubilee Year).
5. No!
6. Shemitah.
7. Dairy.
8. Lo sevashel gedi bechalev immo.
9. Midvar Sheker Tirchak.
10. Hashavat Aveidah.
11. Help him unload the weight from the animal.
12. Fourty days and fourty nights.
13. Shalosh Regalim.
14. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot.
15. The Bnei Yisrael go up to Yerushalayim during these three times of the year.

## 5-6

### Questions

1. What reason is there for a Jew to become an Eved Ivri (Jewish slave)?
2. How does a master have to treat an Eved Ivri?
3. For how long is a person an eved (slave).
4. How could an eved (slave) stay longer if he wanted to?
5. What happens if a person kills Beshogeg (by mistake)?
6. Which people have to be treated with special consideration?
7. Are you allowed to charge interest to a Jew when you lent him money?
8. What is the Hebrew term for interest?
9. What is the law of letting the fields in Eretz Yisrael rest during the seventh year called?
10. What are we not allowed to eat together with meat?
11. Which verse teaches this rule?
12. How many times in the Torah is this verse written?
13. What do we learn from the repetition?
14. What is the Mitzvah of staying away from untrue statements called?
15. What is the Mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner called?
16. If you see a person who has an animal with a heavy load, what should you do?
17. How many days was Moshe in shamayim (heaven)?
18. What is the general term that refers to all three Chagim?
19. What are these three holidays?
20. Why are these three holidays referred to as Shalosh Regalim?

### Answers

1. The Jew stole and he could not pay back what he stole.
2. He has to treat him nicely.
3. Six years.
4. His ear is pierced and he works as a slave until the next Yovel (Jubilee Year).
5. He runs to one of the Arei Miklat (Cities of Refuge) and he stays there until the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) dies.
6. The Ger (Jewish convert), Yatom (orphan), and Elmanah (widow).
7. No!
8. Ribit.
9. Shemitah.
10. Dairy.
11. Lo sevasheh gedi bechalev immo.
12. Three.
13. Three things are forbidden.
  - a. Eating meat and dairy together.
  - b. Cooking meat and dairy together.
  - c. Getting pleasure from meat and milk together.

14. Midvar Sheker Tirchak.
15. Hashavat Aveidah.
16. Help him unload the weight from the animal.
17. Fourty days and fourty nights.
18. Shalosh Regalim.
19. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot.
20. The Bnei Yisrael go up to Yerushalayim during these three times of the year.

## Parsha Stories

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/349101/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349101/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm)

### Living with the Parsha: Guardian

By [Tali Loewenthal](#)

David and Benjy were in deep discussion over the photography session they had just finished when they reached David's house. "David," Benjy asked, "I have to go and meet my mother now at the dentist. I was wondering if you could possibly take care of my camera bag, and I'll pick it up on my way home. It's just a bit heavy, and I would rather not take it with me."

David nodded. "Gosh, it is heavy," he said as he took the bag from his friend. "What is in here?"

Benjy shrugged. "Nothing much. It's just all the photography paraphernalia. You know, camera, lenses, flash and so on, and some books about photography."

"Oh, Benjy," David called out as his friend was leaving. "I'll be coming to your house later this evening to do that revision for the math test, so I'll bring it with me then."

Later that evening, Benjy, David and Saul were sprawled on the living room floor in Benjy's house. Math revision sheets were spread liberally on the floor, but in fact Benjy and David were describing their photography course to Saul. Benjy reached for the camera bag which David had brought to his home, as arranged. When he opened the bag, however, he gasped. His face went pale. "What's the matter, Benjy?" David asked.

"My flash is broken!" Benjy said. "It's smashed. I used it earlier today, and it was fine. You've had it the whole afternoon since we left school." He turned to face David and the tension in the room became tangible.

Thoughts were flying through David's head. He really didn't know how the flash got broken. He had taken the camera into his house and left it in the coat cupboard until he had left the house to meet Benjy and Saul. Stuttering, he told this to Benjy, who looked slightly disbelieving. The truth was that the thought had crossed David's mind to look at the camera in the bag, because it was far more elaborate than his own, just to have a look at all the extra bits it had. But he had resisted the temptation. Now it seemed as though he was going to be responsible for damages that really weren't his fault.

"How's the revision going, guys?" Benjy's father poked his head around the door. Pale-faced, Benjy and David told him what had happened. Mr. Green came into the room and took the broken flash from his son. He shook his head, "Well, boys, I think we can presume everyone here is telling the truth. Right?" He raised an eyebrow at the boys, who both nodded.

"This is very interesting because I have just come back from a class on this week's Torah portion which was discussing exactly this. There are four kinds of guardians--people who have the property of others under their responsibility. There is the unpaid guardian, the paid guardian, the hirer and the borrower. The Torah discusses this exact situation: what if something bad happens to the property?" All the boys were listening intently.

"Well, the borrower pays for anything that goes wrong."

"I didn't borrow it," said David. "Benjy gave the bag to me to look after it for him."

"That's true," said Benjy.

"Then there is the unpaid guardian," continued Benjy's father. "He only pays if he was really negligent, like leaving the bag in the road and a car ran over it."

"Well," said Benjy, "I know he didn't do that. David was an unpaid guardian and I agree he didn't do anything wrong with the bag."

"I think you're right," said his father, "which means he isn't responsible for the damages. The good news is that I think I may have another flash to replace this one. In fact, it's a better model." Both boys looked relieved, but Mr. Green continued with a make-believe frown. "However, good results on the math test are a must if photography is going to continue!" The boys smiled happily and quickly picked up their revision sheets.

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/349094/jewish/Mishpatim-Parshah-Lesson.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349094/jewish/Mishpatim-Parshah-Lesson.htm)

## Mishpatim Parshah Lesson

By [Malka Touger](#)

In the daily prayers it says, "He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and His laws to Israel." Our Rabbis teach us that "His words" and "His laws" mean that the commandments that G-d asks us to do are also His: G-d Himself fulfills the commandments which He commands us.

This week's Torah portion, Mishpatim, has many commandments. Let us take one of those commandments -- the mitzvah of lending money to a person in need -- and see how G-d fulfills it.

When we give someone a loan, it seems as if we are giving away something for nothing. That person is not giving us anything back immediately for the money we gave him, but of course, we expect to get it back one day. We trust him, even if he is a poor person.

Now let us try to understand how G-d fulfills this commandment. Like a person lending another some money, G-d "lends" each and every soul the special strength and ability to fulfill His will.

As with a loan, the soul gets its strength "for free." But G-d expects that, in return, our soul will pay back the loan by using this strength to fulfill His will.

G-d is very generous and grants each soul many powers, whether or not it deserves them. The verse says, "If you will lend money to My people" - G-d loves us and calls us "My people"; that in itself makes us worthy of this loan.

When we lend money, we do not tell the borrower how to use that money. It becomes his, and he can use it for whatever he wants. When G-d gives us a "loan," it also becomes ours. We can use the strength and power He gives our soul for anything we choose. We must do our best to make the right choices. We must show G-d that we are worthy of this loan, and "pay it back" by using the strength He gives us to fulfill His will.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-Mishpatim.pdf?docid=3384&ie=1&showobject=1>

**LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA**

## ONLY THE TRUTH

The Mesillas Yesharim refers to sheker (lying) as a widespread and evil sickness. Some people are professional liars. They go around deliberately spreading false stories to boost their egos and feel important. They belong to a group of people called shakranim (liars) who cannot receive the Shechina (Divine Presence). Other people do not make up false stories. However, when they tell about events, exaggerations and lies are mixed in with the truth. Therefore, it is impossible to believe what they say. Even if they tell the truth, they will not be believed. Still others do not lie habitually; however, they will occasionally mix non-truths into a story to make it funny or interesting. They have no bad intentions and do not realize that they are doing wrong. Against all of these, the Torah warns, “Distance yourself from a false word” (Shemos 23:7). The Torah does not write, “guard yourself” as it does with many other sins. Rather it says, “distance yourself”. We must flee far, far away from falsehood. It stands in direct opposition to Hashem. “The signature of The Holy One Blessed Be He is truth” (Gemora Shabbos 55a). This is how Hashem chose to identify Himself. Therefore sheker, it’s opposite, is an abomination.

Kinderlach . . .

Sometimes it is so tempting to lie. “If I spruce up the story with a few exaggerated details it will be much more interesting and funny.” Correct, but it will be a lie. “If I lie about breaking the glass, I will not be punished.” Correct, but you will suffer far worse consequences. “If I lie and say that I came on time today, I will receive a prize.” Is it worth it? Do you really deserve that prize? Kinderlach, the Mesillas Yesharim tells us how terrible lies really are. Stay far, far away from them.

## WHAT YOU EAT

Quarreling is a terrible thing. If matters are not settled peacefully, they can lead to violence. If one man injures another, he must pay for many things, including medical bills. The details are dealt with in this week’s parasha (Shemos 21:19). The Avi Ezer uses this subject as a springboard for a fascinating insight. He differentiates between external injuries and internal illnesses. One of the causes of internal diseases is overeating. A verse in Mishle (21:23) also speaks about this, “One who guards his mouth and tongue, guards his soul from troubles.” The Eben Ezra explains that guarding the mouth refers to food, and the tongue refers to speech. he Pele Yoatz relates that we must eat for the sake of our souls. Excess eating only strengthens the Yetzer Hora. It also is a waste of food, time, and a health hazard. To eat properly, one must eat only when hungry. Do not eat until full, rather slightly less. Your selection of foods should not be based solely upon taste, rather choose foods that will strengthen your body. The Raavad relates that one who stops eating while the food still tastes good receives a kapora (atonement) for his sins.

Kinderlach . . .

Good eating habits are so important. They are the basis of good health. It is much more difficult to serve Hashem if you are sick. Eating itself is a way to serve Hashem. Now is the time to develop good eating habits. Eat what is good for you, and eat the right amounts. Eat for the good of your body and soul.

## BE SENSITIVE TO OTHERS

You shall not cause pain to any widow or orphan” (Shemos 22:21). Rashi adds that we are not allowed to cause pain to anyone. However, the Torah gives the most common examples, because they are weak, and as a result, they are often hurt. Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt”l quotes the Mechilta, which cites a case that illustrates this point. Rebbe Yishmael and Rebbe Shimon were being taken away to be executed. Rebbe Shimon said to Rebbe Yishmael, “I have searched my heart, and I do not know why I am being killed.” Rebbe Yishmael asked him, “Did you ever make someone who came to you for a din Torah or a shayla (halachic question) wait while you finished your drink, tied your shoe, or put on your tallis? The Torah states, ‘if you will cause him any pain’ (Shemos 22:22) – not only major suffering, but even a small amount of discomfort.” Rebbe Shimon answered, “You have given me comfort, Rebbe.”

The depth of judgment is very frightening!” says Rav Yerucham. If causing such a small amount of discomfort can bring such a severe punishment, how much more so will bringing about major suffering lead to retribution. This shows us how much a person has to be careful with all of his words and actions, all of the time, to never cause anyone any discomfort, pain, or suffering.

This point is vividly illustrated in an earlier mitzvah in the parasha. “If a man shall steal an ox, a sheep, or a goat, and slaughter or sell it, he shall pay five cattle in place of the ox, and four sheep in place of the sheep” (Shemos 21:37). Why is there a difference in payment? If the payment is four, let them both pay four. If it is five, they should pay five. What is the reason for the discrepancy? Rashi explains that Hashem was concerned about the thief’s honor. An ox walks on its own legs. When the thief stole it, he did not have to humiliate himself by carrying it on his shoulders. Therefore, he pays the full penalty – five times the value of the ox. The sheep, however, is different. The thief carried the sheep on his shoulders when he stole it, thereby embarrassing himself. Therefore, it is sufficient for him to pay only four times the value of the sheep. See how much the Torah is concerned about the honor of others! We are coming to punish a thief, who stole a sheep and killed him – a despicable crime. Yet, we still must be concerned for this man’s honor. How much more so should we be careful not to cause any pain or suffering to our fellow man.

Kinderlach . . .

Think about other people, and what causes them pain or distress. Do they like to be spoken to softly? If so, do not raise your voice. Do they like the windows closed? Then do not open them. Do they like their privacy? Do not disturb them. Do they like a lot of attention? Do not ignore them. Are they hungry when they come home? Do not make

them wait for their food. Do you daven slower than they do? Do not stand behind them when praying. Try to fulfill all of their needs – physical, emotional, and spiritual. Do not cause them any pain or discomfort. That is what sensitivity is all about.

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/pArchive.asp?eventType=18&eventName=Mishpatim>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

[http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Helping\\_Hands.asp](http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Helping_Hands.asp)

## **Mishpatim** (Exodus 21-24)

### **Helping Hands**

## **From this week's Torah Portion**

What should we do when we see someone who needs our help, but we don't really feel like helping? According to this week's Torah portion (23:5), we should help them! The Torah way is to help others in distress and not turn our back on them.

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## **Story**

*In our story, a kid faces a choice of helping out or passing by.*

### **FINDING HER MARBLES**

At first Karen, who was finished with her babysitting job and halfway out the door, didn't know what that funny bouncing sound was. But a few seconds later when she heard Greg shouting and racing around the patio, she realized his big cloth bag of marbles -- the ones she knew he'd been collecting -- had somehow popped and dozens of marbles were bounding, bouncing and rolling all over the place.

"Ayy! Oh no! Ayy!" he was crying and desperately trying to round up his runaway -- or make that *bounce-away* -- toy treasures.

*Poor kid*, she thought in passing, *Hope he finds his stuff*. She was about to leave, when she felt a tug on her skirt.

"Ka-wen...h-help me find my maa-bles!" That was just what she *didn't* feel like doing right then. She was tired -- had a ton of homework to do -- and had made big plans with her friends for later on that she had to get ready for.

"Um, Gregggy, don't worry. I'm sure you're going to find them. Karen's got to go home now... okay?"

But the desperate look on the boy's face told her that it wasn't okay at all -- at least with him. "Please, Ka-wen, they're lost! H-help me find them."

The girl was about to give him an 'it'll be alright' pat and dash out the door, when she remembered how she'd felt -- just two weeks before, when to her horror, she'd discovered that one of her absolute favorite and most expensive earrings had somehow fallen out of her ear and ended up...who knew where? She'd combed her room, the school bus and even retraced every step she had taken in school that day. A lot of kids seemed curious about what she was doing, but none of them had been willing to help. How she'd wished back then that they would have -- maybe then she would have found it...

"Okay, Greg. You convinced me. Let's find those marbles," she said with a resigned smile. Bending down she and the little boy searched for and scoped out and scooped up every last marble. Now she could finally go home -- at least that was what Karen had thought...

"Look Ka-wen, dare's a shiny one over dare!" Greg said, excitedly pointing to the grass behind the hammock. He ran over, but his short arm couldn't reach. "Ka-wen help me!"

"Are you *sure* there's something there, Gregggy?" Karen sighed. The boy nodded brightly. *Alright, she'd gone this far, might as well look one more time.* Getting down on her knees, the girl stretched out her arm, reached, and sure enough pulled out from the tall grass a gleaming, shiny...earring! The one she'd lost!!! It must have fallen out last time she was babysitting and had rocked Greg to sleep in the hammock!

Seeing it wasn't his marble after all, the boy lost interest and ran off to play with his marbles. Karen slipped her earring into her pouch, amazed at the way things worked out, how she'd found her earring -- by finding room in her heart to help someone in need.

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## Discussion Questions

### Ages 3-5

Q. How did Karen feel about the lost marbles at first?

A. She felt sorry for the boy, but she wasn't willing to help.

Q. How did she feel in the end?

A. She was happy she'd found her earring and also happy that she had helped.

### **Ages 6-9**

Q. What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story?

A. When people ask us for help, sometimes it can seem like a bother. But it's a great thing to help others and almost always we'll feel good about ourselves when we do.

Q. Is it even okay not to help when asked?

A. There may be times when we simply don't have the time or energy to help someone or they are asking us to do something dangerous or wrong. Then of course we don't have to. But almost always in our daily lives when people need us we can and should be willing to lend a hand.

### **Ages 10 and Up**

Q. Do you think whether we like or dislike the person asking us for help should affect our decision? If so, how?

A. We should be willing to help simply because help is needed -- personal feelings aside. We should try even harder to help out someone we dislike. Acting this way will bring true peace into our lives and to the world.

Q. What if we are truly unable to physically help someone who asks us to -- are there any other ways we can assist them?

A. Sure. We can certainly offer sincere encouragement, which is worth its weight in gold. Also, we can try to find others who *could* help them, as well as to wish and pray for the person's success.

## **Parsha Games**

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

## **K-2**

Resting on the Shabbat day is mentioned in this Parashah

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Enjoying our Shabbat day**

### **Activity**

**Use these activities related to the senses to reinforce knowledge of what we do on Shabbat.**

**What Am I?**

The children sit in a circle. Each has a turn to give clues to their identity using one of the senses, e.g.:

'I'm brown and crusty and you can taste me!'

See - candles, Havdalah candle

Taste - wine, challah

Smell - Besamim (spices) for Havdalah, flowers

Hear - Singing Kiddush, Torah reading

Touch - Siddur

**Or**

Finish the sentence;

'On Shabbat I love to .....

e.g. '.....hear the singing in shul'

## 3-4

We read in the Parashah 'Do not do wrong to a stranger or oppress him for you were strangers in the land of Egypt'

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Be welcoming and tolerant towards strangers**

### **Activity**

**There is a lot of talk these days (T.V. radio, newspapers) about asylum seekers. What do the children understand of this term? Do they have family stories to tell? Use drama to illustrate different scenarios of making people welcome e.g. a new person in school, a new neighbour.**

## 5-6

Many Torah laws tell us to look after other people and animals

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Being aware of the results of carelessness**

### **Activity**

**Read Exodus/Shemot Chapter 21, verses 33 - 34 and paraphrase examples of how this law relates to us today, e.g.: covering or fencing off a workman's trench, banisters on a staircase at home.**