



# Snapshot Torah



**GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH**

**ISSUE 18**

**14<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

**MISHPATIM**

**24th Shevat 5775**

**Kohen - First Aliya:**

**Chapter 21, verses 1 - 19.**

- ✚ Bnai Yisrael receives the social laws from Moshe beginning with how Masters should treat their Jewish slaves and maidservants.
- ✚ A person who kidnaps or intentionally kills another will be put to death. However if the victim was killed unintentionally, the murderer is allowed to seek sanctuary in a city of refuge.
- ✚ The death penalty would be meted out to a child who either curses their parents or strikes them hard enough to make them bleed.

**Levi - Second Aliya:**

**Chapter 21, verse 20 - Chapter 22, verse 3**

- ✚ Someone who wounds another, but not fatally must compensate them for the injury caused as well as all of the financial losses sustained during their recovery. Including medical fees and lost income.
- ✚ Any slave that is hurt due to the negligence of their master, must be released.
- ✚ Any murderous ox who kills someone must be put to death. If the ox's owner was aware of his dangerous ox and was found guilty of not taking the necessary safety precautions he must pay the victim's family damages to the value of their loss. The laws relating in compensation for goring animals, and fines meted out for theft are also discussed.

**Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:**

**Chapter 22, verses 4 - 26**

- ✚ Damages and reimbursements relating to animals grazing on another person's field and any land or property destroyed by fire are related here.
- ✚ An unpaid custodian cannot be held liable for any loss of an object if they swear they were not negligent in any way; however if they are employed, they are held responsible and must reimburse the owner for the loss. They are also made to pay damages if an object gets broken or livestock in their care dies. Unless they make an oath, stating there was no way it could have been prevented.
- ✚ If a man seduces a single woman, then he must marry her or pay the woman's father 50 shekels if he doesn't agree with the marriage. Anyone caught practising the occult or performing idolatry must be killed.
- ✚ A person is prohibited to oppress a stranger or charge interest to his fellow for loans borrowed.

**R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:**

**Chapter 22, verse 27 - Chapter 23, verse 5**

- ✚ The prohibition of cursing anyone of authority over you, i.e. a judge or a king.
- ✚ Firstborn children, animals and all first produce harvested must be redeemed as they belong to Hashem.
- ✚ The rules of what you must do if you come across a stray or fallen animal is discussed next.

**Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:**

**Chapter 23, verses 6 - 19**

- ✚ The prohibition of taking bribes or favouring a poor person without sufficient evidence and giving false testimonies are mentioned here.
- ✚ The mitzvahs relating to Shmittah, Shabbat and the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot are spoken about next along with the prohibition of consuming meat and milk products together.

**Shishi - Sixth Aliya:**

**Chapter 23, verses 20 - 25**

- ✚ Hashem instructs the nation to respect the authority of His Navi's (Prophets) and Rabbis.
- ✚ Hashem then promises to chase out the seven nations who currently inhabit the land of Israel and forewarns Bnai Yisrael in against making a treaty of peace with them.

**Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:**

**Chapter 23, verse 26 - Chapter 24, verse 18**

- ✚ Hashem explains the means by which the seven nations will be chased out of Israel.
- ✚ The borders of Eretz Yisrael (The Land of Israel) are defined.
- ✚ Moshe builds an altar and offers up a Korban (sacrifice). Bnai Yisrael proclaim "Naaseh Vnishma (We will do and we will listen). Moshe is told by Hashem, to ascend Mount Sinai where he will remain for 40 days and nights learning torah, so he can teach Bnai Yisrael all the mitzvahs upon his return.

## Maftir – PARSHAS SHEKALIM, Shemot Chapter 30 Verses 11 - 16

The Maftir of "Shekalim" describes the half-shekel coin that every Jewish Male, over the age of twenty was required to contribute on a yearly basis in order to purchase all the communal korbanos (sacrifices) which were offered up on a daily basis in the Mishkan.

## Haftarah – PARSHAS SHEKALIM, 2<sup>nd</sup> BOOK OF KINGS Chapter 11 verse 17 to Chapter 12 verse 17

### OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Aged 7, Yeho'ash, the sole survivor from the House of Dovid Hamelech following their massacre by the hands of Queen Athalya, was crowned King.
- ✚ Upon seeing that the 155 year old Bais Hamikdash was in need of strengthening and redecorating, Yeho'ash knew that funds were needed to be raised in order to carry out the necessary maintenance. He placed a designated collection box by the side of the Mizbayah for the people to come and place their contributions. The Money was quickly obtained and the repairs were duly carried out.

### LINK TO MAFTIR READING:

- ✚ Maftir Shekalim speak about all the donations given and counted in order to construct and maintain the Mishkan; whereas the Haftarah deals with the same act of charitable giving for the upkeep of the Beis Hamikdash.

### WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

A thief is not known for being the most sensitive person around and yet In Parshas Mishpatim, the Torah delineates various prohibitions and punishments. With regard to stealing 'If a person steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it. He must pay back five oxen for an ox and four sheep for the sheep to the original owner as compensation.' According to Rashi the reason is because when a person steals an ox, he simply has to lead it away. Whereas a sheep on the other hand, must be carried away, and running away with a sheep on your back is considered so embarrassing that it's a form of punishment in of itself.

This is difficult to understand as it is hard to imagine that a thief would be preoccupied with their own humiliation. They are only common thieves' after-all, engaged in the act of committing a crime. They are probably aren't even aware that carrying a sheep is considered demeaning, and they are certainly not thinking about it as they are making their escape. The best way to comprehend this Rashi is by focusing on our own relationship with Hashem. Lord Jonathan Sacks once wrote "the most basic fact in my relationship with Hashem is that He loves me more than I love myself. Hashem is more concerned for my good and is always looking out for my wellbeing and interests more than I do myself.

This is the basic foundation of the concept of bitachon (Trust). Without it, trusting in Hashem is deemed foolish. How can someone rely on Hashem if Hashem doesn't seem to care? The only way a person can develop a true reliance on Hashem is by understanding that Hashem loves every one of His creations to such an extent that it is totally beyond our human comprehension and because of Hashem's infinite mercy and kindness; even if the person does not deserve something from our perspective. Hashem knows best and for reasons we are not able to fathom, Hashem will bestow it to them anyway. It may well be that as the thief is making his / her escape, they are oblivious to the embarrassment and pain caused to themselves; yet Hashem considers that pain significant and counts it as partial punishment for the crime being committed.

I find it incredible that a little bit of embarrassment has the power of reducing the punishment, therefore conversely, imagine how much reward a person must get for the embarrassment they have endured for performing a mitzvah instead. There must be many times, a person will stay away from doing a particular mitzvah because they will be made fun of by others. But that person should strengthen them self by reminding him / herself of the reward for doing a mitzvah under such circumstances. So, next time you feel uncomfortable doing a mitzvah in fear of others' ridicule... just think of the reward you will receive in the future for accomplishing it.

