

# עֵפְרַת הַשָּׁבֹועַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

**פרשת משפטים**  
כ"ז שבט תשס"ה  
מברכים החודש אדר א'  
**February 5, 2005**

Candle Lighting:	4:59
Latest שמע:	9:35
Latest שחרית:	10:27
Earliest הבדלה:	6:02

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In honor of the bris  
of their son  
אריה מנחם

## THE ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

Rabbi Leibe Wolf, 10th Grade Rebbe

### ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפנייהם

Rashi explains that whenever the word אלה is written in the Torah, it excludes what was said previously. However, whenever ואלה is written with the letter "vuv", it is an addition to what was said previously. Rashi explains that here, just as the mitzvos in Parshas Yisro were from Har Sinai, so too, the mitzvos in this week's *parsha* were said at Har Sinai.

The obvious question is why would one think the mitzvos in Parshas Mishpatim are *not* from Har Sinai? Why was it necessary to add the letter "vuv"? Secondly, the first *halacha* in Parshas Mishpatim is about an *eved ivri*; a Jewish slave, which is a *chok* not a *mishpat*. Why begin Parshas *Mishpatim* - titled after a commandment which possesses a known reason - with a *halacha* that is a *chok* instead of a *mishpat*?

These questions may be answered with the words of the Ramban in Parshas Vo'eschanan on the *pasuk*, "כי ישאלך בנך מחר לאמר וגו'". The Ramban over there explains the difference between the three types of mitzvos – *eidus*, *chukim* and *mishpatim*. *Eidos*, such as *mezuzah*, *tefillin*, *Pesach* and *Succos* are mitzvos with which we remember the wonders of Hashem. *Chukim* are

mitzvos which have a purpose that is concealed from man, and *mishpatim* are the mitzvos which we easily understand and are absolutely necessary for the existence of the world.

These *three* types of mitzvos must be adhered to because we are The Ribono Shel Olam's עם סגולה, and from the time of our forefathers Hashem provided for all our needs. Accordingly, *mishpatim*, which our intelligence can comprehend and without *mishpatim*, איש את רעהו חיים בלעו; even these *mishpatim* we fulfill because of our deep *hakoras hatov* to Hashem. *Mishpatim* are therefore *similar* to

(Continued on page 2)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND... AND NATURAL Yaakov Chesed Polansky, 12th Grade

There are three different types of mitzvos that we keep as Jews. These mitzvos are called *chukim*, *mishpatim*, and *eidos*. While *chukim* are mitzvos that we don't know the reasons for and *mishpatim* are mitzvos we do know the reasons for, *eidos* are mitzvos that we do to remember a specific event; like *Pesach* and *Succos*.

It is pretty straightforward why we are commanded to do *mishpatim* and *eidos*; yet what is the reason behind performing *chukim*? *Mishpatim* and *eidos* are mitzvos that once we know the logic behind them, a rational person would keep them and not question why. *Chukim*, on the other hand, possesses reasons that are unknown to us, and therefore are harder to rationalize. There must be a reason why Hashem commanded us to do these mitzvos?

Perhaps the mitzvos of *chukim* are above reason. These mitzvos show an absolute faith in Hashem. A person performs these mitzvos only because Hashem said to do them, not because of any other rational reason. This creates a deep bond between Hashem and us, a bond that is very hard to comprehend. The Jew is doing a selfless action, and any selfless act done in a relationship creates the strongest union.

This concept plays in well with this week's *parsha* which comes immediately after the *sedra* of the Jewish people receiving the Torah. By *kabolas HaTorah*, there were many supernatural occurrences, such as Klal Yisroel hearing the voice of Hashem, and people even *seeing* thunder and *hearing* lightning. After such a miraculous event, it would make sense that the types of mitzvos commanded to us would be those that are above reason and understanding – i.e. *chukim*. The Jewish people just came away from a whole

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ATERES HASHAVUA STAFF

AND THESE ARE THE LAWS/JUDGMENTS THAT YOU WILL PUT BEFORE THEM

On this *pasuk*, the Baal HaTurim explains that the gematria of “אשר תשים לפניהם,” that you shall put before them is equal to the words “דקדוקי התורה ודקדוקי סופרים,” precision in the fulfillment of the Torah and that which is D’Rabbanan. He goes on to say that this *pasuk* has five words, to teach you that whoever does a proper, honest, and truthful judgment, it is as if he fulfilled the five *Chumshei Torah*, and it is as if he was a partner with Hashem in the creation of the world. Yet why would doing this action make one like a partner to Hashem in the *beriyas ha’olam*? What does one have to do with the other?

We can perhaps answer that one of the greatest purposes of creation was in order that people follow the Torah. The Midrash Rabbah explains that the entire Torah is dependent on the presence of laws and judgments, and the Ramban points out that this is the reason why this *parsha* comes right after the *Aseres HaDibros*. Therefore, when a person passes proper judgment, he is setting up the basis for the Torah in this world, so that Torah could flourish. He is thereby assisting in the fulfillment of that which the world was created for.

YAAKOV CHESED POLANSKY (continued from page 1)

series of events that are above reason, and beyond understanding. Yet instead of Hashem giving us *chukim* - mitzvos beyond our understanding - Hashem immediately gives us the *mishpatim*, which seem to be very practical and relate well to us. Why not the reverse?

The Tanya answers this in the following way. It says that even though the giving of the Torah was beyond our comprehension, the Torah cannot be seen in the same light. We must make the Torah practical to ourselves and bring it to our own level of understanding so that we can grow from it. The Torah isn’t above us; it is a part of us.

One of the beauties of the Torah is that anyone can relate to it on whatever level they are on, and it is our job to make that bond between the Torah and ourselves.

Of course we need *chukim*, but we can’t always be living our lives in a place beyond reason. We must make a relationship between the Torah and ourselves, using our purpose in this world to the fullest extent. Let us truly achieve our potential and use the Torah as our guide throughout life – an existence amidst worldly endeavors that will hopefully lead us to supernatural achievement.

## STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

by Moshe Golombeck

A certain rav in Russia owned a pair of tefillin that had been written by Reb Moshe of Peshevarsk, author of the *Ohr P’nei Moshe*. Reb Moshe wrote every word of his tefillin in holiness and purity, and these tefillin were therefore considered extremely valuable.

One time when this rav was getting his tefillin checked, the *sofer* (scribe) noticed that a letter seemed to be broken off, as though unfinished. The rav asked the *sofer* to complete this letter so the tefillin would not be *pasul* to wear, yet the *sofer* refused to pass his quill over tefillin written by the holy Rebbe of Peshevarsk. The rav then brought the tefillin to another *sofer* with the same request. This *sofer* too, declined.

In desperation, the owner of the tefillin finally took them to a *sofer* without telling him who had written them. Yet when the *sofer* dipped his quill in ink and extended his hand to repair the letter, a book suddenly flew out of a nearby bookcase and landed on the *parsha* of tefillin that lay out before him. Those present were startled, but this was nothing compared to the amazement they felt when they actually picked up the book. After clearing off the dust from the *parsha*, everyone present was startled when they saw that the seemingly broken letter was actually complete.

Yet even this amazement paled beside the wonder that they felt when, as they were about to replace the book that had fallen, they discovered that the *sefer* was none other than the *Ohr P’nei Moshe*, written by Reb Moshe of Peshevarsk himself.

RABBI LEIBE WOLF (continued from page 1)

*chukim* and done *without* reason except to express our appreciation for HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s boundless goodness.

Now we can understand the *pasuk* we recite everyday in davening, “נגיד דבריו ליעקב,” חוקיו ומשפטיו לישראל, By Klal Yisroel, there’s no difference between *chukim* and *mishpatim* – we fulfill all mitzvos because they’re the *ratzon Hashem*. With this *yisod*, Reb Gedalia Schorr zt”l explains why *Parshas Parah* begins with *זאת חוקת הפרה*, and not *זאת חוקת התורה* – because this is the way of Klal Yisroel. The path of Yiddishkeit is to perform the *ratzon Hashem*; as a

true servant subservient to his master.

Now we can answer our original difficulties said by Rashi – מה אלה מסיני וגו’. One might think that *mishpatim* are fulfilled and performed because we understand them. Rashi explains that this is not the purpose, rather we fulfill *mishpatim* for the one reason that they were given at Har Sinai. The first mitzvah in *Parshas Mishpatim* is purposely a *chok*, since *chukim* and *mishpatim* are fulfilled for the function of doing *ratzon Hashem*. Let us hope that all of Klal Yisroel will ultimately do all of the mitzvos of Hashem for one purpose only; רצונו!

# IN~DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Avi Lieberman

## Harav Yehudah Zev Segal *zt"l* The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva

Part 2

17 Sivan 5670 / June 24, 1910 – 22 Shevat 5753 / February 13, 1993

- Rav Yehudah's father, Reb Moshe Yitzchok Segal passed away on Wednesday, 12 Cheshvan 5707 (November 6, 1946). The search for a new Rosh Yeshiva began.



Rav Segal visiting the elderly

- Although Rav Yehuda Zev was already serving unofficially as rosh yeshiva, some of the modern members of the board felt that due to his high standards of *kedusha*

and meticulous *shmiras hamitzvos*, he might be unable to relate to the average laymen. As a result, they strongly opposed his appointment.

- Rav Yehudah Zev was aware of the board's opposition, and fostered no ill will towards them. The position remained vacant for a number of months.

~ One of the board members, the eminent Saul Rosenberg - a great *baal chesed* and pioneer of Jewish organizations - fell seriously ill. As he lay in the hospital, he told a close acquaintance about a frightening dream he had recently had. In the dream, he had been told that he had fallen ill because Rav Moshe Yitzchok was upset by the board's failure to appoint his son Rav Yehuda Zev to the position he rightfully deserved. Although he



With a great grandchild

wasn't at all opposed to Rav Yehudah Zev's appointment, he feared that he hadn't done enough to secure it for him. As a result, he sent a family member to Rav Moshe Yitzchok's grave and begged his forgiveness, promising to rectify the matter immediately.

- Amazingly, Mr. Rosenberg, who had seemed on the brink of death, soon recovered in full. When he was released from the hospital, he called an emergency meeting and convinced the board members that Rav Yehuda Zev was the best possible candidate for the position.
- On 29 Nissan, 5710 (Sunday April 16, 1950), Rav Yehuda Zev Segal was officially inducted as rosh yeshiva by Rav Yechezkel Abramsky. The Rav of Manchester, Rav Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss *zt"l* also attended this joyous reception. These three *gedolim* remained close friends throughout their entire lives.

- In 5724 (1964) Rav Segal created a kollel, Talmud Torah, and a preparatory school, transforming the city of Manchester into a Torah metropolis.

~ As Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev's sole concern was developing his students' full potential. When a talmid enrolled in the yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev would ask him for his complete Hebrew name as

well as his mother's, so that he could daven for his growth and development. Every morning before shacharis, he would give tzedaka and then daven that he merit to see all of his talmidim following the path of Torah.

- He was renowned throughout the entire Jewish World as the "father of the yeshivos" of post-war Europe.

~ As rosh yeshiva, he was very warm and loving toward his talmidim. If a student was ill, he would summon a doctor for him, visit him in the dormitory and even bring him tea. As a result, students would jokingly say, "If you want the Rosh Yeshiva's special attention, become sick!"

- Before beginning shacharis each morning, Rav Yehuda Zev would daven that Hashem help him daven with *kavana* (proper intention). To achieve this goal, he recited every single tefilla from a text.

- Rav Segal was meticulous to say *Asher Yatzar* - which one says a number of times a day - from its text. He would recite this tefillah with the same intent and emotion that one recites Ne'ila on Yom Kippur.



Embracing a talmid's child

- When eating, Rav Yehuda Zev would also recite brachos from a text. Since he couldn't always carry a siddur with him, he kept a card in his pocket that had the various brachos printed on it. Before making a bracha, he would prepare himself by saying, "I am about to utter the blessing of *shehakol*...."

~ Once when traveling near the Empire State Building, Rav Segal was urged by his traveling companions to take a detour and see this famous monument. "Only," he replied, "if you can assure me that when I get up to Heaven, Hashem will ask me if I saw the Empire State Building."

Part 3 next week!

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A Student Publication of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov 3

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

כי תקנה עבד עברי שש שנים יעבד ובשבעת יצא לחפשי חנם (כא:ב)

WHEN YOU ACQUIRE A JEWISH SERVANT, HE SHALL WORK FOR YOU FOR SIX YEARS, AND IN THE SEVENTH YEAR HE SHALL GO FREE AT NO CHARGE

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks a question on the phrase "eved ivri; Jewish slave". Throughout the Torah we find that in this situation, the slave is always referred to as *ivri*. Why is this word used, as opposed to the more common distinction of *yisraeli* or *yehudi*, especially as the word *ivri* is usually used exclusively to refer to Avraham Avinu and his followers?

Rav Yaakov answers this question by delving into the source of the word *ivri*. The word *ivri* comes from the name *Eiver*, the son of Shem. At the same time that the avos were teaching Torah to the world, Shem and Eiver had their own *yeshiva*. The difference between the two *yeshivos* was that



R' Yaakov as Mesader Kiddushin at the wedding of R' Yitzchak Knobel to R' Binyomin Kamenetzky's daughter Sora

the avos sought out others to teach them, while Shem and Eiver only taught those that came to them for instruction. However, there was clearly no evident discrepancies between the Torah that the avos taught and the Torah that Shem and Eiver taught, as we find that Yaakov himself learned for fourteen years at the *yeshiva* of Shem and Eiver.

Now we can begin to understand the meaning of the word *ivri*. The people that gathered to Avraham Avinu and formed the group known as the *Ivrim*, came from all different countries and nations. The only connection that they had was the way of life that they had chosen. They certainly did not have any familial or nationalistic ties. On the contrary, they had left their own families and countries, and were on their own.

A person is sold as a slave when they either cannot pay back their debts, or are caught stealing, and cannot afford to pay back the value of what they stole. Such a person, who has no other possessions, and no family or friends that can bail him out of this situation, can be referred to using the distinction *ivri*, a person that has no particular familial connection, and is on his own. Indeed we find that the only place where Klal Yisroel is referred to as *ivrim* is in conjunction with the *Plishtim*. When the *Plishtim* wanted to use a disparaging word for Klal Yisroel they would use this word, insinuating that the Jewish People did not have a country of their own. This same word is used to describe an *eved*, someone who truly has no family.

A Russian officer once confronted Rav Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch and pulled a gun on him, but the rebbe did not flinch. "Aren't you afraid that I can kill you?" the officer asked. The rebbe replied, "One who has a multiplicity of gods and only one world is frightened of dying; yet those who have only one G-d and two worlds have no fear of death."

When reciting the *haggadah* on Pesach night, Reb Avraham of Slonim read the verse, "This year we are slaves, but next year we shall be free." He paused a bit and said, "As long as the *neshamah* is entrapped within a physical body, it is subject to the dictates of the body. When the *neshamah* leaves the body, it is free. This year we are slaves, but next year we will be free." Several months later, Rav Avraham of Slonim passed away.

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