

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY DEAR FATHER
Horav **Yehoshua Binyomin** ben Horav **Sholom Dovber** ob"m
Gordon

The Rebbe's devoted Shliach for over four decades
Executive Director of *Chabad of the Valley*
and its 26 centers, spiritual leader of *Chabad of Encino*
Passed away on 29 Shevat, 5776

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS SON
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yossi and Daniella** שיחי **Gordon**
Chabad of Woodland Hills, California

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Mishpatim, 5783
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“5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL”

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

will be arranged in partnership with the leader of our generation, our righteous Moshiach, at our head, in our holy land, in Yerushalayim the holy city, in the third Beis HaMikdash.

May it be His Will, and this is the most fundamental matter, that he true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach comes into actual reality imminently and immediately... with all the explanations of "MiYaD" (including as well the acronym that encompasses the generations, Moshe, Yisroel (the Baal Shem Tov), Dovid (king Moshiach)).

And specifically to our generation, that the acronym of "MiYaD" alludes to the three periods connected to my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation:⁴² in the order closest to us, Moshiach (Menachem is his name), Yosef Yitzchak, DovBer (the second name of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe).

And all the explanations of "mamosh" [really], and above all immediately in the **literal meaning** of "mamosh", really, really, really.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, 27 Shvat, Blessing of the New Month Adar I, 5752)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** ה"ד
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
ה. נ. צ. ג. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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Executive Director

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Melave Malka repast] and in other places.

⁴² See above, section 59.

*Bava Basra*³³ (the "explanation" of parshas Mishpatim in the Oral Torah) explains in detail the concepts of the mitzvah of tzedekah. Among the fundamental ones is "Great³⁴ is tzedekah **for it brings close the Redemption**, as it says,³⁵ "Thus says the L-rd, keep judgment and do justice [tzedekah], for my salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed."

As a continuation of this, there is also the lesson from the beginning of parshas Terumah (which is read at Mincha on Shabbos): "Make me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them," beginning with the individual sanctuary within each and every Jew ("within it is not written but within them, within each an every one"³⁶), within his inner heart. [The Sanctuary should also be] in his house and his room, making it a house of Torah, prayer and acts of loving-kindness. This includes in particular joining in building and expanding synagogues and Houses of Study in a manner of "Take for me terumah... gold and silver and copper"³⁷ (all thirteen (fifteen)³⁸ things enumerated in the Torah), through which is accelerated and hastened and effected immediately the building of the third Beis HaMikdash in reality, in the simple sense.

This resolution³⁹ should bring immediately the reward,⁴⁰ bringing the Redemption, imminently and immediately in reality, for then the Melave Malka [the meal after Shabbos], "the meal of Dovid, king Moshiach,"⁴¹

33. 8a ff.

34. 10a.

35. *Yeshayahu* 56:1.

36. See Alschich on the verse. *Sheloh* 69a and in other places.

37. 25:2-3.

38. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 153, in the references there.

39. [To give according to the generosity of their pure hearts to the Gemach [Free Loan] Fund, for whose benefactors a Melave Malka was arranged after this Holy Sabbath. (**Publisher's note**)

40. See *Taanis* 8b. *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* end of section 571.

41. *Siddur HaArizal* in its place [section dealing with the Saturday night

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

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•

Volume VII: *Shmos*

•

In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

MISHPATIM

THREE INTERPRETATIONS; THREE CATEGORIES OF MITZVOS

On the verse:¹ “These are the judgments which you shall place before them,” our Sages and Rabbis offer several interpretations of the Hebrew לפניהם, translated as “before them.”

a) Judgments must be passed “before them,” i.e., a dispute between Jews must be settled before Jewish judges who rule according to Torah law, and not before gentile magistrates. Even when the secular law is no different than that of the Torah, litigation must be brought before a Rabbinic court.²

b) לפניהם shares a connection with the Hebrew word, פנים, which has several meanings, including “inner dimensions.” In this context, the verse instructs us that when teaching a student these judgments, one should expose him to their inner meaning.³ He should not be taught the laws as a dry canon, but should be shown the motivating principle behind them. Moreover, instead of telling a student: “This is the law. Discover the motivating principle yourself,” the concepts should be taught in a manner which sits well within the student’s understanding.

c) The Alter Rebbe explains⁴ that “inner dimensions” refers to the student. The Torah’s judgments are Divine

1. *Shmos* 21:1.

2. *Gittin* 88b, quoted by *Rashi*, *Shmos*, *op. cit.*; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Choshen Mishpat*, ch. 26.

3. *Eruvin* 54b. See also *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 4:18.

4. *Torah Or*, the *maamar* entitled *ViElah HaMishpatim*.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

commandment and the power to “make me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them” (as we read in the Torah at Mincha) in regard to building the Third Beis HaMikdash has not yet been received!

From this is understood the great need and the urgency to increase with greater vigor and greater force involvement those things which draw closer, hasten and bring in actual reality the Redemption, imminently and immediately.

First of all, in the matter emphasized in Parshas Mishpatim:

“Mishpatim” are the details of the laws between people in order to achieve peace²⁶ (and obviously the absence of its opposite, nullifying the cause of the final exile²⁷), which brings the Redemption, as our Sages of blessed memory²⁸ said about the advantage of justice [mishpat], that “with it **Tzion will be built**, as it says,²⁹ Tzion will be redeemed with justice.” [This also applies] to tzedekah (“and its captives through tzedekah”²⁹) and acts of loving kindness,³⁰ as explained in our Parsha,³¹ “If you will lend money to any of my people that is poor” and “Acts of loving kindness are greater than tzedekah.”³² Also the relevant section of

26. See *Shmos Rabba* at the beginning of our Parsha (ch. 30:1): “they came to judgment and they made peace.” In the Chiddushe HaRaDaL there: “Possibly it means through a compromise, as it says in Sanhedrin (6b), what is a peaceful judgment? It is a compromise.”

27. See *Yoma* 9b.

28. *Shmos Rabba* there, 15.

29. *Yeshayahu* 1:27.

30. Including as well the effect on the nations of the world to be involved with tzedekah; particularly after the resolution of the leaders of the nations to save on the expenditures for weaponry, it is much easier to affect an increase in activities of tzedekah, whether for the nations of the world or for the Jewish people.

31. *22:24*.

32. *Sukkah* 49b

the rabbis and authorities of the Jewish people **that the time of Redemption has arrived**, "a king from the house of Dovid will arise... it is presumed [b'chezkas] that he is Moshiach " until the situation and position of "behold, he is certainly Moshiach [vadai]."²³ [These are] legal decrees "**from Sinai**," which extend into and penetrate **the barriers of the world** as well, to such an extent that the leaders of the nations²⁴ resolve and announce **voluntarily** (and "**in their courts**" for they have the force "the law of the country is the law") concerning the situation and position that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares."

...According to what was said above, the wonder and amazement becomes much stronger, together with the great pain and confusion (a pain so great that one should not go into lengthy discussion of this matter on the Sabbath) - how is it possible that the Jewish people still find themselves in exile?!... Until when?!...

Is it possible that after all the signs that the true and complete Redemption is coming imminently and immediately in actual reality, including the event of this eve of Shabbos, when even the nations of the world announce that the time has arrived for "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" we find ourselves on the holy Shabbos day outside the land? Instead of being together with all the Jewish people from all corners of the world, is in our holy land, in Yerushalayim the holy city, and in the Beis HaMikdash [Temple], gathered at the "table prepared and set for the meal before the people,"²⁵ upon which is set the Livyosan, the Shor HaBor and the Yayin Meshumar!

Further, and this is essential, the announcement, the

knowledge, and this knowledge must be implanted in the inner dimensions of a Jew's soul. Within our spiritual makeup, we have a number of different levels, some revealed and some hidden. The Torah must permeate even the most hidden of our spiritual potentials.

Like all concepts in *Chassidus*, the above is also alluded to in *Nigleh*, the revealed dimensions of Torah law. Commenting on the above verse, the *Jerusalem Talmud*⁵ associates the word *tasim*, rendered as "place," with the Hebrew word *simah*, meaning "treasure-store," referring to the hidden secrets of the Torah. And the secrets of the Torah arouse the hidden, inner dimensions of the soul.⁶

As mentioned on several occasions, when our Sages offer different interpretations of the same word in the Torah, all the interpretations share a connection.⁷ Similarly, with regard to the concepts mentioned above, the different interpretations of לפניהם share a connection.

The common ground underlying these interpretations can be understood by considering the connection between the directives implied by the word לפניהם and the *mitzvos* that are referred to as *mishpatim*. As is well known,⁸ the *mitzvos* of the Torah are divided into three categories: *chukim*, *eidus*, and *mishpatim*. These three categories reflect the differing degrees to which a particular *mitzvah* can be fathomed by our reason and logic.

The *mitzvos* described as *chukim* do not have a rationale that can be grasped by reason. Instead, they are observed in obedience to G-d's will. They are, as the *Midrash* relates,⁹

5. *Avodah Zarah* 2:7; see the gloss of the *P'nei Moshe*.

6. See *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 73a; *Likkutei Torah*, *Vayikra*, p. 5c.

7. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Toldos* in this series.

8. See the *maamar* entitled *Im Bechukosai*, 5700, sec. 4. See also the commentaries to *Devarim* 6:20, and the commentaries to the *Haggadah* with regard to the question asked by the wise son: "What are these *eidus*, *chukim*, and *mishpatim*?"

9. *Bamidbar Rabbah*, *Chukas*, 19:8.

23. *Rambam*, *Laws of Kings*, end of ch. 11.

24. That "even though he doesn't see, his mazel [lit., constellation, spiritual guide] sees" (*Megillah* 3a).

25. Rashi's commentary to the beginning of our Parsha.

“statutes which I have ordained, decrees which I have issued,” to be observed even though one does not understand.

Eidus, by contrast, are *mitzvos* whose rationale can be grasped. Had the Torah not commanded them, we would not have proposed these observances on the basis of our own logic. Nevertheless, once the Torah has given such commands, we can comprehend their rationale.

Mishpatim represent the category of *mitzvos* which are mandated by even mortal intellect alone (i.e., our reason not only accepts the observance of these practices, it *requires* their observance). In this vein, our Sages said:¹⁰ “If — Heaven forbid — the Torah had not been given, we would have learned modesty from a cat, and [the prohibition against] theft from an ant.” For even without the Torah’s commandment, our own minds would have dictated the observance of this type of *mitzvah*.

Questions thus arise: Why is it with regard to *mishpatim* that the Torah mentions the concept of לפנייהם, with all of its interpretations? Why are these lessons more closely associated with *mishpatim* than with *eidus* and *chukim*?

An explanation can be given according to the first interpretation of לפנייהם. For only with regard to *mishpatim* is it possible for gentile judges to rule in the same manner as Jews. With regard to *eidus*, and surely with regard to *chukim*, there is no need to forewarn against approaching non-Jewish judges, for it is obvious that such people have no understanding of these things. Their rulings have no connection to subjects which transcend human intellect. But since *mishpatim* involve matters that fall within the scope of human intellect, it is possible that gentiles will rule in the manner the Torah prescribes. Therefore it is necessary to say that a Jew must bring *all* disputes before a Jewish court.

10. Eruvin 100b. See the *sichah* to Parshas Yisro in this series.

connected with the Redemption because of its connection to the life **of the leader of our generation**; for it occurred on the eve of the last Shabbos of the month of Shvat, the eleventh month, on the tenth of which is the *hilulo*²¹ (the completion and perfection of the Divine service) of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation. The eleventh [of Shvat] produced an expansion and innovation in his leadership, with greater strength and greater vigor, until the completion and conclusion of all the Divine service of our generation (the last generation of exile which is the first generation of Redemption). [This happened] during the [past] forty-two years, which correspond to the forty-two stages of travel in the desert of the nations [i.e., exile]. Thus we are already prepared and poised to enter the land in the true and final Redemption (as discussed at length at a previous gathering).²² For **the time** (as well as the place) of the announcement that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" emphasized the connection with the activities of the leader of our generation, my sainted father-in-law, the Moshiach of the generation, through whom is fulfilled the promise that "they will beat their swords into plowshares."

...It may be said that the resolution and announcement of **the leaders of the nations of the world** on the eve of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim concerning the condition and situation of "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" is an effect of the resolution and announcement of "**our kings, the Rabbis**" that "Behold he (the king Moshiach) comes." [The situation today] began with the legal decree of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that we have already completed our work and Divine service in the course of the exile and we are already prepared to greet our righteous Moshiach. It then continued through the legal decree of

21. [The Zohar describes the passing of a tzadik as "hilulo." Literally it means wedding, because it is the "reunion" of the soul of the tzadik with his Maker. Translator's note.]

22. Talks of 11 Shvat and Shabbos Parshas Beshallah (*Sefer HaSichos* 5752, p. 380).

throughout the world. That was done, and is being done, through the leader of our generation, **the Moshiach of the generation**.¹⁹ This is so to such an extent that through the completion of the Divine service mentioned above, at this time the whole world is made ready for the beginning of the activities of the king Moshiach, "and he will judge between the nations and reprove many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares."²⁰

The time in which this event occurred is also appropriately

19. See the pamphlet mentioned above (in note 11), section 5, that the leader of the generation is the Moshiach of the generation. This is emphasized especially in regard to my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, as alluded to in his two names: "Yosef" - "the L-rd shall set his hand again [Yoseef]... and gather the outcasts of Israel" (*Yeshayahu* 11:11-12), and "Yitzchak" - "then our mouths will be filled with laughter [S'chok]" (*Tehillim* 126:2. And see *Brochos* 31:1).

20. It should be noted, that the United Nations, organized for the purpose of peace and unity among the nations, was established in the lower half of the world after and in **proximity to the arrival of the leader of our generation** to the lower half of the world (beginning with the acceptance of the resolution in the middle of the war, about 5702, and principally at the conclusion of the war, about 5705). The headquarters were established **in the city of the leader of our generation**, even constructing a special building (about 5711). This emphasizes that the unity and the peace between the nations is a result of the activities of the leader of our generation in purifying the world (through the dissemination of Torah, Judaism, righteousness and integrity throughout the world). According to the increase of purification of the world through the leader of the generation, so also increases the solidification of an organization whose goal is to achieve unity and peace in the world, to the point of the completing and perfecting the purification of the world, fulfilling the prediction that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares," which is the foundation of this organization (to such an extent that it is emblazoned on the walls of the building.)

The second interpretation, however — that when teaching a student, one should expose him to the motivating principles behind the laws, so that he will understand them thoroughly — seems more appropriate for *eidus* and *chukim*. Our unaided intellect does not obligate the observance of *eidus*, and *chukim* are entirely above our conceptual grasp. Accordingly, it is necessary to emphasize that when teaching a student, these concepts should be conveyed in a manner that facilitates internalization.

This message appears unnecessary with regard to *mishpatim*. In that realm, it is obvious that the instruction should be conveyed in a manner to which a student can relate.

Neither does interpreting לַפְּנֵיהֶם as “to your inner dimensions” seem to relate to *mishpatim*. In order to observe the *mishpatim*, it is seemingly unnecessary to arouse the inner dimension of our souls, for these *mitzvos* are obligated by our intellect. Since *chukim*, by contrast, transcend the dictates of intellect, their observance must be spurred by the inner dimension of the soul. Without such inspiration, observance of these *mitzvos* will be a function of duty alone. If these *mitzvos* are not internalized, a Jew will carry them out only because he must; without inner vitality. For him to internalize these *mitzvos* and be motivated to perform them with vigor, one must involve the inner dimensions of one’s soul, which transcend intellect.

FAITH DOES NOT EXCLUDE INTELLECT

Our Sages state¹¹ that “deed is most essential,” emphasizing that the actual observance of a *mitzvah* is of fundamental importance. For example, with regard to the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* — and “the entire Torah is equated with *tefillin*”¹² — were a person to have in mind all the spiritual intentions associated with the *mitzvah*, but fail to actually bind *tefillin* to his head

11. Cf. *Avos* 1:17.

12. *Kiddushin* 35a.

and arm, he has not performed the *mitzvah*, and is placed in the category of “a skull on which *tefillin* have not been placed.”¹³ If, by contrast, a person were to put on *tefillin* even without considering the intent, he fulfills the *mitzvah*. This applies even when a person is advanced enough to be capable of directing his intent, yet fails to do so. Although he fulfills the *mitzvah* in a perfunctory manner, he must recite a blessing beforehand, and mention G-d’s name and His sovereignty.¹⁴ The lack of higher intention does not detract from the fact that the *mitzvah* has been observed. The same applies with regard to other *mitzvos*, because “deed is most essential.”

Nevertheless, this emphasis on deed is not meant to exclude thought or feeling. On the contrary, G-d intends all the *mitzvos* to permeate our characters, encompassing all the potentials which we possess.¹⁵ A *mitzvah* should affect not only one’s powers of deed and speech, but also one’s powers of thought and emotion, and even the encompassing powers of will and pleasure.

This does not apply only to those *mitzvos* which naturally depend on understanding and the feelings of the heart, e.g., the *mitzvos* of love, fear, faith in G-d, knowledge of G-d, and the like. Even *mitzvos* dependent on deed must permeate every aspect of our personalities, including our deepest potentials, especially the potential of pleasure. For every *mitzvah* must be observed with happiness and joy,¹⁶ as alluded to in the verse:¹⁷ “All the choice parts should be given to G-d.”

13. See *Rosh HaShanah* 17a.

14. To borrow the wording of *Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 11: the blessing must be recited “without a doubt, or a shadow of a doubt.”

15. Based on the above, we can understand that a person involved in the performance of one *mitzvah* is free from the obligation to perform another, whatever *mitzvah* it might be. See *Sukkah* 25a, *Tosafos*, entry *Shiluhei*.

16. See the *Rambam*, *Mishneh Torah*, the conclusion of *Hilchos Lulav*.

17. *Vayikra* 3:16. As explained in *Torah Or*, p. 29d, and *Likkutei Torah*, *Pinchas* p. 78b, this verse serves as an analogy, teaching that pleasure — our deepest and most choice potential — must be dedicated to G-d.

against belief in the Creator and Guide of the world. (This also includes the imprisonment of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, and consequently his expulsion from the borders of that country.) Nevertheless, the activities of the *shluchim* of the leader of our generation extended even there, spreading Torah and Judaism in secret and with real *mesiros nefesh* [self-sacrifice]. This continued until the recent period, when the decrees of the country were nullified, and it became possible to continue the activities of spreading Torah and Judaism with greater strength and vigor, openly and publicly. Finally, the previous government fell and a new government was established, declaring itself for justice, integrity and peace, based on belief in the Creator and Guide of the world.

As a continuation of this, on the eve of this Shabbos a meeting between the new president of that country and the president of this country occurred, in partnership with many other leaders of the great countries of the world. There they accepted the resolution and publicized its contents that “they shall beat their swords into plowshares.”

The location of this conference, its resolution and announcement **in the city of the leader of our generation**, my sainted father-in-law (in which gathered the leaders of the countries, including as well the president of this country, who had to come from the capital city to this city¹⁸) implies that all this came as a result of the activities in disseminating Torah and Judaism, justice and integrity

18. Even though **the simple** reason for this is that the designated location for the representatives of the nations of the world to gather in an established way was from the outset designed to be in a place that was not the capital city of a particular country, yet the **true** reason for establishing that place [the United Nations] specifically in this city is that it was to be **the capital city** of “the kings, the rabbis” (see *Gittin* 62, end of side a and in other sources), my sainted father-in-law, **the leader of our generation** (and see below note 20.)

When the leader of our generation came to the lower hemisphere and established his residence in this country and city, there began in force the purification and refinement **of the lower hemisphere**, extending there the revelation of the giving of the Torah (which had been in the upper hemisphere¹⁵). More than this, it became the source from which extended and spread the fundamental activity of disseminating the Wellsprings outward **literally into all corners of the world**. This was done through the shlichim [emissaries] that he sent throughout the world (also to the upper hemisphere), to the farthest corner imaginable, in order to disseminate Torah and Judaism to all the Jewish people (including and specifically those dwelling among the gentiles and speaking their language and acting in all appearances like them).

Further, and this is also essential, he disseminated matters of goodness, justice and integrity between the nations of the world as well, through fulfillment of the commandments of the children of Noah.¹⁶ As greatly emphasized in recent years, as we come closer to and approach the time of the coming of our righteous Moshiach, "Then I will turn to the nations a pure language to call all of them on the name of G-d and to serve Him with one consent."¹⁷

In this last period (beginning with the year of **miracles**, and continuing into the years of "**wonders** I will show him" and "**wonders** in everything") this activity has reached its climax, with the breaking down of the boundaries of the country [Russia] that at its inception engraved on its flag and declared a war against the dissemination of Torah and Judaism, to the extent of waging war

15. See *Igros Kodesh* of the *Rebbe Rayatz*, vol. 2, page 492 ff. See there for cross references.

16. According to the ruling of the Rambam (*Laws of Kings*, chapter 8, halacha 10), that "Moshe Rabbeinu commanded, by Divine edict, that all who come into the world be compelled to accept the commandments commanded to the children of Noah."

17. *Tzefanyah* 3:9. See Rambam *ibid*, end of ch. 11.

Accordingly, not only the *mishpatim*, but also the *chukim* must be fulfilled with a commitment that encompasses our minds as well as our bodies. They should not be regarded as mere imperatives required of us because we must perform G-d's command even when it appears to be without reason or purpose. Instead, the *mitzvos* must permeate every dimension of our being. Since G-d gave these commandments, even the *chukim* should be made a part of our thought processes.

This is not meant to imply that we should simply admit man's inability to grasp the rationale for the *chukim*, and be satisfied that G-d, who commanded their observance, has a rationale for them. This attitude indicates that a person is still lacking in *kabbalas ol*; he has not transcended the limits of his intellect. On the contrary, his observance is motivated by his trust that the *chukim* embody and reflect great wisdom.

The proper way is to observe the *chukim* with *kabbalas ol*, the acceptance of G-d's yoke, without any rationale whatsoever.¹⁸ This approach does not require the denial of one's intellect. On the contrary, one's *kabbalas ol* must have so much strength and vitality that it influences one's intellect and spurs it to accept this path. One's mind should appreciate that it is necessary to fulfill G-d's will without wondering why.

On this basis, we can appreciate the precision of our Rabbis' wording:¹⁹ "It is a decree... you have no permission to question its observance." On the surface, the Rabbis should have said: "You have no permission not to observe it." Why is "questioning" mentioned?

The explanation is that the mere observance of such *mitzvos* in deed is not sufficient. Instead, one must develop a thoughtful commitment to their observance, to the extent that one does not question. This goes beyond the advice that a person who occasionally thinks the *chukim* are of no value

18. See the *sichah* for Chanukah in this series where this concept is explained.

19. *Rashi*, the beginning of *Parshas Chukas*.

should dismiss the thought immediately, as stated in *Tanya*²⁰ with regard to other concepts. The intent is rather to say that a person who observes *chukim* properly *does not question*; he proceeds with a single-minded commitment that knows no doubt.

Such a person observes the *chukim* without a rationale for his observance, not even relying on the explanation that G-d surely has a rationale. His entire personality is permeated with simple faith and *kabbalas ol*, to the extent that this affects his thinking processes, and he does not question. His commitment has pervaded his thoughts to such an extent that no other approach even occurs to him.

According to this explanation, it is clear that to observe the *chukim* properly, one must arouse the inner dimensions of one's soul — the third explanation of לפניהם mentioned above. For it is this potential that enables the *chukim* to be accepted within the framework of our intellect and emotion. Without the influence of this inner dimension, a person will not be able to reach the single-minded commitment described above. It is possible that he will observe the *chukim* with *kabbalas ol*, but his observance will lack vitality.

When, however, a person arouses the inner dimensions of his soul, he derives a satisfaction in his Divine service which transcends the limits of knowledge. This enables him to internalize the Torah's laws, and make them a part of the way he thinks and feels.

With regard to *mishpatim*, by contrast, the lessons of לפניהם are seemingly not applicable. For the *mitzvos* classified as *mishpatim* can be understood by the intellect, and thus a person will naturally derive satisfaction from their obser-

20. Ch. 12. *Tanya*, however, speaks about a *benoni* dismissing thoughts of performing a sin or failing to observe a positive commandment; there is no doubt or question regarding the truth of the commandments themselves. In the case at hand, by contrast, doubt and questions are raised concerning the merit of the *mitzvah* itself. This resembles a lack of faith.

and announce together concerning the position and situation of "they shall beat their swords into plowshares."

The resolution and announcement occurred specifically at this time, because of its special connection with the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

It may be added, that the connection of the event to the beginning of the activities of our righteous Moshiach is also emphasized **in the details** of the event - **the time and place** wherein the heads of state made the resolution and announcement concerning the position and situation of "they shall beat their swords into plowshares":

The place wherein this event occurred (a place designated for representatives of the nations of the world to gather to deliberate among themselves in a courteous and peaceful manner) is in this country and this city. In the country and city wherein is "**Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel**"¹³ [The House of our Rebbe in Babel], "**Beis Chayeinu**" [The House of our Life], the synagogue and study hall, the house of Torah, Prayer and acts of loving-kindness, [all creations] of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation. He chose [this place] and established here the headquarters from which "Torah will go forth," the dissemination outward of Torah and the wellsprings into all corners of the world until the coming of our righteous Moshiach (when your wellsprings extend outward¹⁴). For then also will the promise be fulfilled that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares."

The meaning of this concept is:

13. *Megillah* 29:1. And see at length the pamphlet on the subject *Mikdash M'at Zeh* etc. (*Sefer HaSichos* 5752, p. 465.)

14. The Holy Letter of the Baal Shem Tov - *Kesser Shem Tov* at the beginning. And in many places.

"At the end of days the mount of the House of the L-rd will be mended... and all the nations will flow to it, and many peoples will go and they will say let us go up to the mount of G-d, to the House of the G-d of Yaakov and learn from his way and go in his paths, because Torah goes forth from Tzion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem,"⁸ and "the one who will teach them is the king Moshiach, about whom it is said, and he will judge."⁹

The heads of the nations of the world are resolving and announcing the reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction and an expansion of programs that provide sustenance for the country and the world as a whole. This is the content of the promise that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares," breaking weapons of war to make them vessels for working the ground, "ground from which comes bread."¹⁰ [Since they are currently making this resolution,] this is a clear sign concerning **the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise** of the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

A further clarification:

Since we find ourselves in the "highest time" of the coming of our righteous Moshiach, "Behold he (the king Moshiach) comes,"¹¹ we already see (an example) and the beginning of **the effect of the king Moshiach on the nations** - "and he judges between the nations and reproves many peoples and they shall beat their swords to plowshares..." Essentially, G-d is inspiring the rulers of the world ("the heart of kings and princes is in the hand of G-d"¹²) to resolve

8. *Yeshayahu* ibid, 2-3. *Micha* ibid, 1-2.

9. Commentary of *Radak* on the verse.

10. *Iyov* 28:5.

11. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8 and *Shir HaShirim Rabba* on the verse.

12. A common expression - based on *Mishlei* 21:1. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, p. 285, note 1 and the marginal note there.

vance. Why is it necessary for a person to arouse his soul for the observance of these *mitzvos*?

AN OUTGROWTH OF THE REVELATION AT SINAI

The above question can be resolved by first explaining another statement of our Sages. On the verse: "And these are the judgments,"²¹ our Sages comment:²¹ "These complement those which came before." The *mishpatim* come as a continuation of and a corollary to the Ten Commandments, for the *mishpatim* were also given at Mount Sinai.

As mentioned previously,²² the Ten Commandments represent a fusion of *mitzvos* from both extremes of the spiritual spectrum. The first *mitzvos* express the deepest concepts of Divine unity, while the latter convey basic dictums such as "Do not kill"²³ and "Do not steal"²³ which can be grasped even by undeveloped mortals. This fusion emphasizes that the correct observance of "Do not kill" and "Do not steal" must stem from the awareness that they are also G-d's commandments; they were dictated by the same One who declared: "I am G-d your L-rd."²⁴

By saying: "These complement those which came before," our Sages are implying that the *mishpatim* were given on Mount Sinai as a continuation of the giving of the Torah. As such, they must be observed not only because they make sense, but because they too were given by G-d.

This is highlighted by the first interpretation of לפנייהם, which forbids reliance on gentile courts, even when their decisions resemble those rendered by a Torah court. For their decisions are not associated with the revelation of "I am G-d your G-d." Their rulings are not expressions of the laws of the

21. *Shmos Rabbah*, *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Mechilta*, on this verse; cited also by *Rashi*.

22. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Yisro* in this series, and the sources mentioned there.

23. *Shmos* 20:13.

24. *Ibid.*:2.

Torah. Therefore we are forbidden to seek them out, for every dimension of a Jew's life must be guided by the Torah.

This also relates to the Alter Rebbe's interpretation of לפניהם as referring to the inner dimensions of the soul. The intent is that the study and practice of *mishpatim* should be motivated not only by mortal intellect, but rather by the inner depths of the soul, as with the study and practice of *chukim*.

And similarly, with regard to the *mishpatim*, an effort must be made to internalize their observance [the second interpretation of לפניהם], not only as compelled by mortal intellect, but as an expression of the depths of the soul. For as mentioned above, a Jew's G-dly core must affect the full range of his character, allowing even these spiritual concepts to become part and parcel of his thought processes.²⁵

Based on the above, we can appreciate the interrelation between the three interpretations of לפניהם, and the fact that these concepts are taught in connection with *mishpatim* in particular. Since *mishpatim* are *mitzvos* which can be comprehended by our intellect, it is necessary to emphasize that this understanding alone should not motivate their observance, but rather that they should be kept because they too were given at Sinai. Thus the *mishpatim* too must be observed with a *kabbalas ol* inspired by the inner depths of the soul (the Alter Rebbe's interpretation).

Accordingly, it is forbidden to bring judgments to a gentile court (the first interpretation), for their rulings are based solely on mortal intellect. And although the observance of *mishpatim* should be motivated by *kabbalas ol*, this *kabbalas ol* should be internalized within our thinking process (the second interpretation) through the arousal of the soul's inner potential.

25. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, *Parshas Mishpatim*; Vol. II, Letters, p. 672.

procure weapons to expand economic programs that provide for the citizenry. The announcement was confirmed by Congress, wherein the laws of the country are established and which have the force of law according to Torah ("the law of the government is the law")²

One has to consider the lesson as well as the details of the event - its place and time, including its connection to the contents of the time in **the Torah**, the Parsha of the week, as will be explained.

The lesson of this event is a general and fundamental aspect of the Divine service of the Jewish people ("our work and Divine service while in exile"³) - **to bring the coming of Moshiach:**⁴

One of the promises of the true and final Redemption through our righteous Moshiach is connected to the conduct of the nations of the world: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."⁵

Furthermore, this will occur through the activity of our righteous Moshiach himself, as stated at the beginning of the verse,⁶ "He will judge among the nations and reprove many peoples" ("The judge is king Moshiach... for he is the master of all the peoples, and he reproves them; he says to whoever in whom is found sin, let the crooked be made straight... and because of this there will not be war between one nation and another because he will make peace between them, and they will not need weapons of war, and they will beat them to make of them utensils for working the ground"⁷). For

2. *Gittin* 10b. See there for cross-references.
 3. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.
 4. The expression of our Sages, of blessed memory - in the Mishneh at the end of the first chapter of Brochos.
 5. *Yeshayahu* 2:4. *Micha* 4:3.
 6. *Yeshayahu* 2:4. *Micha* 4:3.
 7. Commentary of *Radak* on the verse.

The Announcement Of The Redemption

16

The appointment of David, the King Moshiach, has already occurred, as it says,¹ "I have found David My servant, with My holy oil I have anointed him." It requires only an acceptance of his kingship by the people and a complete revelation of the attachment between the king and the people - in the true and perfect Redemption.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, Parshas Shekalim, Mevorchim HaChodesh Adar, 5751)

1. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 89:21.

66

In regard to recent events:

First of all, it occurred that on the eve of this Shabbos, the heads of the great and important countries of the world, and at their head the leaders of the two superpowers, convened together. They resolved and announced a new era in the relationship between the countries of the world. The status of war between the nations of the world was nullified, to be expressed in a reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction until there is peace and unity, a working partnership and strong cooperation between nations for the good of all mankind.

Prior to this event (by Divine Providence) the President of this country declared to all his people (on Wednesday, "the preparation for Shabbos,"¹ the beginning of the eve of this Shabbos) that he would announce and publicize a reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction, utilizing the money that was not spent to

1. *Pesachim* 106, end of side a.

THE DRAWBACKS OF RELYING ON MORTAL INTELLECT ALONE

There are two reasons for not relying on mortal intellect in observing the *mishpatim*:

a) Were the observance of these *mitzvos* to depend on concepts that could be understood by our animal souls, there would be a tendency towards spiritual descent, as implied by our Sages' statement:²⁶ "Today, it (the *yetzer hora*) tells a person 'Do this.' Tomorrow, it tells him 'Do that'... until it tells him 'Go worship false divinities.'"

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, would explain²⁷ that at first the *yetzer hora* does not have the boldness to entice a Jew to sin. Therefore it begins by telling him to perform a *mitzvah* — "Today, it tells a person 'Do this,'" i.e., something which the Torah itself commands. But when a person fulfills a *mitzvah* because his animal soul deems it beneficial to do so, and not because G-d commanded him to do so in the Torah, he severs his connection with G-d. From then on, it is possible to descend lower and lower. "Tomorrow, it [will] tell him 'Do that'" and ultimately, "it [will] tell him, 'Go worship false divinities.'"

b) Moreover, when a person fulfills a *mitzvah* only because of the dictates of mortal wisdom, his observance lacks a fundamental awareness of the connection established (for the word *mitzvah* relates to the word *tzavsa*, meaning "connection") with "I am G-d, your L-rd." He does not appreciate that his observance is an expression of the Torah's mandates.

A THRUST TOWARD OUTREACH

As mentioned previously,²² the fusion of the two extremes in the Ten Commandments teaches a twofold lesson:

26. *Shabbos* 105b.

27. *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, Vol. I, p. 37; *Toras Menachem* 5710, p. 78.

a) To borrow the wording of the *Midrash*,²⁸ “the higher realms descended to the lower realms.” In the analog, the spiritual power embodied in the commandments “I am G-d” and “You shall have no other gods”²⁹ must descend and be felt in the observance of the commandments “Do not kill” and “Do not steal.” Even these *mitzvos* should be observed because they were commanded by G-d Himself.

b) “The lower realms ascended to the higher realms.” In the analog, the term “lower realms” refers to people who by nature are even less developed than animals, and thus do not learn the prohibition against theft “from an ant...”¹⁰ They must be *commanded* “Do not kill” and “Do not steal” by G-d Himself. Even such individuals must meditate and “ascend to the higher realms,” developing their faith and knowledge of G-dliness in order to establish a connection with “I am G-d, your L-rd.”

These two directives are emphasized again at the beginning of *Parshas Mishpatim*, which as mentioned above is a continuation of the giving of the Torah. As stated previously, the observance of *mishpatim* must be inspired by the inner depths of the soul. This reflects “the descent of the higher realms to the lower realms.”³⁰

Simultaneously, there must be “the ascent of the lower realms to the higher realms.” Students who have a minimal knowledge of the Torah and who do not have the ability to make distinctions must be shown how to study, with the les-

28. *Shmos Rabbah* 12:3.

29. *Shmos* 20:3.

30. Also implied by “the descent of the higher realms to the lower realms” is that Torah scholars must “descend” and involve themselves with simple people, teaching them and providing them with guidance. In this vein, commenting on the verse (*Mishlei* 29:4): “A king establishes the land with justice, while an elevated man destroys it,” the *Midrash (Shmos Rabbah* 30:13) explains that the latter phrase refers to “a wise man who knows *halachah*, *Midrash*, and *Agadah*... but says, ‘I am busy with my studies. I have no time [for others].’”

As mentioned above, all our Sages’ interpretations of a verse are interrelated.

sons prepared “as a table set before a person, ready for him to eat from.”³¹

Moreover, this can also refer to those who are lowly with regard to their moral development, such as litigants who occasionally advance false arguments. (Although the word *לפניהם*, “before them,” refers to the judges, since it is speaking about judgments, it also relates to the litigants.) These lowly individuals must be exposed to the “treasure stores” of *pnimiyus HaTorah*, the Torah’s inner, mystic core.

This exposure will awaken the inner dimensions of the soul, a level on which all Jews are “worthy,”³² potentially fit to receive these treasures. Although the inner dimension of the soul may be hidden from such people, we are obligated to help them reveal it. And this is accomplished by exposing them to the Torah’s treasures.

This arouses the inner dimension of their souls, and motivates this inner potential to permeate their conscious powers of thought and feeling. And it also affects their deeds, leading to the observance of the *mitzvos* with energy and vitality.³³

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, 5722)



31. *Rashi, Mechilta*, commenting on *Shmos* 21:1.

32. See the *Jerusalem Talmud* cited in note 5.

33. See *Shmos Rabbah* 30:22; *Or Torah*, from the Maggid of Mezeritch, *Parshas Acharei*.