

Knesset Israel

Your Beverlywood Shul

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Parshat Mishpatim

By Rabbi Avraham Schefres

Bnei Yisrael said 'we'll take it' or the more traditional way we see it written in Parashat Mishpatim is 'everything that Hashem has said, we will do (naase) and we will hear (venishma)' (Shmos 24:7). What were they thinking? They gave a definite answer, accepting the entire Torah without knowing or understanding most of it. Most people today would not do this because it is simply not logical. The mefarshim applaud Bnei Yisrael for their response. Rabeinu Yonah, for example, explains that the words of Bnei Yisrael are a perfect example of that which we learn in Pirkei Avot, chapter 3, mishna 12(b), that "He (Rabbi Chanina) used to say, anyone whose good deeds are greater than his wisdom, his wisdom will endure...." (Avot D'Rebbe Natan 22:1). This means that Bnei Yisrael were, perhaps, not as wise as their deed of saying yes. Is it possible that Bnei Yisrael did answer with some wisdom? What are the possible reasons for their answer?

One possibility may be as follows. The word mitzvah is used in the Torah for all commandments. However, the mitzvot are generally divided into three categories which are mishpatim – logical laws, chukim – decrees that we would not understand logically, and eidot – law based on testimonials to commemorate an event or represent something (may become logical once their significance is explained). The parsha of Mishpatim boasts 53 mitzvot, which are primarily logical laws, with a few testimonials and decrees. The response of Bnei Yisrael shows chronologically in the Torah right after they heard these laws. Is it possible that since most of the laws were logical to them, they felt that it was 'safe' for them to accept the Torah since it was along their line of thinking?

Another possibility could be the insight Bnei Yisrael had into the human psyche, and their need of self-preservation. Sociologists have noticed that every generation has different values based on their life cycle events and collective experiences. Is it possible that Bnei Yisrael did not want their values to change over the generations, especially when they were presented with the Torah, a manual for life, from the Creator Himself? Is it possible that they wanted to have the same Torah values in every generation? Did they want to preserve their values and in essence create 'the Torah generation' preserving the values of the nation?

Furthermore, if you step back to view the larger historical picture, Bnei Yisrael may have been giving an answer using logic, without seeming to be. How? Avraham already established a trusting relationship with Hashem, followed by the other forefathers. B'nai Yisrael didn't have to re-invent the emuna wheel, so to speak. Avraham Avinu did the entire intellectual and logical work of finding Hashem and knowing

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He is the One true G-d. Bnei Yisrael, may have felt that they did not need to reestablish that belief and trust in Hashem and could now just say yes to the Torah. They were an extension of Avraham's conversation with Hashem and accepting the Torah was their contribution to that conversation and gift to the following generations. This possibility when put into historical context makes perfect logical sense.

While Bnei Yisrael may have been naïve when they said yes to accept the Torah, it is also possible that they, collectively, very much understood what they were doing: either as a response to a series of common sense laws; an instrument of self-preservation; or an extension of the trust established and built by their forefathers. May we, another 'generation of Torah' have the fortitude to make the right decisions in Torah for the benefit of generations to come. See you in shul.

Shabbat Times

Erev Shabbat Feb 5, 2016 / 26 Sh'vat, 5776

Candle Lighting.....4:21 pm to 5:09 pm
Mincha.....5:10 pm

Shabbat Day Feb 6, 2016 / 27 Sh'vat, 5776

Shacharit.....9:00 am
Kiddush.....11:30 am
Mincha.....5:05 pm
Havdalah / Shabbat Ends.....6:11 pm

Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday Shoshana Partush! (Feb 5)

This is a leap year and thus we have Adar Alef (first Adar) and Adar Bet (second Adar). We celebrate Purim in the second Adar. Meanwhile, Rosh Chodesh Adar Alef will be upon us next week and there is some inyan (ting or 'a zach') about being a little joyous during the time of Adar Alef as well. Mishenichnas Adar Marbim Besimcha – so here is a little levity for Adar Alef.

Story - A harmless dummy hung in the spirit of Purim in Chicago somehow turned into a rescue effort after police and



paramedics arrived at the scene thinking that a dummy was a real person. Some bochurim at Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago, in honor of Chodesh Adar, created a Mishenichnas Adar sign and hung it on the front of their dormitory building. The bochurim, in their creativity, made it look like a person - a dummy - hanging up the sign had lost his balance and was hanging on for dear life on the high window sill while the fallen ladder sat below. Police officers and paramedics were contacted by someone who was not aware that the "guy" was nothing more than a dummy. After arriving at the scene, police and paramedics cut the ropes holding up the "fellow" and finally reached him, only to discover that he was nothing more than a dummy. The police and paramedics broke out in laughter, quickly figuring out that the sign and dummy were nothing more than a creative Purim endeavor by the boys. In fact, the paramedics, smiling from ear to ear, took the "person" on a stretcher and headed back to their station to show their "find" to their friends. The bochurim later contacted them and asked if they could get their dummy back. (One of the bochurim needed to return the shaitel from the dummy's head to his mother!)



So Morris decided to distribute his wealth while still alive. Didn't want his family bickering over the Yerusha. Morris

decides he will sell his own palatial home and divvy up the funds amongst his 12 children, but the deal was that he lives at a different child's home each month of the year. Things are working out pretty well for a while when one day Hymie, Morris' old friend, finds Morris sleeping on a bench in the park. "Morris, what happened to you"? Why aren't you with your children?" "Oh Hymie, what should I tell you, it's a Leap Year this year"!

A man was in a job interview today when the manager handed him his laptop and said, "I want you to try and sell this to me. "So he put it under his arm, walked out of the building and went home. Eventually he got called by mobile and said, "Bring it back here right now!", the man said, "\$100 and it's yours."



Two days after Rabinovich applies for permission to emigrate, he is awakened at 3AM by loud, insistent knocking. "Who is it?" he calls groggily. "The mailman" is the reply. So Rabinovich stumbles to the door, opens it— and is immediately grabbed by three plainclothes KGB officers, who muscle him backwards into his living room, plant him on the couch, and flip on the lights. One of the officers pulls out a small notebook and growls "It says here that you recently applied for permission to emigrate to Israel." "Yes, I did," replies Rabinovich, blinking in the bright light. "Why did you apply to emigrate? Do you not have a well-paid, satisfying job?" "Y-yes, of course!" "Is your wife not provided with every luxury and comfort she needs to build a proper home?"



"Always, sir, always!" "Are your children not receiving a proper socialist education?" "The best, the absolute best!" "Then tell me, zhid, why in the hell would you apply for permission to emigrate!" "B-because," Rabinovich stammers "I don't like living in a place where they deliver mail at three in the morning!"

Ten reasons for celebrating Purim:

1. Making noise in shul is a mitzvah.
2. Levy is not reserved for the Levites.
3. If you're having a bad hair day, you can always wear a mask & no one will know who you are.
4. Purim is easier to spell than Khanuka, Chanukah, Chanuka, Hanuka – the Hebrew name for the Festival of Lights.
5. You don't have to kasher your home and change all the pots and dishes.
6. You don't have to build a sukkah and eat outside.
7. You get to drink wine & you don't have to stand for Kiddush.
8. Mordechai - 1; Haman - 0.
9. You won't get hit in the eye by a lulav.
10. You can't eat hamentaschen on Yom Kippur.
11. Mordechai - 1 ; Haman - 0!!!!

