



## ואלה המשפטים 21:1 "אשר תשים לפניהם"

"And these are the judgments that you shall place before them:" Why does the Torah use a peculiar Loshon of "לפניהם" – that these Halachos shall be placed in front of them? This week is Parshas Shekalim, which speaks about Klal Yisroel giving a Machatzis Hashekel. The Medrash tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu could not understand what it looked like, until Hakodosh Boruch Hu showed him a coin of fire. Why did Klal Yisroel only give a half of a Shekel, and why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu show Moshe a coin in fire? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P'shat offered in the closing paragraph.

**ואלה 21:1 – רבינו אפרים**  
"המשפטים" – These letters also spell the words, "משה פיתם" – "Moshe formulated." This means to say that Moshe taught Klal Yisroel the Parshah of Halachos, and "formulated" it in front of them like Ketores Samim. He made it easy and pleasant for them to understand.

**ואלה המשפטים 21:1 – רבינו יואל**  
"אשר תשים לפניהם" – This Posuk has five words K'neged the five times it says the word, "אור" by Brias Ha'olam – by the Creation of the world. Thus, judgment is only to take place by, "אור" – during the daytime, and not at night.

**ואלה המשפטים 21:1 – רבינו יואל**  
"אשר תשים לפניהם" – This Posuk has twenty four letters, which is K'neged the twenty four Sifrei Kodesh of Torah Shebiksav. We learn from this that, "כל" – "All who adjudicate the absolute truth, is as if he is Mekayeim the entire Torah."

**ואלה המשפטים 21:1 – דברי ישראל**  
"אשר תשים לפניהם" – Rashi says on this Posuk that the Mishpatim shall be placed before Klal Yisroel, "כשולחן ערוך ומוכן לאכול" – "Like a set table, and it is prepared to eat from." Rashi is telling us that just as regarding food, although someone ate yesterday, today he is hungry as if he had not eaten, so too must one feel about the "food of Torah." A person should have a tremendous desire for more Torah every day, and he should not be content with what he has learned in the past.

**ואלה המשפטים 21:1 – דברי ישראל**  
"אשר תשים לפניהם" – The Torah juxtaposes the Mizbe'ach to this Parshah of "ואלה המשפטים" to teach us that just as the Mizbe'ach is a place which creates peace between Hakodosh Boruch Hu and His people, so too Klal Yisroel must choose judges who are individuals who will help bring peace, and not Chas V'sholom individuals who will create strife amongst Klal Yisroel.

**ואלה 21:1 – מהר"י שטיף**  
"המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם" – The "ו" in the beginning of the word, "ואלה" tells us that it is adding on to something. We can explain that the Torah is adding to that which was already taught to Klal Yisroel in Marah. In Marah, Klal Yisroel were taught Halachos, and now they were being taught more Halachos.

**ואלה המשפטים 21:1 – בן איש חי**  
"אשר תשים לפניהם" – Why does the Posuk say that the Mishpatim should be, "placed" in front of Klal Yisroel, instead of saying that they should be taught to Klal Yisroel? Bava Basra 131a – "אין לו" – "A judge only has what his eyes sees." This phrase seems to be inaccurate, and it should have said that a judge only has, "מה שאזניו שומעות" – that which his ears hear. For a judge does not see anything with his eyes when adjudicating a case, rather it is what his ears hear from the litigants and witnesses with which he makes his judgment. Chazal are saying something deeper here, and that is that the judge must use his "eye" of wisdom. He must look at the case in front of him with a wise eye, so that he adjudicates the case properly, and not just rely on what he hears from the participants of the case. If the judge only judges based on what he hears, he will not rule correctly, for there is much trickery and deceit. Rather he must open his intelligent eye, and recognize what is true and what is not. If a judge were to rule that an oath must be taken based on what he heard, it could be that the one who will swear will be swearing falsely, and the theft will not be rectified. So not only did he not rectify the wrong, but he causes more evil to be perpetrated with a false oath. The judge must be wise and figure out how to get the truth so that the theft is rectified, and

a false oath is not taken. There is a story in the Sefer חולין של תלמידי חכמים about a wine merchant who had a worker who hid fifty silver coins among the barrels of wine because Shabbos was coming, and he needed a place to hide it. On Motzai Shabbos, he returned to the place where he had hidden his coins, but it was gone. He cried out bitterly, for he had just lost all the money that he had worked for years to earn. He believed that his boss was the one who stole his money, so he had his boss called to the Gaon of the city. The Gaon asked the boss if he knew anything about his worker's money, and the boss said he did not. The Gaon told the boss, "I too believe that it must have not been you – a Jew, who stole the money on Shabbos, rather it must have been a non-Jew who stole it. Being that a non-Jew went into the place where all your wine was stored, that would make all of your wine, ויין נסח, and you would need to spill all of it out. Then someone needs to be sent to the Shul to inform everyone that they are not allowed to purchase wine from you, for it is ויין נסח. When the boss heard these words, his heart died within him, for he realized that his evil act had dire ramifications to him – for now he would lose an insurmountable amount of money. The boss was compelled to admit to the Gaon that it was he who stole the money, and not a non-Jew – therefore his wine was not ויין נסח. The boss swore that he was the one who stole it. The Gaon said that it was not enough for him to swear, but he must immediately go bring the worker his pouch of money, and he did so. This Gaon used his "eye" of intellect to have the theft rectified, and for there not to be any false oaths. There are many such scenarios where the litigants and witnesses may try to deceive the judges. Chazal do not say, "אין לו לדיין אלא מה שאזניו שומעות", for if the judges only acted upon when they actually heard, there would be much ruin which would be caused by it. Rather Chazal say, "מה שאזניו שומעות" – meaning that judges must adjudicate based on what their "eyes of intellect see," that they must look deep into the hearts of the litigants and witnesses to know if the words that are coming out of their

mouths are true, or do they need to be crafty and use ingenuity to get all to say the truth, and rectify all that was wronged.

**ואלה " 21:1 - מהר"י שטייף**  
**המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם** – Rashi tells us that this Parashah of Mishpatim is adding on to what was stated in the previous Parshah. We can explain this to mean that the Torah is completing the three pillars upon which the world stands, as stated in Avos 1:1. In the previous Parshah, it states the Aseres Hadibros, which is the Amud Hatorah, and it speaks about the Mizbe'ach, which is the Amud of Avodah. Here in this Parshah, the Torah speaks about the Amud of Gemilas Chasodim, which is accomplished by the judges adjudicating cases properly. They are doing a great Chesed, by ensuring that the money that belongs to each person is retained by that person, or returned to him.

**Sukkos 32 – Shemos 3:11**  
**ויאמר משה אל האלקים מי אנכי כי אלך** – “Moshe said to Hashem: Who am I that I will be the one to go to Paroah, and that I shall take Klal Yisroel out of Mitzrayim?” Hakodosh Boruch Hu answered Moshe, **ויאמר כי אהיה עמך וזה לך**, **ואות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את העם ממצרים** – “And He said: For I shall be with you and this is your sign that I have sent you: When you take the people out of Mitzrayim, you will serve Hashem on this mountain.” What was the give and take between Moshe and Hakodosh Boruch Hu here? Moshe wanted the Geulah of Mitzrayim to be the final Geulah, and thus told Hakodosh Boruch Hu, “Who am I to go to Paroah?” Moshe understood that if the Geulah were to occur through him, the humblest man in the world, then it would not be everlasting, for the Midah of humility and lowness is only before the final Geulah, but at the final Geulah, there will be greatness and grandeur. To this Hakodosh Boruch Hu responded, **כי אהיה**, **עמך** – “For I will be with you”- meaning that what was needed here was still the Midah of humility, like Hakodosh Boruch Hu was using at this time. The sign that this was correct, and humility was needed was, **“תעבדון את האלקים על ההר הזה”**

– that Klal Yisroel was going to serve Hashem on Har Sinai, the lowest and most humble of all the mountains. This was a proof that the time had not come for the Malchus of Shomayim to be revealed to all, and therefore Moshe, the humblest man of all, was the proper choice to be the one to redeem Klal Yisroel from the Golus of Mitzrayim.

**זה יתנו – 1 – אור פניך - ברוך משה**  
**כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל בשקל** – The Medrash says that Moshe Rabbeinu had difficulty understanding what the Machatzis Hashekel looked like. Hakodosh Boruch Hu showed Moshe a coin of fire, so that Moshe would know what the Machatzis Hashekel looked like. Why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu show it to Moshe “in fire” instead of just showing him what the coin looked like? Hakodosh Boruch Hu was alluding to Moshe that it was not yet time for the glory of Hakodosh Boruch Hu to be revealed to the world. There would be destructions of holy places, like the Bais Hamikdash, and Klal Yisroel would be in Golus. Klal Yisroel would need to wander for many years until they will finally be Zoche to the third and eternal Bais Hamikdash. This is alluded to in the “coin of fire” – the fire represents the burning of the Batei Mikdoshos, and it also alludes to the final Bais Hamikdash, which Chazal tell us will be built with fire. However, until that time of Le'asid Lavo and the Malchus of Hakodosh Boruch Hu will be revealed to all, we must follow Hashem's lead and act with Shiflus and Anivus, and thus we do not give a whole Shekel – but we are humble and only give a half of a Shekel (see Atzei Chaim above).

**ואלה המשפטים " 21:1 - בן איש חי**  
**האשר תשים לפניהם** – The Posuk says that the Mishpatim shall be placed, **“לפניהם”** – because Yirah, fear, is the storehouse of wisdom. If there is no Yirah, then there is no wisdom which the judges need in order to properly adjudicate monetary cases. Shemos 20:17 **“ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פניכם”** – “So that awe of Him (Hashem) shall be upon your faces.” Why is it that the face is the storehouse – represents, the Yirah of a person? It is known that the face of a person alludes to the Shem Havayah, as the Shlah Hakodosh tells us. The eyes of the person is like the letter 'l,

and the nose is like the letter 'v. Two eyes, 20, and a nose, 6, is a total of 26, which is the Gematria of the Shem Havayah. The face also alludes to the Shem Havayah in its spelled out form with the 'ה', (spelled out, ה-ה, ו-ו, ה-ה, which is the Gematria of 52. We have the 26 from the eyes and the nose. If you take the end of the nose: 2 holes, which each one represents a 'v, and the wall in between the holes represents a 'l, you have another 26, for a total of 52. It says in the Sefer עץ חיים that the Sod of Yiras Hashem is in the Shem ב"ן of Hakodosh Boruch Hu – the fifty-two that is alluded to on the face. As it says in Mishlei 22:4 **“עקב ענוה יראת ד”** – “The result of humility is fear of Hashem.” The Posuk tells us here, **“ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם”** – **“לפניהם”** – telling us that the “face” is very important. For if one does not have Yiras Hashem that is upon one's face, then his wisdom is worthless. One needs to have Yiras Hashem in order to be a proper judge.

Now we can understand why the Torah used the Loshon of **“לפניהם”** here, regarding to the Mishpatim. **“לפניהם”** – these Halachos were to be placed on “their faces.” The face is the place which must remind us of the Yiras Shomayim that we must have. In order for one to adjudicate matters of money, or for the layman to be involved in the day to day business or affairs of this world – one must have the proper Yiras Shomayim in order to act properly. The Torah sets the guidelines and the Halachos, but it needs to be infused with a large dose of Yiras Shomayim. If one becomes arrogant and thinks he knows it all, he is sure to err. We must think about the Half of the Shekel which Klal Yisroel gave to the Mikdash. Hakodosh Boruch Hu showed Moshe the coin in fire, as a reminder that we are always to act with humility, as Hakodosh Boruch Hu does, until we are Zoche to the eternal Bais Hamikdash. We are also always to yearn for that time, for the final Geulah. This half was to show that Klal Yisroel were cognizant of the Yiras Shomayim that they must exhibit at all times, and never to become haughty. May we be Zoche to have true Yiras Hashem, and be Zoche to the Geulah Shlaima, **אמן במהרה בימינו אמן!**