

him to utilize this talent?

The Ibn Ezra's comments on this verse are perplexing. He notes that the Torah juxtaposes the verse regarding a physician needing permission to heal to the verses which discuss various types of external wounds inflicted upon a person. Therefore, he deduces that a physician may only heal external wounds; all internal maladies are in the hands of Hashem.[2] The Mateh Moshe finds the Ibn Ezra's comments unfathomable, citing numerous references in the Talmud to medical procedures and medications which were given to treat internal ailments. He therefore concludes that a physician is required to treat internal ailments and if he refrains from doing so, causing the death of his patient, he will be held responsible.[3] How do we reconcile the comments of the Ibn Ezra with the treatments mentioned in the Talmud?

To begin resolving the aforementioned difficulties, we must first reexamine the statement "nitna reshush larofeh lerapos". The dictum is generally understood to be granting permission to a physician to heal. However, an alternative definition of the word "reshush" is "domain" or "realm". The Talmud is stating that Hashem has placed the ability to heal entirely in the realm of the doctor. He is completely equipped to deal with the malady in a "derech hatevah" - natural manner; we do not view the malady or its cure as a supernatural phenomenon which requires Hashem's intervention. To this, the Ibn Ezra comments that only external ailments are completely within the realm of medical procedures, while internal ailments

Erev Shabbat Parashat Mishpatim  
Kabbalat Shabbat 6.30 pm  
Candle lighting 5/02/16 7.40 pm

Shabbat Parashat Mishpatim  
Shacharit 6/02/16 9.15 am  
Children's Service 10.00 am  
Mincha (Mizrachi) 7.27 pm  
Shabbat ends 8.37 pm

Rosh Chodesh 1 Adar 1 9/02/16  
Rosh Chodesh 2 Adar 2 10/02/16

Erev Shabbat Parashat Mishpatim  
Kabbalat Shabbat 6.30 pm  
Candle lighting 12/02/16 7.26 pm

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are not subject to clear cut medical diagnoses and cures. Although a physician must tend to internal ailments as well, these maladies require Hashem's hand to insure full recovery. Treatments offered by the Talmud for internal ailments are not completely scientific in nature and are often accompanied by amulets, incantations and the like, which supports the Ibn Ezra's assertion. 1. Bava Kama 85a 2. 21:19 3. Refuos p. 358 *Rabbi Zweig and torah.org.*

# Or Chadash

קהילת אור חדש

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

**Shabbat Parashat Mishpatim**  
27 Shvat 5776; 6 February, 2016  
**Shabbat Torah reading:** Stone Chumash  
page 416 and Haftarah page 1156.

**President** Jonathan Erlich  
**Rabbi-in-residence** Rabbi Franklin  
**Dvrei Torah** Rabbi Eisenberg

### A Thinking Judaism Rabbi Marc D. Angel

This week's Torah portion begins with G-d commanding Moses: "And these are the ordinances that you shall set before them." Rashi comments that G-d instructed Moses not to teach the Israelites by rote, but to explain the reasons for the laws. If the people had the opportunity to study the reasons behind the laws, they would more likely internalize and fulfill them.

Rashi's comments relate to "mishpatim", those ordinances that are apparent to reason and common sense. But what about "hukkim", laws whose reasons are not readily apparent? Was Moses expected to offer reasons and explanations for these ceremonial,

ritual laws? Or was he to state the commandments and have the Israelites obey them even if they did not understand the underlying reasons for them?

In his "Guide for the Perplexed," Rambam devoted serious discussion to the reasons for mitzvot. He believed that since G-d is all-wise, all of the mitzvot contain divine wisdom. G-d's commandments aim at perfecting us, inculcating proper beliefs, improving society. G-d would not issue commands in an arbitrary, irrational manner. Rambam writes disparagingly of those who view the Torah in an obscurantist way: "There is a group of human beings who consider it a grievous thing that causes should be given for any law; what would please them most is that the intellect would not find a meaning for the commandments and prohibitions (book 3, chapter 31)." He refers to the sickness



in the souls of such people, who prefer to observe commandments blindly rather than to imagine that G-d had reasons for giving these commandments. Rambam writes: "Every commandment from among these 613 commandments exists either with a view to communicating a correct opinion, or to putting an end to an unhealthy opinion, or to communicating a rule of justice, or to warding off an injustice, or to endowing men with a noble moral quality, or to warning them against an evil moral quality."

According to Rambam's approach, we need to study G-d's commandments with a view of trying to understand the divine wisdom within them. While we may not be able to penetrate to G-d's own wisdom, we will become better and more religious people by engaging in intellectual analysis and inquiry. Rambam rejects the obscurantist approach that teaches blind obedience and authoritarianism. He fosters a philosophic approach that teaches us to think, to ask, to try to find answers. Certainly, we are obligated to observe the mitzvot whether or not we ultimately understand the reasons for them; but we should study and strive and struggle to reach as deep a level of understanding as possible. This is at the root of our freedom and dignity as religious human beings. *Rabbi Marc. D. Angel and the Institute of*

*Jewish Ideas and Ideals.*

## Slavery Rabbi Berel Wein

One of the most puzzling, if not even disturbing subjects, discussed in biblical and halachic detail, appears in this week's Torah reading. That subject matter concerns itself with the institution of slavery - of literally owning another human being and defining them as human chattel. Certainly, the entire subject matter grates on the ears and sensibilities of Western citizens in our current twenty-first century.

We remember the words of Abraham Lincoln that if there is any wrong in human society, slavery is certainly that wrong. Yet, as a matter of cold hard fact and reality, slavery still exists in a large part of human society today and was certainly the norm in all human societies for many millennia. Only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did Western societies begin the slow, painful and always violent change of mindset and practice and legally abolish slavery.

Large parts of the Moslem world today still incorporate slavery as part of their social and economic fabric of life. So, we moderns ask the question, certainly to ourselves if not publicly, why does it seem that the Torah accepts and even con-

done the practice of slavery? It devotes a great deal of space and thought to regulating it, limiting it, and making it more humane and less brutal.

Yet, in the final analysis it does not speak out against the practice nor does it forbid it as being a moral and legal wrong. To the true believer, this question like all questions regarding religion and faith, has really no validity. To the nonbeliever, there never is an acceptable answer to any of one's doubts and questions regarding faith and revelation.

To many if not most of us who, though believing are nevertheless troubled by seeming moral inconsistencies and who search for Torah relevance in our everyday lives, this type of question gnaws at us.

The Talmud many centuries ago pointed out the inefficiencies and economic backwardness that slavery inflicts upon society. Its famous statement was: "One who purchases a slave to serve one's self is in reality acquiring a master over one's self." Yet, even here it is the impracticality of slavery that is being attacked and not the immorality of the institution itself.

Many of the great Torah commentators, especially of the last few centuries, have attempted to deal with this issue. They saw in it - in this Jewish attitude toward slavery - an institution that could rehabilitate the criminal, give opportunity to the helpless poor, educate the ignorant and bring the pagan to monotheistic society and its enlightened practices and attitudes.

As true and high sounding as these goals are at best, they still do not sound a ringing condemnation of the institution of slavery itself. I think that we are forced to say that

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since the Torah was given to all societies and all times - an idea emphasized by Maimonides throughout his works - the Torah, as was its wont in many cases, spoke to a current and long-lasting society that could not imagine a world where slavery should no longer exist. It regulated the institution and look forward to a time such as ours where, in most human societies, that institution would no longer exist. The Torah never commanded the acquisition of slaves. It tempered the practice, waiting for the time when it would cease to be an issue. *Rabbi Berel Wein and torah.org.*

## Eternal Medicine Rabbi Berel Wein

"...and he shall provide for healing" (21:19) The Torah records that among the compensatory damages which a person who has inflicted bodily harm on another must pay, are the medical bills. The Talmud derives from this verse that "nitna reshut larofeh lerapos" - "The Torah grants permission to a doctor to heal." [1] If Hashem has blessed a person with the power to heal, why would a verse be required to permit

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