

פרשת משפטים / Parashat Mishpatim

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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The Throne of your Heart

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 21:1-24:18
הפטרה: Jeremiah 34:8-34:22 33:25-26
הברית: Matthew 5:38-42 17:1-11
החדשה

10 In this week's reading (*Shmot / Exodus 23:20-24:18*) G-d told Moshe to tell the people *23:24 'You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces.* Today, this verse has significant implications for us in our walk before the Lord. The worship of a deity is thought of as worshipping a particular god or goddess. Frequently in history this involved the worship of an idol that was a physical representation of the particular deity one was worshipping.

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שמות 23:20-25

20 הִנֵּה אֲנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָךְ לְפָנֶיךָ לְשַׁמֵּרְךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וְלִהְבִּיאֲךָ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הִכֵּנְתִּי: הַשְּׁמֵר מִפְּנֵי וּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי
21 אַל־תִּמְרָ בּוֹ כִּי לֹא יֵשֵׁא לְפָשְׁעֵכֶם כִּי שָׁמִי בְּקִרְבִּי: כִּי אִם־שָׁמַע תִּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי וְעָשִׂיתָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר אֶדְבַר וְאִבִּיתִי אֶת־אֹיְבֶיךָ וְצָרְתִי אֶת־צָרְרֶיךָ: כִּי־יִלְךָ מִלְּאֲכִי לְפָנֶיךָ
22 וְהִבִּיאֲךָ אֶל־הָאֲמֹרִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי הַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי וְהַכְּחַדְתִּי: לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָאֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם וְלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כַּמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי הָרַם תְּהַרְסֵם וְשִׁבַר תִּשְׁבַּר מִצְבֹּתֵיהֶם: וְעִבַדְתֶּם אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּבְרַחֵם אֶת־לַחְמֶךָ וְאֶת־מִימֶיךָ וְהִסַּרְתִּי מִחֲלָה מִקִּרְבֶּךָ:

20 What does idol worship mean today and how does this apply to us? Idol worship begins in the mind with an incorrect perception of G-d. The idol worshippers in ancient times thought that one could mold an abstract representation of G-d out of brick, stone, or wood. Idols in ancient days came in many shapes and forms. Similarly, today, idols come in many forms and to worship them does not necessarily mean that one sings, dances, and bows down before and inanimate statue. The fact is that idols do come in many forms today and are not limited to the molten images which are so often mentioned in the scriptures (see *Bamidbar /*

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Shmot / Exodus 23:20-25

23:20 'Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 23:21 'Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. 23:22 'But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. 23:23 'For My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. 23:24 'You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces. 23:25 'But you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst. (NASB)

Numbers 33:52, Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:12, 27:15, Shoftim / Judges 17:3, 17:4, 18:14, 18:17, 18:18).

30 The most common form of idol worship today is performed in ones heart that includes but is not limited to personal pride, money, and possessions, etc. These forms of idol worship in the mind are called “idols of the heart” according to *Ezekiel 6:9 and 14:3-7*. This presents us with a problem. The problem with the “idols of the heart” is that one can keep it hidden. Thus, it becomes our
35 responsibility to tear down these high places so that we may come before the Lord in worship as he desires us to. G-d knows the “true intent” of our hearts. The question then is whether the “true intent” of our hearts is to serve the Lord and to live in obedience to His every command or not? In order to tear down these high places we have established in our heart we need to do some personal reflection.
40 The following list of questions may help to discern the “true intent” of your heart, take a few moments to think about each question.

Contemplative Questions

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1. What do you esteem most or what occupies your thoughts the most?
 2. Do your actions reflect your faith?
 3. What have you resolved to do most all of your life?
 4. What do you love the most?
 5. What or who do you truly trust with your life?

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 6. What do you fear the most?
 7. Where are your hopes grounded?
 8. What is the deepest desire of your heart?

The things which we desire, that occupies our thoughts and motivate our
55 intentions (what we do), what we love, who we trust our lives with, what we fear, our hopes, and our deepest desires, in these things the one we most highly value we set upon the throne of our heart. The act of personal reflection is an ongoing process since the human heart does not take neutral ground. The reason is that we were designed for worship and thus our hearts must worship something. This is
60 why the heart is such an idol factory that is consistently elevating and worshipping something other than the Lord. That is why Yeshua said in *Matthew 12:30 'He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters'* because the heart is never neutral.

According to the Torah, we are prohibited from sculpting, building, or
65 otherwise creating an image, form or likeness of a heavenly body or angelic creature whether for personal use or otherwise. One may neither buy nor sell idols, and it is also forbidden to perform maintenance work on one. The creation of these images “idols” and their veneration “idolatry” is the worship of hollow forms. It is interesting to consider that one performs maintenance on the “idol of the heart” daily. G-d told the children of Yisrael to tear down their idols and not
70 to worship their gods; He is saying that only the Lord should reign supreme in their lives. In that ancient day when G-d spoke to the people and for us today, we need to rely upon the Lord as our strength, our source, and our focus in our lives. This is why the Sheliakh (Apostle) John wrote what he did in *1 John 2:15-16*.

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1 John 2:15-16

2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. (NASB)

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To love the things of the world is synonymous with placing something or someone on the throne of our hearts. Worship begins in the heart, and thus G-d desires that we return and worship him without the high places we have established in our lives. If we replace our love for G-d with worldly things, we will be torn between worshiping the Lord and returning to the high place we have established in our heart.

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This week, take some time to evaluate your heart, examine yourself to see if your faith measures up to what you are doing, how you are living, and the decisions you are making. Make a serious effort to throw away those things which take you away from G-d and distract your heart and mind. Learn to worship G-d with all your heart, mind, and strength (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4-8*). Don't let the world dictate where your time and money is spent. If G-d is supreme in your life, do not let the things of the world move Him aside.

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The last question I have for you today is this, "do you think it is possible to place tradition upon the throne of your heart?" I believe this has application for those who place rabbinic tradition at the foremost place in their walk before G-d. It is possible to put tradition upon the throne of our hearts in place of the truthfulness, and gentleness that G-d desires for us. I am not saying all tradition is wrong, though rabbinic tradition should be scrutinized through the lenses of the Word of G-d (the Bible), the practice of certain aspects in rabbinic tradition such as the traditional liturgy and many traditional aspects of the Jewish service are fine. The problem of rabbinic tradition occurs when one places it upon the throne of their heart and as a result, uses it to disfellowship with other believers. It is sad to say that I have seen this happen time and time again. With this in mind, I would like to leave you with the following verses from *Philippians 4:4-9*. Contemplate these verses in light of this week's study on the throne of our hearts. Consider if your motivation, love, and deepest desire in your heart in any way interferes with what Sheliakh Shaul (the apostle Paul) has written. In your application of rabbinic tradition in your life, have you demonstrated a gentle spirit before all men?

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Philippians 4:4-9

4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 4:5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything

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worthy of praise, dwell on these things. 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (NASB)

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever