

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

What should be the focus in our relationship with God?

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

In order to get closer to God, we must begin with the details of everyday life. In this vein, the following was written by Rav Adin Steinsaltz on this week's Torah portion, Mishpatim:

“How can it be that we transition from the dramatic revelation on Mount Sinai in last week’s parasha to a parasha with a list of 53 mitzvot regarding mundane concerns of day-to-day living? How do we go from the Giving of the Torah to dozens of divine obligations that include proper care for a donkey and reparations owed for breaking someone’s tooth? Yet it’s precisely in such matters that God is found, and the Revelation on Mount Sinai enters everyday life. In contrast to ‘The ends justify the means’, the Torah teaches us that ‘The means justify the ends.’ Note: the Hebrew uses ‘sanctify’ as opposed to ‘justify’ in this saying.

We may no longer experience the thunder and lightning of Sinai, but we can take the spirit of what happened there and translate it into practical

actions – mitzvot – that elevate our lives at home, on the road, in the bank, and at the supermarket. Our values are expressed in how we conduct our lives on a daily basis. We don’t need to speak about these values, but simply to live them.

We are accustomed to lifting our eyes heavenward when we speak about God, but Parashat Mishpatim teaches us that He is also present in the money we spend, in the apple we eat, and in our relationship with the parking lot attendant.”

Everyone is invited to search for and find God in the details of everyday life, starting today, starting now.

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