



# The Lion's Link

Volume I • Volume 20



**TVT Senior Zachary Gayer presents one of two perspectives on this week's parsha.**



**TARBUT V'TORAH**  
Community Day School  
Founded in loving memory of  
Naomi Gelman Weiss

## Senior Divrei Torah

This week's *parsha* of *Mishpatim*, by definition, means laws. The entire *parsha* is made up of a list of religious, ethical and civil laws and the consequences for breaking them. The *parsha* strangely begins by saying *ve'eileh*, meaning "and these are the rules." (Exodus 21:1). As Rashi explains, the reason the *parsha* begins by saying "and" is to show that it is a direct continuation of the *parsha* (*Yitro*) before it, which describes God giving Moses the Ten Commandments. So, why would God separate these commandments of *Mishpatim* from the Ten Commandments, which are commonly treated as the rock of our religion? Sure, the use of the word "and" connects these laws to the Ten Commandments, but it still seems as if the Ten Commandments are separated on a pedestal. Aren't all of the laws of equal importance if they are included in the Torah?

In our present day, we are inundated with an incomprehensible number of laws. Whether these laws are from our government, or come from our own households, we are expected to follow them and are often judged by how well we are able to do so. Yet, the importance placed on specific laws in our daily lives differs greatly. As shocking as this may sound, the law my mother has set for me to clean my room plays a far more important role in my life than the

federal law that it is illegal to sell one's eye, even though the consequence for doing so would be far worse. It's all relative.

That is likely the reason that the two portions are separate. While all the laws of *Mishpatim* are important in their own right, it is the Ten Commandments that God knew would relate to everyone and could stand the test of time. While the extensive list of laws in *Mishpatim* about treatment of slaves happily don't really apply to me, the law of honoring my mother and father and not stealing or murdering relate to me – and to each of us in our daily lives. While all laws from the Torah are important in God's teachings, it just seems that the ten from last week's portion were meant as the general start for becoming a good human being.

This leads me to one final point. While the laws from the Torah give us an outline to become the best people we can be, it is only a start. I humbly challenge each of us to be ethical and implement the wisdom of our tradition in our lives and choices.

**T**his week's *parsha* of *Mishpatim* introduces fifty-three new laws. Once the laws are given to the Jews, God promises to bring the Israelites to Israel, but at the same time warns them against conforming to the lifestyles of the pagans around them. (Exodus 23:20-33). The Jews agree to abide by these laws. Following this agreement, Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the covenant (24: 1-18).

One major theme in this *Parsha* is the concept that a punishment should be equivalent to the crime: "life for life, eye for eye, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." (21:23-24). Accountability is the focus of this measure for measure.

Does a person definitely deserve to die if they commit a murder or steal? Shouldn't the punishment be decided by each individual case? Our rabbis in *Talmud* discussed in depth these issues and guided us in making ethical and legal decisions and rulings. On January 8, 2011, six people were murdered at a political rally in Tucson, Arizona. Jared Lee Loughner, the man accused of this shooting, recently pleaded not guilty to several charges relating to the shooting. We can appreciate that "eye for eye" demands the payment of money damages and not the physical body part. But we should also appreciate that under the laws of the Torah, Jared Loughner should be convicted and executed for his crimes (if found guilty). That is not a foregone conclusion, either in Rabbinic interpretation or for me.; however people should be held accountable for their actions.

Some of us seniors are already over 18 or soon will be, when American law holds us accountable for our actions. We all need to remember not the punishments for each action, but what we should do and what we should not do in our daily lives. These laws of the Torah were given to us to govern our actions, not necessarily our punishments. From this *Parshah*, we learn that we are held accountable for our actions. Do not forget the golden rule: *vehavta l'reyacha kamocho*--"you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Do to others that which you would like them to do to you.

Shabbat Shalom.



**TVT Senior Micha Goldsman presents one of two perspectives on this week's parsha.**

## CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

<b>Grade 4 &amp; 5: Havdallah</b> <a href="#">LS MPR</a>	<b>M</b>	<b>1/31</b> <b>9:30 AM</b>
<b>US Parent-Admin Coffee</b> <a href="#">US Admin Conference Room</a>	<b>W</b>	<b>2/2</b> <b>8:00 AM</b>
<b>After School Activity</b> <a href="#">Registration Deadline</a>	<b>W</b>	<b>2/2</b> <b>5:00 PM</b>
<b>Field Trip</b> Middle School Student Council	<b>TH</b>	<b>2/3</b> <b>8:00 AM</b>
<b>MS Academic Awards</b> <a href="#">US MPR</a>	<b>TH</b>	<b>2/3</b> <b>2:25 PM</b>
<b>Early Re-Enrollment</b> <a href="#">Deadline</a>	<b>F</b>	<b>2/4</b>
<b>K-5 Kabbalat Shabbat</b> Grade 2B Leads: <a href="#">LS MPR</a>	<b>F</b>	<b>2/4</b> <b>8:00 AM</b>
<b>Upper School</b> <a href="#">Winter Dance (off campus)</a>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>2/5</b> <b>8:00 PM</b>
<b>TVT Gala</b> <a href="#">Marconi Automotive Museum</a>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>2/26</b> <b>7:00 PM</b>



Congratulations to the **Middle School Basketball** teams! The boys and girls both enter the Tri-Way League Play-offs as third seed! **Varsity Girls' Soccer** is also doing well (4-0 for the season) after this week's win at Fairmont. **Varsity Boys' Soccer** is 1-3 in league play after this week's match against Southlands Christian. **Varsity Girls' Basketball** fought hard, but like **Varsity Boys' Basketball**, eventually succumbed to Avalon (35-29), remaining 2-2 in league play.



Photo by Nelson Nahum

**MS Girls' Basketball (H)** M 1/31  
PLAY-OFFS vs. Carden Hall 2:00 PM

**MS Boys' Basketball (H)** M 1/31  
PLAY-OFFS vs. Anaheim Hills 3:00 PM

**Varsity Girls' Basketball** M 1/31  
at Capo Valley Christian (A) 7:00 PM

**Varsity Boys' Soccer** T 2/1  
versus Fairmont (US Field) 3:00 PM

**Varsity Girls' Soccer** T 2/1  
versus Connelly (LS Field) 3:00 PM

**Varsity Girls' Basketball** T 2/1  
at Saddleback Christian (A) 6:00 PM

**Varsity Boys' Basketball** T 2/1  
at Saddleback Christian (A) 7:00 PM

**MS Basketball** T 2/1  
Semi-Finals TBD

**Varsity Girls' Basketball** TH 2/3  
Versus Connelly (H) 3:30 PM

**Varsity Boys' Basketball** TH 2/3  
at Eastside Christian (A) 4:30 PM

**MS Basketball** TH 2/3  
Finals TBD

**Lost and...  
FOUND!**  
**LS: Courtyard Table  
MS/US: MPR Closet**



**Frog Jumping Contest**  
Second grade science classes finished their unit on amphibians with the annual TVT Frog Jumping Contest, in which each 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class trained and entered a frog to compete. This year's winner was the 2C frog, "Supersonic", which jumped over 12 feet on successive jumps.



**Kindergarten "Spilt Milk" Project**  
While learning about the roles of an authors and illustrators, TVT Kindergarteners read [It Looked Like Spilt Milk](#) by Charles Shaw and made their own illustrations with "symmetry clouds" - putting white paint in the middle of their paper and rubbing in a circular motion. Once dry, students described what their cloud looked like from every angle. Some examples were, *spaceship, ice cream cone, tree, and a butterfly.*



**MLK - A Day ON, Not a Day Off**  
On Monday, January 17, over 50 TVT Upper School Students demonstrated their commitment to service by taking part in community programs. In the morning students and faculty spent time with the JCC Cares organization to make lunches for the SOS homeless shelter. In the afternoon a large and enthusiastic group picked onions and planted broccoli to support Second Harvest at the Incredible Edible Park. A special thanks goes to TVT parent **Robin Zwiren** who helped organize the afternoon activities—for the fifth year in a row!

**Good & Welfare:**  
It is with sadness that we announce the passing of **Candice Schnapp**, wife of **Roger** and mother of **Monica** (Class of 2010), on Wednesday, January 19, 2011. Rabbi Miller and Cantor Grant will officiate the funeral at Pacific View Memorial Park, Sunday January 30, 2011 at 11:30 AM.  
  
If you have an update for the TVT community, kindly notify:  
[icarbone@tarbut.com](mailto:icarbone@tarbut.com).