



THIS WEEK AT TEMPLE ISRAEL

February 20 to February 26

26 Shevat to 2 Adar

Parsha of the Week: Mishpatim (Ex. 21:1-24:18)

Parsha Highlights: In the midst of the dramatic Sinai revelation, follows a mundane list of *mishpatim*, or “ordinances;” that is, laws for which a logical reason may be found (as opposed to *chukim*, laws which we follow simply because G-d commanded them). The *mishpatim* include the laws of the Hebrew slave, penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault, theft, and others; and how Jewish law-courts are to be set up. We find here also the *mitzvot* (commandments) concerning the seasonal festivals and bringing produce to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem (strange, considering that, at this time, the Israelites are still wandering in the desert!); the prohibition against eating milk with meat, and G-d’s promise to bring the Israelites into the Holy Land. Once again, the Parsha ends with Moses ascending Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah from G-d.

The Pavement of Sapphire Stone

Traditional Jews believe that Moses wrote the entire Five Books which bear his name, from Genesis through Deuteronomy—that is, except the last few verses, which they opine were written by his disciple Joshua, since no prophet, not even one as great as Moses, who spoke with G-d “face to face” (metaphorically, of course) could know the day of his death. Contrariwise, it is generally acknowledged by most modern Jews that the Torah was written by many hands, and that it was finally redacted (edited) and placed in its final form in around the 9th Century by the Masorettes, a group of Bible scholars.

What fascinates me are the mythological fragments that crept into the text—mostly in Genesis, but occasionally in the other books. And here, at the end of Mishpatim, we find a most tantalizing one: a sort of heavenly picnic, wherein Moses, Aaron, and Seventy Elders of Israel ascend to the top of Mt. Sinai, where they “saw the G-d of Israel: under His feet there was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire, like the very sky for purity. Yet He did not raise His hand against them; and they ate and drank. (Ex. 24:10-11)” What a remarkable divine-human encounter! In two short verses, we find both the pleasures (and dangers) of getting too close to G-d, as well as the universal symbol of sealing the covenant: the *se’udat mitzvah*, or the “Mitzvah Meal.”

Friday, February 20

9:00 am Preschool

7:30 pm Service

5:02 pm Candle Lighting

Saturday, February 21

9:30 am Shabbat Service

5:22 pm Sundown

6:04 pm Shabbat Ends

Sunday, February 22

NO SCHOOL

FEBRUARY VACATION

Monday, February 23

6:30 pm Adult Ed Class

Tuesday, February 24

6:30 pm Adult Ed Meeting

Wednesday, February 25

NO SCHOOL

Thursday, February 26

NO PRESCHOOL

Weekly Services

Wednesdays at 5:15pm when Hebrew School is in session.

Yahrzeits

We recall with affection those who no longer walk this earth, grateful to G-d for the gift of their lives.

February 20 Joan Yudin, Sydney Parker

February 21

February 22 Anna Dinnerman, Elizabeth Stone

February 23 Albert Isselbacher, Ann Goodman, Frances Danforth

February 24 Selma Schwartz, Lillian Roberts

February 25 Jeanette Black

February 26 David Fishbein, Sophie Sandler

INFORMATION

SCHOOL VACATION 2/15 THRU 3/1 RESUMES MARCH 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Lay Led Dinner & Service Friday, February 27th: Sunday Morning Cultural Event March 1, at 11:00 am.

THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH UNTIL SUNDAY, MARCH 1ST. IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL 603-231-8073. OR ANDY KARPMAN.