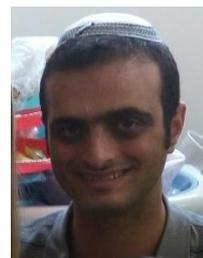


8 These are the rules that you shall set before them

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“These are the rules that you shall set before them”

This parasha follows parashat Yitro, in which Bnei Yisrael receive the Ten Commandments. According to the sequence of the parshiyot, Am Yisrael are still standing in the same assembly in which they received the commandments - the pinnacle points of our torah. Bnei Yisrael are still standing at this dramatic and awe inspiring event.

As it's name suggests, the parasha lists a long line of laws, ranging from financial and property laws, to holidays and warnings regarding the relations of man and G-d. This parasha also hints to the need of batei din - courts - which will enforce these laws.

Towards the end of the parasha moshe is commanded to write all these laws along with the commandments of parshat Yitro into the “book of the covenant” in which Am Yisrael pledge to keep the words of Hashem.

One may ask, why do all these details, including some laws which seem isoteric, belong with all the drama of receiving the awesome principles of the Ten Commandments? Does going down into minute detail not take away from the power and drama of internalizing the big picture?

Rashi explains:

“And these are the judgments: What is the connection to the former commandments (the עשרת הדברות)? They were given at Sinai! So these, too, were given at Sinai!”

If this be so, why is this section dealing with the “civil laws” placed immediately after that commanding the making of the altar? To tell you that you should seat (i. e. provide quarters for) the Sanhedrin in the vicinity of the Temple.”

Apparently Rashi is asking a similar question: it is not trivial that this parasha to be placed here, after the Ten Commandments, and the rules of building an altar (Mizbeach). But there are two reasons:

First of which - to show that also the “minute” details and laws come from Sinai.

Second of which is to teach that the sanhedrin needs to be near the holy altar. What does this mean? The literal explanation is that the sanhedrin will physically be in close proximity to the altar and the Temple Mount. But this also hints at a deeper meaning: the mikdash represents the presence of G-d and sanhedrin represent the implementation of the rules of the Torah. this comes to show that

the source of the authority of our court system is from Sinai. If we take this another step forward - we could see a two way street. Without the sanhedrin and the "dinim", the big and divine principles will remain on Sinai or in the temple, but will fail to be executed in everyday life.

"What is the connection to the former commandments (the עשרת הדברות)? They were given at Sinai! So these, too, were given at Sinai!"

Our Torah is a Torah of life, and is meant to be implemented in all elements of everyday life. Therefore, the big principles depend on being executed in even the smallest details; from the rules of damages to the customs of the holidays.

*"Moses went and repeated to the people all the commands of the LORD and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, "All the things that the LORD has commanded **we will do!**"*

In light of the above, we can see the emphasis on "**we will do**". Rather than just declare allegiance to believing in G-d or the Ten Commandments they declare "we will do".

Am Yisrael has a role in this world - which is to implement Hashem's will in this world, each and every day in each and every detail.

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