

SHABBAT GUIDE

MISHPATIM

ABOUT THE STORY OF MISHPATIM

The word *mishpatim* literally means "laws and judgments." This chapter looks at actions and their effects in this physical world. The Zohar tells us that this chapter also refers to the process of reincarnation—making us aware that the insights here teach us not only about the law of Cause and Effect in the physical world, but also about the impact of our actions in the spiritual dimension.

MICHAEL BERG ON MISHPATIM

Shabbat Mishpatim is about the Creator giving us the Light. And once it is given over, whether we take it or not is our choice, but the Creator can no longer fix this world. Only beings of this world—not angels or even the Light Itself—can fix it. So not only are we given the opportunity to own the Light and, therefore, receive the protection that comes with that, but we also receive this tremendous responsibility to do something that cannot be done by the Creator or the angels. We have to take control of this Light, and through that, fix this world.

The Creator is giving over His essence, and that is what this Shabbat is about: the concept of the giving of the Torah, which is a giving over of the Creator's essence. And because the Creator has given His essence over to us, the Creator can no longer fix this world; only we can.

What was given to us at Sinai, what was given to our world in what is called the Torah, and through the Zohar, is the essence of the Light that the Creator has cut away for us. The Creator put it there, and it is here for us to take. This is why the angels were so scared. They asked the Creator, "Are You sure about this? Are you sure You want to send Your Light down into the world in a way that is not retrievable by us, or You? We cannot fix it anymore once you make this

choice." And the Creator says, "Yes. It might take a while, but there will come a time in human history where enough people understand that we have sent down into the world the essence of the Light. Nobody else can touch it except humans. Humans who understand this, and make it their focus of their lives to own this Light, can use that Light to fix the world."

It is a very important shift in how we see our spiritual work and the responsibility that comes with it. And on Shabbat Mishpatim, we have both the gift of being able to refocus our spiritual work around this understanding, and of being able to take this essence of the Light that was given over to us and fix this world.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The upcoming portion of Terumah impresses on us the importance of understanding that the physical world is an illusion. No one is going to change the world for us; we have to come to that change in consciousness and then make the changes we want to see. This week, try shifting your consciousness to that of the spiritual realm—the world of truth.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.