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Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov 2 days ago 3 min read

Make it last

We all have those moments when we feel inspired. It's like a light goes on inside us, and we feel connected to something bigger. But as we know, inspiration doesn't last on its own. What we do after that spark is what really counts.

This idea shows up in the story of the Torah being given to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. If you read the Torah's description of the events closely, you'll notice something interesting: the story of Sinai is split across two portions, Yitro and Mishpatim. It's not just one big event lumped together. That's because there are two sides to this story—G-d's side and our side.

In the first portion, Yitro, it's all about G-d showing up in this jaw-dropping way. Thunder, lightning, the mountain shaking, and so on. G-d literally comes down to meet the Jewish people and gives them the Ten Commandments. It's the kind of moment you'd never forget.

But as amazing as it was, it didn't last. That overwhelming feeling of awe and connection—it was like July 4th fireworks. Beautiful, but gone in a flash.

Then comes Mishpatim, where many of the Torah's laws are laid out for us in detail. This part isn't as flashy. It's about what the Jewish people did in response. They said, "We'll do, and we'll hear," basically signing on the dotted line to live by the Torah. They made a commitment—not because they were still swept up in the drama of Sinai, but because they decided this was worth sticking with for the long haul.

This part of the story, the part where they took action, is what lasted. Because when you put in the work, it becomes real. Inspiration is great, but it's what you build on top of it that makes a difference.

Practically speaking, think about a time when you felt inspired—maybe during the High Holidays, a meaningful Shabbat service, or even just a moment of clarity during a tough time. That feeling is like G-d coming down to you. It's powerful, and it gives you a sense of direction.

But what happens next? If you don't do anything with it, it fades. That's where Mishpatim comes in. It's the reminder that we have to step up and turn that inspiration into action.

This could look like committing to a small change—lighting Shabbat candles, calling someone you've been meaning to reconnect with, or setting aside time to study Torah. It doesn't have to be huge, but it has to be real.

The Jewish people's commitment at Sinai wasn't about being perfect right away. It was about saying, "We're in this for the long haul." That's why the Torah follows Mishpatim, in next week's portion, with the instructions to build the Mishkan, the portable sanctuary.

The Mishkan wasn't built by miracles. It was built by people. They gathered materials, they worked with their hands, and they made something beautiful. It was their effort that made it special—and it became a permanent home for G-d's presence.

That's the lesson for us. The big, awe-inspiring moments in life are just the starting point. The real magic happens when we take that spark and build something lasting with it.

So, what's your "Mishpatim" moment? Maybe you've been feeling inspired to make a change, reconnect with your faith, or invest more in your relationships. Don't let that feeling slip away. Start small, but start somewhere.

It could be as simple as saying, “This week, I’m going to do one thing to bring more kindness, connection, or meaning into my life.” The important part is showing up and taking action.

The story of Sinai isn’t just about what G-d gave us. It’s about what we gave back—our commitment to grow and to make the world a little better. Let’s take the inspiration we feel and turn it into something real. That’s how we make it last.

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