

GO UP, MOSES

MISHPATIM

Exodus 21:1-24:18

Cast of Characters

Narrator #1

Narrator #2

Moses

Aaron

Israelite #1

Israelite #2

Israelite #3

Nadab

Abihu

Joshua

Hur

NARRATOR #1: In last week's parashah, Yitro, Moses read the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel. They promised to obey them.

NARRATOR #2: While Moses was on Mount Sinai, he received lots of other laws from God as well.

NARRATOR #1: The Israelites would have to accept these laws, too, if they wished to be chosen as the people of God.

NARRATOR #2: And so Moses knew it was very important to bring these laws to the people.

(Moses and Aaron enter.)

MOSES: Well, Aaron. This is a very big day.

AARON: It's your birthday?

MOSES: No! This is the day I do as God commanded, and bring God's laws to the people of Israel. When I am through, I will ask them if they accept the covenant.

AARON: What happens if they accept the covenant?

MOSES: They will be a great nation, and God will destroy their enemies.

AARON: What happens if they don't accept it?

MOSES: They will not be a great nation and their enemies will destroy them.

AARON: Something tells me they'll accept it.

MOSES: But you don't understand . . . there are a lot of laws. They're all written in the Book of the Covenant.

AARON: How many laws can there be?

(Moses takes out a huge book and places it before Aaron.)

AARON: That's a lot of laws. I hope they will listen to them . . . and follow them.

MOSES: We shall see.

(Moses and Aaron exit. Three Israelites enter, along with Hadab, Abihu, Joshua, and Hur.)

ISRAELITE #1: Hey, are you here to listen to Moses read the Book of the Covenant?

ISRAELITE #2: Yeah. I hear it's really long. Will there be an intermission?

ISRAELITE #3: I doubt it. I bought along a bag of manna.

ISRAELITE #1: You were smart to bring your own manna. The vendors charge so much at these events.

ISRAELITE #2: I probably won't be able to eat anyway. Remember before we heard the Ten Big Ones . . . and there was all that thunder and lightening. It was really awesome!

ISRAELITE #3: Ten big ones? What are you talking about?

ISRAELITE #2: You know — thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal . . .

ISRAELITE #3: Oh, you mean the top ten greatest laws.

ISRAELITE #1: I don't know about you, but I think they should be called the Ten Commandments. That's much stronger.

ISRAELITE #2: But it's not catchy. It'll never stick!

ISRAELITE #1: I wish Moses would start already. This could go on a long time.

ISRAELITE #3: We already heard the important stuff. How many more laws could there be?

(Moses and Aaron return. Moses shows the people a large book.)

ISRAELITE #3: I shouldn't have asked!

NARRATOR #1: And Moses read the laws to the people.

(During this, Moses pantomimes reading the laws. The three Israelites and Nadab, Abihu, Joshua, and Hur pantomime reactions.)

NARRATOR #2: There were laws to make sure that servants were treated well . . .

NARRATOR #1: There were laws about what to do when someone hurt someone . . .

NARRATOR #2: And there were laws about what to do when someone killed someone by accident . . .

ISRAELITE #1: *(Getting up.)* That's very nice. Let's go now.

ISRAELITE #2: *(Pulls him down.)* Wait, there's more!

NARRATOR #1: There were laws about what to do when a person injured a beast . . .

NARRATOR #2: And there were laws about what to do when a beast injured a person!

NARRATOR #1: There were laws about how to do business, how to be kind to the poor . . . even laws about how to be kind to your enemy!

NARRATOR #2: There were laws about Shabbat and what was kosher . . .

NARRATOR #1: And of course there were laws about respecting and loving God.

ISRAELITE #1: Are you getting all this?

ISRAELITE #2: I'm taking notes!

ISRAELITE #3: I hope there isn't a test!

MOSES: Now I am finished. These are God's laws. If you obey them, God will make you a great nation. Will you accept them?

ISRAELITES #1, #2, and #3: All the words which God has spoken — Na'aseh v'nishma — we will do and we will listen!

AARON: Don't they have it backwards, Moses? Won't they have to *listen* before they *do*?

MOSES: The people love God so much, they are saying that they will do whatever God asks of them. And then they will study it and think about it. (*To the people.*) Most of you can go now. But the following must stay with Aaron and me — Nadab, Abihu, Joshua, and Hur.

(*Nadab, Abihu, Joshua, and Hur come forward.*)

MOSES: And 70 elders . . .

ISRAELITE #1: The elders have all the fun!

(*Israelites #1, #2, and #3 exit.*)

HUR: Excuse me. Do you think we can fit 70 elders on the stage?

MOSES: (*Points at audience.*) They will be the elders.

JOSHUA: (*Looking out.*) Yeah . . . some of them are elder, all right!

ABIHU: Well, Moses. What do you want us to do?

MOSES: Come with me to the foot of Mount Sinai.

NADAB: (*Frightened.*) You don't want us to go up there with you, do you?

ABIHU: It's kind of cloudy up there . . . and I'm not so good at mountain climbing.

MOSES: No, you just need to stay here with me. You will see something holy and incredible.

NARRATOR #2: And they all saw a vision of God . . . and felt God's presence.

MOSES: Now, Joshua, you will go with me higher up on the mountain.

JOSHUA: Do I get to go up to the top of the mountain? I can, you know. I'm young, I'm brave, and I take karate!

MOSES: No . . . I go up there alone. And there God promised to give me two tablets . . .

HUR: You have a headache?

MOSES: Two tablets of stone . . . on which God will inscribe God's laws.

ABIHU: And Moses, while you are gone, who will judge the people if there are arguments?

ALL: (*Raising hands.*) Pick me! Pick me! Ooo, ooo, pick me!

MOSES: Aaron will be one.

NADAB: Of course. He always picks his brother.

MOSES: What was that?

NADAB: I said of course . . . he's smarter than any other!

MOSES: And the other judge will be Hur.

ABIHU: Her? There are no girls here.

HUR: He means me! My name is Hur!

JOSHUA: Is it short for Hurricane?

AARON: Is your nickname Hurry?

MOSES: Enough! Now, Joshua, lead me to the mountain!

NARRATOR #1: And Moses went to the base of the mountain, where he stayed six days while a large cloud covered the mountain. On the seventh day, God called to Moses out of the cloud.

NARRATOR #2: And the appearance of God was like a fire devouring the mountain.

NARRATOR #1: And Moses entered the cloud and went up the mountain.

NARRATOR #2: And stayed there 40 days . . . and 40 nights.

NARRATOR #1: And when he came down . . .

NARRATOR #2: Shh! We'll need to stay tuned because . . . that's the end of Parashat Mishpatim!