

Good Shabbos Everyone. This week's Torah portion Mishpatim describes some of the basic mitzvahs dealing with commerce and the laws of civil litigation and damages. As in all other Legal systems, (most of which are based on Jewish Law) the Dayan or Rabbinic Judge is an integral part of the judicial process. In Judaism however, the role of the judge carries with it even more weight than in secular legal systems. Specifically, the Sages tell us that by deciding the law in this world, the Dayan - Jewish judge can actually influence the spiritual worlds above. The following narrative illustrates this and other inspirational concepts:

"The wedding of my uncle, Rabbi Chaim Raitport, to Milka Sudakevitch was scheduled to take place in Kfar Chabad, a village near Tel Aviv, Israel, in the winter of 1991, on the 23rd of Shevat, 5751.

A few weeks before the wedding, the war between America and Iraq broke out, a war that was later known as Operation Desert Storm. Everyone was concerned: Should the entire family go the wedding in Israel or not?

My grandfather, Rav Yitzchok Raitport, my father and my uncle Chaim went together to 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn on Sunday, the 9th of Shevat, where they waited in line to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe to ask for his blessing and to receive a dollar from his hand (later to be exchanged and distributed to charity). Many more people than usual were there that day, because that night began the yahrzeit of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and the 40th anniversary of the crowning of his son-in-law as his successor.

When it was my grandfather's turn, one of the Rebbe's attendants informed the Rebbe that they would be celebrating a wedding in two weeks in Israel. The Rebbe asked my grandfather if everyone in the family was going.

My grandfather replied that he did not know what to do considering the war situation and the bombings in Israel: should they postpone the wedding, move the wedding to America, or minimize the number of people going to the wedding, i.e., just my grandfather, the groom and my father.

The Rebbe looked at my grandfather and said, "You are a Rav [one who decides Jewish law] who can pasken dinim [rule in matters of Jewish law]! If you will not go, then you are ruling that the Land of Israel is a dangerous place. And if you will travel, it means that you are ruling that the Land of Israel is not in danger. You should travel--men, women and children--and I say to you that all will be good and nothing bad will happen. Everybody from the surrounding villages should come to the wedding and the wedding should be made publicly and with much simcha [joy], as nothing will go wrong. The wedding shall take place in a good and auspicious time."

Armed with the Rebbe's blessing, my uncle, father and the entire family went to Israel. The blessing became public and was even broadcast on the radio all over Israel, giving the Jewish people in our Holy Land much needed strength and assurance in those frightening times of sealed rooms, gas masks and threatened chemical warfare.

Although they had been urged to start the wedding earlier and cut the festivities short so that people could return home before dark, the wedding took place as scheduled, at 7:00 p.m. (well, 7:14 pm to be precise, which in Chabad circles is like being on time or even early! - ed.) The ceremony was held in the large area in front of the main synagogue in Kfar Chabad.

The celebrations and dancing lasted until 11:30. The wedding hall was filled to overflowing. My father was curious about who many of the guests were, as neither our side of the family nor the bride's side recognized them. When my father asked a number of people what brought them to the wedding, they explained that the Rebbe's blessing was broadcast on the radio encouraging people from surrounding villages to come, so they came!

After the wedding was over, my father and some other family members were waiting outside to go back to their hotel in Jerusalem when the local guard pulled up. With him was a soldier who had just come off duty from the Patriot Anti-Missile Battery right near Kfar Chabad. The soldier asked them what time the chupah had taken place.

When they told him "7:14 p.m." he said, "The Rebbe is watching over you." He explained that earlier that evening three American F16s were flying a night mission over Western Iraq when they saw three mobile SCUD missile launchers preparing to fire into Israel. The planes took out the SCUD missile launchers with bombs. According to the army logs the time the bombs were dropped was 7:14 p.m!" (From Reb Yerachmiel Tilles, Ascent)

By consulting with competent Rabbis and Rebbes we can all merit to see the wisdom of the Sages "in-action;" namely, that whatever a Rav decides in this world can influence the spiritual worlds above. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**