

PARASHAT HASHAVUA

PARASHAT TERUMA

Why Does Parashat Mishpatim Precede the Parashiyot of the Mishkan?¹

By Rav Yoel Bin-Nun

The *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan*, the sacrifices, and purity occupy a central place in the Torah in the second half of the book of *Shemot* and in the first half of the book of *Vayikra* (and in the beginning of the book of *Bamidbar*). We are left with the impression that the sacrificial service and the laws of purity stand at the center of the Torah's universe, and that without them we would have no complete Torah at all.

However, the words of the Prophets, from *Shemuel* to *Yirmeyahu*, as well as the psalms of *Tehillim*, leave us with an entirely different impression, according to which it is only those who are morally worthy to "ascend the mountain of God and dwell in His holy mountain" whom He desires. God has no desire for sacrifices; He has no need for offerings, and the sacrifices brought by people who are morally unworthy are certainly a sacrifice, causing the *Shekhina* to depart from Israel.

On the superficial level, there appears to be a profound gap between the Torah's commandments and the morality of the Prophets and *Tehillim* regarding the perspective on the Temple. From this gap it would appear that while the Torah mourns the terrible void created by the absence of the Temple since its destruction, the morality of the Prophets and *Tehillim* prefers a Temple in ruins to a Temple that is defiled by moral corruption.

However, an in-depth study of *Parashat Mishpatim*, and especially the absolute law that constitutes an essential introduction to the *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan*, reveals a different meaning. The prohibitions of false reports, assisting the wicked, bribery, and perversion of justice are **prerequisites**. Only a community that passes the moral test of *Parashat Mishpatim* is worthy of ascending to the holy and having the verse fulfilled in them: "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (*Shemot* 25:8).

The covenant of the exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Mount Sinai as a whole are prerequisites for entering the Land of Israel, but **the commandments of justice and righteousness are preconditions for ascending to the Holy and the Temple.**

According to this reading, there is no gap between the Torah and the morality of the Prophets and *Tehillim*. In any case it must be clear to all believers that this is the way the Prophets read the Torah; this is the way they interpreted its morality and principles.² **Standing before the Lord in the holy Temple is a**

wondrous privilege for the deserving, while justice and law and morality are the pillars upon which the Temple stands, and without which it cannot exist.

We will present below the verses of the "absolute law" from *Parashat Mishpatim*, based on the understanding that they represent the pillars, and that only upon them can the holy Temple stand. We will then present the verses of the Prophets and *Tehillim*, as an obvious and expected continuation, to prove to the reader that this is the way to understand the order of the Torah with regard to the transition from *Parashat Mishpatim* to the *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan*.

Ostensibly, there is room for this interpretation primarily according to the approach adopted by Rashi, that the *mitzvot* connected to the building of the *Mishkan* were given to Moshe only after the sin of the Golden Calf. According to Rashi's approach, the order of the Torah – in which the *parashiyot* of the *Mishkan* immediately follow *Parashat Mishpatim*, before the recording of the sin – requires explanation. Reading *Parashat Mishpatim* as a fundamental condition for the *Mishkan* and the Holy provides an explanation for the order of the *parashiyot*.

In contrast, according to the Rashbam, the Ibn Ezra and the Ramban, the order of the Torah reflects the actual order of occurrence of the events, and so it would seem that no further explanation is necessary. But upon closer examination, it is clear that order of occurrence in actual reality can also be meaningful. The explanation presented here attributes meaning to the order of the *parashiyot* and the events that corresponds to the words of the Prophets and *Tehillim*.

1) The Absolute Law in the Torah (22:20-26, 23:1-10) as a precondition for the *Mishkan*:

And a stranger shall you not wrong, neither shall you oppress him; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way – for if they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry – My wrath shall wax hot...

If you lend money to any of My people, even to the poor with you, you shall not be to him as a creditor; neither shall you lay upon him interest.

If you at all take your neighbor's garment to pledge, you shall restore it to him by that the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin; wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he cries to Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

You shall not receive a false report; put not your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shall you bear witness in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to pervert justice; neither shall you favor a poor man in his cause...

You shall not wrest the judgment of your poor in his cause.

Keep you far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay you not; for I will not justify the wicked.

And you shall take no gift; for a gift blinds them that have sight and perverts the words of the righteous.

And a stranger shall you not oppress; for you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

¹ Adapted from *Mikra'ot Le-Parashat Mishpatim*, pp. 575-583.

² This contradiction between the "priestly" laws and the morality of the Prophets was a cornerstone of the approach of critical biblical scholars (see, for example, n. 3 below). However, the reading proposed here of *Parashiyot Yitro-Mishpatim* as a prerequisite for the *Mishkan* demonstrates that there is really no contradiction, and one of the central arguments of the critical approach disappears.

2) Verses in the books of the Prophets concerning the relationship between "the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice" (*Bereishit* 18:19) and the Temple and the holy service:

And Shemuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in hearkening to the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." (I *Shemuel* 15:22)

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? says the Lord; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; it is an offering of abomination to Me; new moon and Sabbath, the holding of convocations – I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly... When you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow... (*Yeshayahu* 1:11-17)

Yeshayahu objects not only to the sacrifices and the incense, but also to prayers, the spreading of hands, and even the Sabbath and festivals. The worship of God is desirable and worthy only after evil is removed and justice is sought, especially for the helpless, such as the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. This view is consistent with the wording of the Torah in *Parashat Mishpatim*, "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child" (*Shemot* 22:21), and with the warning how God will intervene and punish those who afflict them, which appears immediately afterwards. Thus, the words of Yeshayahu can be read as a prophetic exposition of the Torah's verses.

This is true even more forcefully in the continuation:

How is the faithful city become a harlot! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Your silver is become dross, your wine mixed with water. Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes and follows after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come to them... And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as at the beginning; afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and they that return of her with righteousness. (*Yeshayahu* 1:21-27)

Yeshayahu prophesies about Yehuda and Jerusalem, while Hoshea and Amos, at the very same time,³ say similar things about the Kingdom of Israel (Shomron), especially about the bloody road between Shechem and the Gil'ad:

For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against Me. Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity; it is covered with footprints of blood... they murder in the way toward Shechem; they commit enormity. (*Hoshea* 6:6-9)

³ See my book, co-authored with R. Binyamin Lau, *Yeshayahu: Ke-Tziporim Afot* (Tel-Aviv, 2013), pp. 74-83; 279-284.

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burnt-offerings and your meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take you away from Me the noise of your songs, and let Me not hear the melody of your psalteries. But let justice well up as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream. Did you bring to Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? (*Amos* 5:21-25)

Biblical scholars maintained that Amos was not familiar with the Torah passages dealing with the sacrifices in the wilderness.⁴ However, upon closer examination of the Torah, we find that the ordinary sacrifices and meal-offerings are offerings that depended on entering "the land of your habitations" (*Bamidbar* 15:1-16) and on the meal-offerings and libations that accompanied them. Only about the daily burnt-offering (as a fixed sacrifice) is it stated, "which was offered at Mount Sinai" (*Bamidbar* 28:6; *Shemot* 29:35-42).

Amos was precise in his reading of the Torah and regarding the order of the *parashiyot*.⁵ Israel's public assemblies on the festivals contradicted the word of God, **since justice and righteousness are preconditions** for such assemblies. The forty years in the wilderness were primarily dedicated to the building of the foundation of justice and righteousness upon which the *Mishkan-Mikdash* could be built. This is exactly what Yeshayahu and Mikha say later about Jerusalem:

Hear this, I pray you, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. (*Mikha* 3:9-12)

Mikha continues along the lines of Yeshayahu⁶ and further sharpens the message by conditioning the continued existence of the Temple on the doing of justice and righteousness, while "bribery" in judgment (explicitly mentioned in *Mishpatim*) will bring calamity and even destruction. Indeed, Yirmeyahu (26:17-19) reports about the repentance of King Chizkiyahu and the people of Yehuda, which prevented the destruction of the Temple in their days.

⁴ As was summarized by M. Horn, *Encyclopedia Mikra'it*, vol. 6 (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 284-285.

⁵ So writes the Ibn Ezra (based on the verse in *Amos* in his long commentary to *Shemot* 29:42: "It seems reasonable to say that Israel offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices only at Sinai, and on Yom Kippur of the second year (where it says, 'And he did'; *Vayikra* 16:34)... For the people of Israel were in the desolate wilderness for about thirty eight years; from where then could they have procured every day a half-hin of olive oil, and also wine? Could they have taken with them about 14,000 hin? And from where did they have two one-year old sheep every day, and more on Shabbat and the festivals?" The Malbim in his commentary to *Amos* (5:25) adds to the words of the prophet: "At the time that they were in the wilderness for forty years, they did not have many animals for sacrifices and wine for libations, and the essence of their service was doing justice and righteousness."

⁶ Regarding the relationship between the prophecies of Yeshayahu and Mikha, see my book (co-authored with Rav Binyamin Lau), *Yeshayahu: Ke-Tziporim Afot* (Tel-Aviv, 2013), pp. 291-312.

In another prophecy, Mikha presents "what is good" in the eyes of God, and here he exposes an important gap between the sacrifices in the Torah, which are always few in number, and the sacrifices brought by the kings of the house of David, and especially by Shelomo, who brought thousands of sacrifices. There is no mention of "thousands of rams" among the sacrifices described in the Torah. About this *Chaza* said: "For a day in your court is better than a thousand" (*Tehillim* 84:11) – One day that you [David] sit and study Torah is better than the thousand burnt-offerings that your son Shelomo will one day offer before Me on the altar" (*Shabbat* 30a).

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?... It has been told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. (*Mikha* 6:6-8)

Yirmeyahu, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, brings these prophecies to a climax:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust you not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. But if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if you oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever. (*Yirmeyahu* 7:3-7)

Yirmeyahu uses the phrase, "I will cause you to dwell (*va-ashakna*, from which the word *Mishkan* is derived) in this place," along with the repeated call, "the temple of the Lord," which he puts in the mouths of those who trust in a Temple that is not connected to justice and righteousness. Thus, we see once again how the prophet expounds the connection between the laws of justice in the Torah "between a man and his neighbor" and the *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash*, "the temple of the Lord" – as a prerequisite.

Yirmeyahu continues with the clear wording of the Ten Commandments, saying that when the people transgressed those prohibitions, the Temple turned into "den of robbers":

Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you have not known, and come and stand before Me in this house, whereupon My name is called, and say, "We are delivered," that you may do all these abominations? Is this house, whereupon My name is called, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, says the Lord. (*Yirmeyahu* 7:9-11)

In the continuation of the chapter – following the suggestion to those who offer burnt-offerings even though they were not fit to stand before God, that they eat the meat of the burnt-offerings together with the other sacrifices (because God does not desire them) – Yirmeyahu comes to his main point: At the beginning of Israel's journey after the exodus from Egypt, they were not commanded to offer sacrifices, but rather to distance themselves from idol worship and hearken to the voice of God, as

is emphasized in the Ten Commandments, in the ordinances of *Mishpatim*, and in the laws for a holy nation:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, and eat you meat. For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying: Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk you in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. (*Yirmeyahu* 7:21-23)

The phrase, "the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt," appears twice more in the book of *Yirmeyahu*⁷ – in the words of the covenant (11:4), which were apparently uttered at the time of the covenant made with Yoshiyahu in the eighteenth year of his reign,⁸ and also in relation to the release of the slaves in the days of Tzidkiyahu (34:13), a release that failed. The reference there is explicitly to the covenant at Sinai, where the people of Israel accepted upon themselves to hearken to the voice of God and be His people, and together with that the passage dealing with the freeing of slaves at the beginning of *Parashat Mishpatim*. The covenant of the exodus from Egypt is the foundation, and at its center stand the Ten Commandments with the laws of a holy nation. All the *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash*, together with the laws of the sacrifices and of purity, are built on these foundations. It is clear that this is the way that Yirmeyahu understands the order of the Torah, with *Yitro-Mishpatim* coming before the *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan*.

Zekharya (at the beginning of the Second Temple period) repeats these ideas, saying that God does not need the fast days (*Zekharya* 7:5-6), just as He has no need for the sacrifices; we fast not because of the destruction, but for the reasons that caused it.⁹ Therefore, it is not enough to build a second Temple. Rather, we must deal with the reasons for the destruction:

Thus has the Lord of hosts spoken, saying: Execute true judgment and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart. (*Zekharya* 7:9-10)

Zekharya goes beyond the words of his predecessors, demanding not only that one do no harm to others, and especially to the helpless, but that one also not think evil in his heart, because evil thought can easily turn into wicked action. This is certainly a moral-prophetic requirement that goes beyond the law, as it is impossible to judge evil thoughts in a human court. Zekharya summarizes the prophetic morality that underlies the rebuilding of the Temple, using the phrase, "These are the things," familiar to us from the covenant of Sinai:

These are the things that you shall do: Speak you every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false

⁷ My thanks to R. Shaul Barukhi for pointing out the parallels between the three prophecies in *Yirmeyahu* containing the phrase, "the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

⁸ See II *Melakhim* 23; the wording at the beginning of *Yirmeyahu* 11, which differs from his usual style, is precisely the wording of "the words of the covenant" in the book of *Devarim*.

⁹ See my article regarding Zekharya's prophecy, "*Divrei Ha-Tzomot*," on my website.

oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord... Therefore, love you truth and peace. (8:16-19)

It is clear that the words of the prophets are consistent with the words of the Torah, provided that the Torah is read as it was read by the prophets. The covenant of Sinai with the Ten Commandments, together with the laws and the ordinances, are the foundation and prerequisite for the resting of the *Shekhina* in the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash*.

3) This message is also apparent in the psalms of *Tehillim* that address the issue of who is worthy of ascending to a holy place, most importantly *Tehillim* 15:

A Psalm of David. Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell upon Your holy mountain? He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart; That has no slander upon his tongue, nor does evil to his fellow, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors them that fear the lord; he that swears to his own hurt, and changes not; He that puts not out his money on interest, nor takes a bribe against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved.

The words of the psalm correspond to the words of the prophets. The difference is that the prophets spoke reproach, while the psalm extols the servant of God who is worthy of dwelling on His holy mountain. The great novelty is in the transition from the prophetic collective to the psalmist individual. The individual who always "walks uprightly" in the way he conducts his life, "works righteousness" in his actions, "and speaks truth" not only in his mouth but also in "his heart" and in his distancing himself from the negative. He is careful not to slander with his tongue, does no evil to his fellow, watches over righteousness, and takes up no reproach against his neighbor, thus preserving the truth in his heart.

The use of terms such as "interest," "bribe," and "innocent" proves the connection to the prohibitions in *Parashat Mishpatim*. Similarly the phrase, "who shall dwell upon Your holy mountain" is undoubtedly connected to the Torah's wording: "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (*Shemot* 25:8).

A similar, abridged formulation is found at the beginning of *Tehillim* 24:

Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not taken My name in vain, and has not sworn deceitfully.

Here, too, the positive virtues correspond to the avoidance of evil, and the acts of the hands to the purity of the heart. Here, too, we find expressions that derive from *Parashiyot Yitro-Mishpatim*, such as, "You shall not take (*tisa*) the name of the Lord your God in vain (*shav*)," together with "You shall not utter (*tisa*) a false (*shav*) report." The servant of God who is worthy of ascending His holy mountain is he "who has not taken (*nasa*) My name in vain (*shav*)," and especially not with an oath. In order to ascend the mountain of God, one must be worthy. The way to be worthy is through the uprightness, justice, and righteousness of *Parashiyot Yitro-Mishpatim*.

An even sharper language that is similar to the wording of the prophets is found in the psalm of Assaf (*Tehillim* 50), with its emphasis on the "I" that opens the Ten Commandments as a warning:

Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against you: God, your God, am I.

I will not reprove you for your sacrifices, and your burnt-offerings are continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he-goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills... If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof...

Offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay your vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall honor Me.

But to the wicked God says: What have you to do to declare My statutes, and that you have taken My covenant in your mouth? Seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you. When you saw a thief, you had company with him, and with adulterers was your portion. You have let loose your mouth for evil and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son.

These things have you done...

Who offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him that orders his way aright will I show the salvation of God. (50:7-23)

God does not need sacrifices, nor does He need fasts or prayers. The service of God is intended to elevate us, and it is a great privilege for those who are worthy of it. Yirmeyahu (7:21) said (mockingly) about those who are not worthy of sacrificing burnt-offerings that they can eat the meat of the burnt-offering together with that of other sacrifices.

The psalmist Assaf also says that it is fitting for the true servant of God to bring a thanksgiving-offering (which is eaten by the person who brings it!) based on gratitude, but he should not bring burnt-offerings based on the mistaken belief that God needs them. One who hates instruction has nothing to look for in the covenant of God or in His laws. One who knows how to show respect and show gratitude will be rewarded with "the salvation of God."

4) In complete accordance with the words of the prophets, the *gemara* (*Makkot* 23b - 24a) says the following about the 613 commandments and the fundamental pillars upon which they stand:

R. Simlai expounded: Six hundred and thirteen precepts were communicated to Moshe...

David came and stood them on eleven – (*Tehillim* 15)¹⁰...

Yeshaya came and stood them on six [principles], as it is written: "He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly, He that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hand from holding of bribes, that stops his ear from hearing of blood and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given, his waters shall be sure" (*Yeshayahu* 33:15-16).

Mikha came and stood them on three [principles], as it is written: "It has been told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord does require of you: only to do justly, and

¹⁰ The Talmudic passage cites the entire psalm, together with various midrashic expositions.

to love mercy and to walk humbly before your God" (*Mikha* 6:8).

Again came Yeshayahu and stood them on two [principles], as it is stated: "Thus says the Lord, Keep you justice and do righteousness" (*Yeshayahu* 56:1).

Amos came and stood them on one [principle], as it is stated: "For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek you Me¹¹ and live" (*Amos* 5:4).

But it is Chabakuk who came and stood them all on one [principle], as it is stated: "But the righteous shall live by his faith (*be-emunato*)"¹² (*Chabakuk* 2:4).

According to the simple understanding, the expression "and stood them" means that the edifice of the 613 *mitzvot* stand on pillars firmly set in stone: "His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks" (*Yeshayahu* 33:16). These pillars are the pillars of justice and righteousness and lovingkindness and uprightness, upon which the entire edifice of the *mitzvot* stands. The metaphor of a magnificent structure standing on pillars firmly cast in stone also accounts for the different numbers of pillars. One who designs the skeleton of a building must know how to calculate and stand the structure, sometimes on eleven pillars, or with a different calculation on six or three or even one pillar, if it has enough steel and concrete equal to eleven pillars.

According to this understanding, the Talmudic passage is in complete accordance with the words of the Prophets and the psalms of *Tehillim*, and also with the Torah, in which the Ten Commandments and *Parashat Mishpatim* are the foundations, and only upon them will the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash* stand.

In contrast, according to the *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot* of the Rambam and later works, all 613 *mitzvot* are of equal value (as a matter of principle and for educational purposes), it being impossible to distinguish between foundations and pillars and the structure itself. This understanding of the *mitzvot* as being equal in value makes it impossible to read the order of the Torah in accordance with the words of the Prophets and *Tehillim*, or even in accordance with the Talmudic passage itself, from which the idea of 613 *mitzvot* is derived.

The order of the Torah portions, with *Yitro* and *Mishpatim* coming before the *parashiyot* dealing with the *Mishkan*, together with the morality of the Prophets and *Tehillim* and the Talmudic passage concerning the 613 *mitzvot* that stand on the pillars of justice and righteousness, all accord with the word of God who is one and whose name is one.

Translated by David Strauss

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¹¹ In the words of Amos himself, the seeking seems to refer to giving priority to justice and morality, but according to the *gemara's* understanding, it might refer to the Torah's *mitzvot* as a whole.

¹² In medieval Hebrew (from the time of R. Saadya Gaon and on), *emuna* means cleaving to God and His Torah in thought and in action. But in Biblical Hebrew, and even in Rabbinic Hebrew, it means "uprightness": "A God of uprightness and without iniquity" (*Devarim* 32:4). See my article, "*Emuna el mul Hafakheha*," *Al Ha-Emuna* (Jerusalem, 2005), pp. 190-242, and on my website.