



AND THESE ARE THE (HOLY-HOLE) LAWS

Our portion begins with the words "V'ELA HAMISHPATIM - And these are the laws". We learned in school not to start a sentence with the word "and". What does this verse want to teach us by starting off in such an unusual way?

Rashi teaches us a linguistic rule - whenever it says " ELA-these" it contradicts what came before it, but if it says " V'ELA -and these" it adds to what came before it. So if these verses are coming to add something - what exactly are we meant to learn about the juxtaposition of the portion of Mishpatim - which is primarily civil and tort law with last weeks portion of Yitro - with the spectacular event of Har Sinai and receiving the ten commandments?

Although all the laws mentioned in this weeks portion may seem mundane (i.e. the Hebrew slave and maidservant, personal damages, the killer ox, a hole in the ground, damages by grazing & fire, the unpaid custodian, occult practices, lending money, stray animals) - the Torah is teaching us that they were also given at Sinai and by following them we can also become holy. Although they may seem like lowly

laws relating to routine activities they are just as much expressions of God's greatness as the first commandment that describes God's existence and power. We must remember that one can become holy both by keeping the Sabbath and by paying damages to someone who's donkey fell into the hole that he left uncovered in a public area (21:33).

The Ramban has a very interesting explanation to the connection between last weeks portion and this weeks. He says that the civil law is an extension of the last of the ten commandments "do not be envious of your neighbor's house....wife, slave, maid, ox, donkey or anything else that is your neighbor's" (20:14). In order to be able to know what really belongs to his neighbor and what he shouldn't covet, one must actually know all the rules of ownership. He must know his neighbors rights and what actually constitutes their property. Those are the kinds of things that are discussed in this week's portion.

Since the portion talks about the laws related to a hole left uncovered in a public place this weeks recipe is for a hole cake - not to be confused with a whole cake. This is a regular whole cake that you poke holes in after it is baked. The holes are then filled with a liquid or filling - like pureed fruit, chocolate cream, or pudding - to infuse extra flavor into every bite - just like the laws in the portion of Mishpatim teach us that the Torah infuses holiness into every aspect of our lives..

LEMON HOLE CAKE WITH BLUEBERRY SAUCE

4 eggs

1.5 cups sugar

1/2 cup oil

2 cups flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 cup water

2 tblsp fresh lemon juice

2 tblsp lemon zest (about 1 or 2 lemons)

1 tsp. Vanilla

For the Lemon Blueberry Sauce

1½ cup frozen blueberries

1 large lemon (zest and juice) (about 1 tsp. of zest and 1 tbsp. of juice)

¼ cup sugar

2 tsp. corn starch

pinch of salt

½ tsp. vanilla extract

Beat together the eggs and sugar until thick. Gradually beat in the oil until smooth. Add the flour, baking powder and salt, and then the water. Beat just until smooth, and then mix in the lemon juice, zest, and vanilla. Bake for about 40 minutes, at 180 C or until the cake tests done. In the meantime mix lemon juice and cornstarch. Add blueberries, lemon zest, sugar, and salt and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture starts to bubble and

thicken (about 12 minutes). Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla. Set aside.

When cake is cool use the handle of a wooden spoon to poke holes into the cake that are about an inch apart. Drizzle the blueberry lemon sauce on top. Spread the sauce into an even layer over the cake allowing some of the sauce and blueberries to get into the holes. Serve like this or you can add a layer of whip cream or your favorite glaze. [A](#)