

# דברי מנחם

*Diarei Menachem*

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In Parshat Mishpatim, Moshe is invited by Hashem to ascend Har Sinai in order to learn the Torah in its entirety. Having received this summons, and prior to his ascent, Moshe built an altar at the foot of the mount. He sent for "the youths of the Children of Israel" who brought the various offerings that were to be sacrificed to Hashem.

Of interest is that, following the reading of the Brit (The Book of the Covenant) and the people's acquiescence to keeping the laws within it - "Na'aseh" ('We shall do') - Moshe sprinkled half the blood on the altar and the other half on the people. The narrative tells us that the blood (like the red seal on a contract) symbolized the Brit between the people and Hashem; it indicated to the people that the laws they were receiving are the expression of G-d's will (Sh'mot 23:4). And now Bnei Yisrael were demonstrating their commitment to abide by their side of the transaction.

The "splitting" of the blood reminds us of the Brit that Hashem made with Avraham, the Brit Bein Habetarim (The Covenant of the Pieces), whereby fire passed between the two sides of a slaughtered animal, signifying that if the covenant was broken by either side, "fire" awaited the transgressor. Notably, following the Ramban, Moshe called upon the youth (who symbolize "innocence") to be involved in preparing the sacrifices. Perhaps, more so, the "youths of the Children of Israel" remind us that both the promises to Avraham and the laws of our sacred Torah are to be studied, internalized, and fulfilled for all time by us and our progeny - in our generation and in all future generations to come.