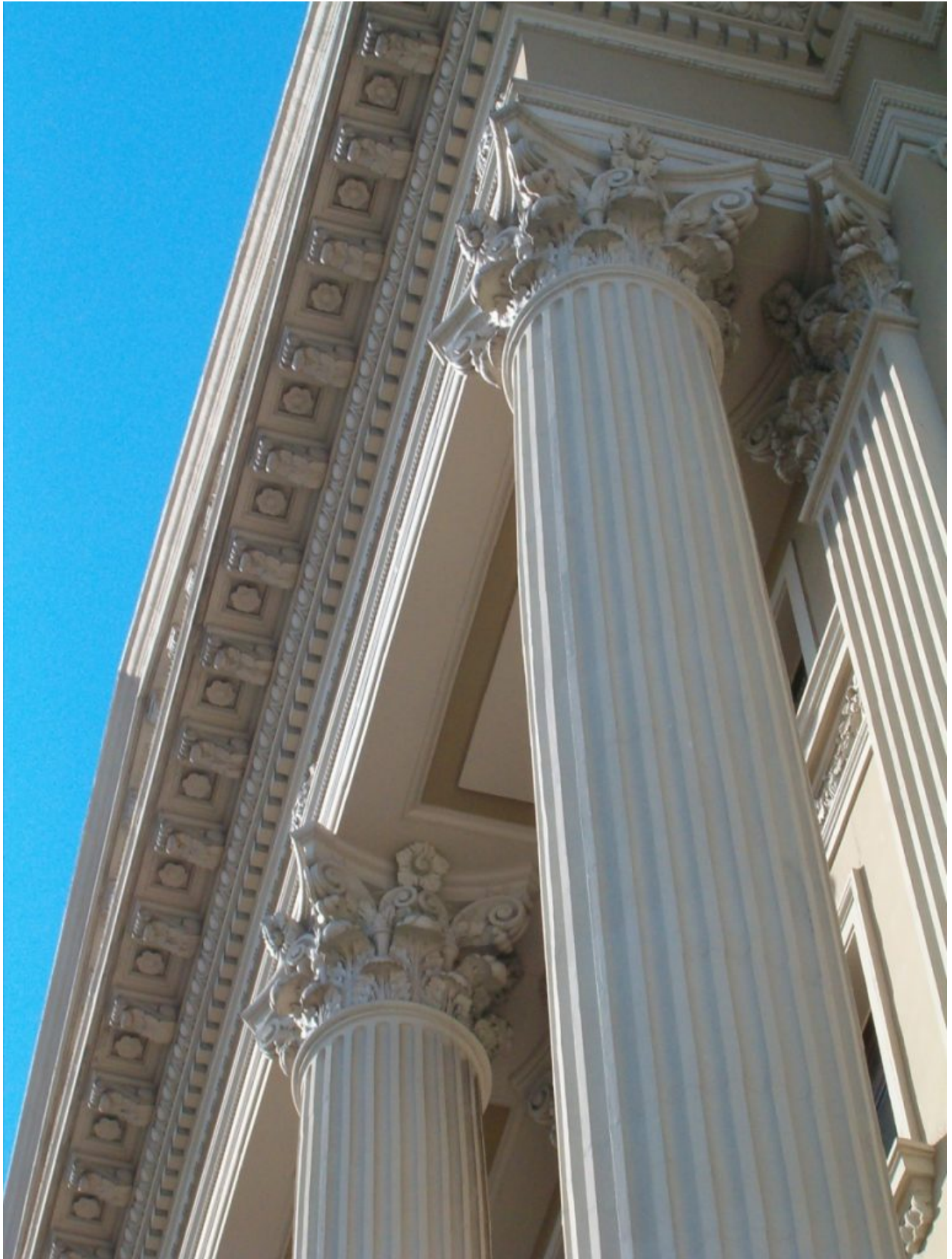


# **Dvar Torah for Parshat Mishpatim**

written by Ozer Bergman  
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Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Dayanim* 4:3

“In every case of misappropriation, whether it involves an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment or anything else that was

[allegedly] lost...both parties' claims must come before the *elokim* (judge)" (Exodus 22:8).

There are other Hebrew words for "a judge." Why then, asks Reb Noson, is the word *elokim*, one of God's holy names, used? (When transliterating God's name into English we write *Elokim*, but Hebrew has no capital letters.) He answers that if the judge does his job properly he reveals the *Elokut*, Godliness, contained within the objects over which the litigants were contending. The *halakhic* (Jewish legal) decision he renders makes those physical objects Torah. Torah is Godliness and God's unity.

This is why, Reb Noson continues, the Torah gives a comprehensive list of objects which can come under a *elokim*'s purview. Everything in the world—every thing—contains Godliness. It is that Godliness which brings and keeps the thing in existence, and it is that Godliness which gives the thing its purpose for being.

This is the essence of a *din Torah*, a Jewish-court case. When confusion sets in and clarity is on vacation—"Mine! "No! Mine!" "I delivered it." "I didn't receive it." "It was a horse." "It was a mule!"—the *elokim* draws forth from the litigants the history of their interaction. What did each say? When? What were they thinking? What the judges are doing is showing them that though they may have forgotten it at the time, every aspect and facet of business, and how each is dealt with, is Torah.

Most of us today don't have much to do with oxen and donkeys. We deal with trucks and tractors, mortgages and appliances. But all things, whether they are iThings or urThings, are *Elokim*'s things. Hopefully, we'll remember that on our own. If not our case will come before the *elokim* and we'll be reminded.

*agutn Shabbos!*

*Shabbat Shalom!*

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