

J.L.C. Connections

The Jewish Learning Connection's Weekly Newsletter



Parsha Shoftim
August 14, 2026 / 1 Elul 5786
Volume 31, Issue 42
Candlelighting: 8:09 pm

Waxman Torah Center · 2195 S. Green Road · University Heights, OH 44121 · (216) 691-3837 · www.clevelandjlc.com

Friday, August 14

6:45pm Early Mincha / Maariv
8:09pm Candlelighting

Shabbos, August 15

8:45am Shacharis
*Kiddush is sponsored by
Murray & Rus Richelson*

7:00pm Pirke Avos
8:00pm Mincha / Shalosh Seudos
9:17pm Maariv

Sunday, August 16

9:15am *Parsha Class*
(R. Nisenbaum)
10:00am "The 613 Mitzvos"
(R. Stoll)

8:30pm *Maimonides' Laws of
Repentance continues
next week*
(R. Nisenbaum)

Monday, August 17

8:00pm *"Lessons from Yonah"
continues next week*
(R. Nisenbaum)

Tuesday, August 18

8:00pm Tanna d'vei Eliyahu
(R. Stoll)

Wednesday, August 19

8:00pm Nach Still Speaks –
MISHLEI (R. Stoll)

Thursday, August 20

8:00pm Sefer HaChinuch: R. Stoll
10:15pm Parsha Class
(R. Nisenbaum)

Torah Podcast

Listen to Rabbi Nisenbaum's
"Torah Podcast" at Spotify, Apple
Podcasts, iHeartRadio, and more,
or download at
www.maverickpodcasting.com

Weekday Minyanim

7:00am Shacharis (M-F)
8:00am Shacharis (Sun)
10:00pm Maariv (Sun-Th)

Class Connection

R. Nisenbaum:
425-436-6200 #352171
"The Torah Podcast" weekly
at all podcast locations

R. Stoll:
Zoom: 876-619-3551
Audio: 669-900-9128

Parsha: Shoftim

The Torah introduces certain laws which are exclusively applicable to the leaders. Because these individuals were granted special authority, they needed special guidelines to prevent them from misusing their positions and becoming arrogant.

The judges, for example, were severely warned against taking any form of bribery, even to render an honest ruling. They were also obligated to follow the majority ruling of the court. If a judge or Torah scholar, regardless of his level of scholarship, defies and rules against a decision of the court, he is liable to be put to death. This uncharacteristically severe punishment was necessary to prevent the undermining of the court's authority by other great leaders. This would ensure that the court remain a central authoritative body, whose decisions would be binding upon the entire nation.

The king was also subject to special obligations and prohibitions. In contrast to many of the other monarchs of the ancient world, the Jewish king was not allowed to indulge in physical or material excesses, such as a large harem of women, or an excess of money or horses. The Torah warns that these excesses would inevitably lead the king's heart astray.

The king was also required to write his own copy of the Torah that would be carried on his person at all times. The constant review of this Torah would, hopefully, inspire his reverence for G-d and prevent him from becoming haughty.

The Kohanim were also guided by a unique set of laws. They did not receive their own inheritance in the Land, because they had to be available to devote themselves to the service of G-d. Their livelihood would be taken care of by the other tribes, who would give them the priestly gifts. Their dependence on other people would also prevent their feeling arrogant.

The prophet's responsibilities are also discussed. The prophet was a person of exalted character and scholarship, who was able to receive certain communication from G-d. Accordingly, he too was held to a higher standard. If the prophet would suppress his Divine

prophecy he would be guilty of a severe offense. If a person prophesies something that he did not receive from G-d or in the name of another god, it is considered an even worse offense, and he is punished by death.

No public leader in the Torah is above the law. Each position has its own set of rules specifically tailored to its own unique challenges.

Kiddush sponsorship

by Murray and Rus Chaya
Richelson on the occasion of his
father's yahrzeit Boruch Yisrael ben
Mottl and their anniversary

Mazel Tov!

Chaim & Julie Leeson upon the
marriage of their daughter

Dr. Scott & Debbie Peters upon the
upcoming marriage of their son.
Aufruf is at Heichal followed by
kiddush

Gary & Liat Shyken on the
engagement of their daughter

Insights: Shoftim

...he shall write for himself this Torah on a book...and it will be with him ... (Deut 17:18-19) The king is apt to become arrogant when viewing his power. The Torah therefore obligates him to carry a Torah scroll to realize that everything is relative. He may be powerful compared to others, but compared to G-d's expectations of him he is certainly found lacking. The first Rebbe of Lubavitch once asked a preacher for words of mussar (reproach). The preacher said, "Rebbe, what can I tell you. Everything I know, you certainly know as well. And what you do not know, I certainly do not know either. The difference between us is what you know and what I do not. But that is still miniscule to what neither of us know!"

Did You Know?

One should try to be more meticulous in his or her mitzvah observance during the month of Elul, in preparation of the High Holidays. Psalm 27 is recited after prayers, both in the morning and evening. (Ashkenazic custom adds it after the evening service, and Sefardic custom adds it after the afternoon service.) Many people try to complete the entire Book of Psalms twice during Elul, and a third time before Yom Kippur. Some have their tefillin and mezuzos checked during these days to ensure that they have not become disqualified. (Often, due to exposure to weather or age, the letters may become cracked or smudged, disqualifying their usage.) If not done previously, one should also have his or her clothing checked for Shaatnez, the prohibited mixture of wool and linen.

Thought for the Week: Some, in pushing things off, fail to notice the cliff (A Candle By Day)