

J.L.C. Connections

The Jewish Learning Connection's Weekly Newsletter



Parshas Shoftim
September 2, 2022 / 6 Elul 5782
Volume 27, Issue 48
Candlelighting: 7:40 pm

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

Friday, September 2

7:40pm Candlelighting
7:45pm Mincha / Maariv

Shabbos, September 3

8:45am Shacharis

6:35pm Pirke Avos

7:35pm Mincha / Shalosh Seudos /
Maariv

Sunday, September 4

9:15am Parsha Class

(R. Nisenbaum)

10:00am "The 613 Mitzvos"
(R. Stoll)

Monday, September 5

8:00pm "The Emotions of the
High Holidays:
Teshuva: The
Wholeness of a
Broken Heart" (2/4)

Tuesday, September 6

8:00pm Pirkei d'Rebbi Elazar
(R. Stoll)

Wednesday, September 7

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

Thursday, September 8

10:15pm Parsha Class
(R. Nisenbaum)

Condolences

Larry Rothenberg &
Family upon the loss
of his mother

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 (priests) 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.

Insights: Shoftim

Do not take a bribe (Deut. 16:19)

Rav Heshel was the rabbi of Cracow. One time he was asked to decide a financial dispute between two wealthy parties. The day before the hearing one of the fellows approached the rabbi and told him he was confident that he would get a fair trial. Surreptitiously, he handed Rav Heshel an envelope with one hundred rubles inside.

That evening Rav Heshel invited his family to a fancy dinner. His children looked at him questioningly, not knowing what the occasion was. During the meal Rav Heshel pulled out the envelope and showed everyone the bills.

"My children, do you know what this is? It looks like a nice sum of money, but really it is a despicable item. It is a bribe, and the Torah warns us that we must never accept a bribe! Never be tempted to take something like this, regardless of how wonderful it might seem!"

With that Rav Heshel called the man to his house and returned the money, sharply censuring the man for trying to win his favor."

Did You Know?

It is customary to visit the graves of one's family members to pray for a good year before the High Holidays. The Torah actually prohibits communicating with the dead, however some authorities understand this prohibition to mean praying to the deceased themselves, since the dead have no power to grant requests. Thus, it is permitted to pray to the deceased that they intercede before G-d on behalf of the living. This is implied in several prayers that make such requests of the Angels, who also have no independent powers. Others prohibit even that much, and merely permit praying to G-d in the presence of the deceased in order to incur their merit.

Thought for the Week: *Silence is golden only when it speaks.* (A Candle By Day)