



HERE COMES THE JUDGE

Don't be judgmental. Unless, of course, you happen to be a judge. Then it's your job. This week's Parshah, Shoftim (Deuteronomy 16:18–21:9), begins with the biblical command for judges to be appointed in every city and town to adjudicate and maintain a just, ordered, civil society. Interestingly, it occurs in the first week of Elul, the month in which we are to prepare in earnest for the Days of Judgment ahead, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. There are, however, some significant differences between earthly judges of flesh and blood and the heavenly judge. In the earthly court, if after a fair trial a defendant is found guilty, then there's really not much room for clemency on the part of the judge. The law is the law and must take its course. The accused may shed rivers of tears, but no human judge can be certain if his remorse is genuine. His feelings of regret are touching, but of limited legal consequence. After all, a human judge may only make a decision based on "what the eye can see." The misdeed was seen to have been committed. The remorse, who knows? Perhaps he's a good actor and is only acting contrite. The Supreme Judge, however, does know whether the accused genuinely regrets his actions or is merely putting on an act. Therefore, He alone is able to forgive. That is why in heavenly judgments, teshuvah (repentance) is effective. The Maharal of Prague gave another reason. Only G-d is able to judge the whole person. Every one of us has good and bad to some extent. Even those who have sinned may have many other good deeds that outweigh the bad ones. Perhaps even one good deed was of such major significance that it alone could serve as a weighty counterbalance. The point is, only G-d knows. Only He can judge the individual in the context of his whole life and all his deeds, good and bad. Our goal is to emulate the heavenly court. We should try to look at the totality of the person. You think he is bad, but is he all bad? Does he have no redeeming virtues? Surely, he must have some good in him as well. Look at the whole person. A teacher once conducted an experiment. He held up a white plate and showed it to the class. In the center of the plate was a small black spot. He then asked the class to describe what they saw. One student said he saw a black spot. Another said it must be a target for shooting practice. A third suggested that the plate was dirty or damaged. Whereupon the teacher asked, "Doesn't anyone see a white plate?" There may have been a small black spot, but essentially it was a white plate. Why do we only see the dirt? Let us learn to find the good in others. Nobody is perfect, not even ourselves. Let's not be so judgmental and critical. Let's try to see the good in others.

Human and Animals Medical Experimentation

Question:

I'm wondering what the Jewish view is on animal as well as human medical experimentation.

Answer:

Technically, it is permissible to perform medical experiments on animals for potential human benefit. This follows the general principle that we may make use of and even kill animals for human needs. However, since it is forbidden to pain animals unnecessarily, one must be careful not to harm animals any more than required. In addition, needless to say, this would only be permitted in cases where there is a realistic chance some human benefit will result. Doing so just out of curiosity would certainly be forbidden. In terms of humans, the rules are similar but the concern is even greater. Firstly, needless to say, the person would have to be willing to submit himself to the experimentation. He would have to be made aware of the precise risks and willingly accept them. Secondly, the Torah explicitly forbids causing undeserved pain to another human being. (This is based upon Deut. 25:3, that (even) when administering corporal punishment to a sinful Jew, it is forbidden to whip him more times than the Torah prescribes.) Here too, harming a person for a beneficial purpose – whether for him or others – is allowed, but there is an even greater concern that it carries a real benefit to mankind. In addition, there should be no realistic chance the experiment might be fatal.

SHUL TIMES

Shabbat Times

Candle Lighting 7:56pm

Shabbat Ends 9:06pm

Friday

7pm with Rabbi Yanky

Kabbalat Shabbat

outside Shul & on

zoom

Artscroll

1024

1199

Living Torah

948

1234

PARSHA SUMMARY

Moses instructs the people of Israel to appoint judges and law enforcement officers in every city. "Justice, justice shall you pursue," he commands them, and you must administer it without corruption or favoritism. Crimes must be meticulously investigated and evidence thoroughly examined—a minimum of two credible witnesses is required for conviction and punishment. In every generation, says Moses, there will be those entrusted with the task of interpreting and applying the laws of the Torah. "According to the law that they will teach you, and the judgment they will instruct you, you shall do; you shall not turn away from the thing that they say to you, to the right nor to the left." Shoftim also includes the prohibitions against idolatry and sorcery; laws governing the appointment and behavior of a king; and guidelines for the creation of "cities of refuge" for the inadvertent murderer. Also set forth are many of the rules of war: the exemption from battle for one who has just built a home, planted a vineyard, married, or is "afraid and soft-hearted"; the requirement to offer terms of peace before attacking a city; and the prohibition against wanton destruction of something of value, exemplified by the law that forbids to cut down a fruit tree when laying siege (in this context the Torah makes the famous statement, "For man is a tree of the field"). The Parshah concludes with the law of the eglah arufah—the special procedure to be followed when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body is found in a field—which underscores the responsibility of the community and its leaders not only for what they do, but also for what they might have prevented from being done.

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

Isaiah 51:12-52:12 This week's haftorah is the fourth of a series of seven "Haftarot of Consolation." These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah. The haftorahs of the past two weeks open with Israel's complaint that they have been abandoned by G-d. Israel is not content with consolations offered by the prophets — instead they demand that G-d alone comfort them. In response, this week's haftorah begins with G-d's response: "I, indeed I, will comfort you." After briefly reprimanding Israel for forgetting their Creator for fear of human and finite oppressors, the prophet describes the suffering and tribulations which Israel has endured. However, the time has arrived for the suffering to end. The time has come for Israel's oppressors to drink the "cup of suffering" which they had hitherto forced Israel to drink: "Awaken, awaken, put on your strength, O Zion; put on the garments of your beauty, Jerusalem the Holy City, for no longer shall the uncircumcised or the unclean continue to enter you. Shake yourselves from the dust, arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; free yourself of the bands of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Isaiah extols the beauty of the messenger who will announce the good tidings of Redemption. "Burst out in song, sing together, O ruins of Jerusalem, for the L-rd has consoled His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem." The haftorah ends by highlighting the difference between the Egyptian Exodus, when the Israelites hurried out of their exile and bondage, and the future Redemption: "For not with haste shall you go forth and not in a flurry of flight shall you go, for the L-rd goes before you, and your rear guard is the G-d of Israel."

WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK CHAIM ARUCHIM

Kovler Andrea Father Mordecai Yehudah ben Chaim 2 Elul

Collins Edna Husband Yisrael ben Avraham 3 Elul

Klein Simon Mother 3 Elul

Goldstone Michael Father Hershi ben Michael 5 Elul

Laderman Cyril Father Moshe ben Mordecai 5 Elul

Berg Sharon Mother Rivka bas Dovid 6 Elul

Klein Simon Father Gershon ben Peretz 6 Elul

Rains Raymond Father Eliyahu ben Shmuel 6 Elul

Goodman Stacey Mother Sarah bas Moshe 7 Elul

JEWISH HUMOUR

David Sapperstein was driving back home from visiting his Elderly Bubbie when he stopped at a gas station to use the restroom. Suddenly, David heard a voice saying, "Hey! How's it going?" David looked around, surprised trying to see where the voice was coming from but not wanting to be impolite he responded, "I'm fine. Thanks for asking." "What are you doing?" asked the same voice. "Who wants to know?" David asked. "I'm going to have to call you back," said the voice. "Some smart-aleck is answering all of my questions."

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

I am something people love or hate. I change peoples appearances and thoughts. If a person takes care of them self I will go up even higher. To some people I will fool them. To others I am a mystery. Some people might want to try and hide me but I will show. No matter how hard people try I will Never go down. What am I?

**Answer to last week's Riddle.
The river was frozen.**

STORY TIME

Mar Ukva was a learned and righteous man, one of the leaders of Jewish people while they lived in Babylonia. He and his wife were constantly involved with many acts of charity and deeds of kindness - they gave food to the hungry, tended to the sick, helped those who needed assistance, and many other good deeds. Near the house of Mar Ukva lived a respected though poor family. Mar Ukva and his wife could not stand to look upon the thin, hungry faces of the poor family's children, but the parents were too proud to accept any charity. "I have a plan how we can help our poor neighbors," Mar Ukva's wife told him one evening. "Late at night, when everyone is already comfortably asleep in their beds, let us go to our neighbors' home and secretly put a few coins inside. In this way, they will not know who gave them the charity and they will not be embarrassed to accept it." Mar Ukva was pleased with his wife's plan. That very night, with a few coins in their pockets, they stealthily made their way toward their neighbor's home. As they approached the door, Mar Ukva looked here and there to make sure that there were no passers-by. Mar Ukva took four dinars out of his pocket, slid them under the door, and quickly left the area. In this manner, Mar Ukva and his wife continued each evening to quietly and secretly help support the poor family. And the family was not subject to the embarrassment of having to ask for or collect charity for themselves. One evening, Mar Ukva remained later than usual in the study hall. He was trying to understand and master a particularly difficult question in the Torah. His wife became concerned and decided to go to the study hall to find him. Seeing that everything was all right, she patiently waited until Mar Ukva finished learning and they walked home together. Along the way, they passed the poor neighbor's home. Seeing that no one was out at this late hour, Mar Ukva and his wife decided to put the four dinars in the house now, on their way home. This very night, though, the poor man had decided to wait up and see who it was who so generously and consistently helped support his family. He wanted to bless them for their good and kind deed. As Mar Ukva and his wife were turning toward home, having just slipped the money under the door, they saw the door open. They did not want the poor man to see them, fearing that he might later be embarrassed to look at them or speak with them in public. Quickly, they ran away from the house. Because of the darkness, the poor man was not able to see who it was, and he began to chase the couple fleeing his home. "Quickly, quickly," Mar Ukva called out softly to his wife. "We must hide before the poor man catches up with us." They looked in all direction, in search of a hiding-place. The only place they could find was the large communal oven, which was presently not lit. "Come, let us go inside the oven and hide there," said Mar Ukva's wife. The couple entered the oven. But Mar Ukva immediately felt that the floor of the oven was still hot from the day's fires. Mar Ukva cried out in pain as his feet were burned by the hot oven floor. "Put your feet on top of my feet," Mar Ukva's wife told him. "For my feet are not being scorched." Mar Ukva was very surprised when he saw that his wife's feet were not being effected by the extreme heat. Why did Mar Ukva's wife merit that a miracle be performed for her? She was not content simply to give money to poor people who came to her home. Rather, she invited them in, fed them graciously and encouraged them to satisfy their hunger in her home. In this way, they did not even have to go to buy bread for themselves. Mar Ukva and his wife continued helping the poor family, but no one ever found out about their charity, charity dispensed with dignity and honour.

FOOD & THE SOUL

G-d can do anything. He could even, as the Talmud puts it, "fit an elephant through the eye of a needle." So, how would He do it? Would He make the elephant smaller? Or would He expand the eye of the needle? Neither. The elephant would remain big, the eye of the needle small. And He would fit the elephant through the eye of the needle. Illogical? True. But logic is just another of His creations. He who created logic is permitted to transcend it.