

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Shoftim

For the week ending 4 Elul 5757
5 & 6 September 1997

Parsha Questions

1. What is the role of *Shoftim*? What is the role of *Shotrim*?
2. May a judge accept a bribe if only for the purpose of judging fairly?
3. What is the source for the concept "Seek out a good *Beis Din*"?
4. Even though the *Avos* were permitted to use *matzeivos*, the Torah later forbade them. Why?
5. "You will come to... the judge *who will be in those days* (17:9)." Since it's impossible to go to a judge who lives at a different time, why does the Torah add these apparently extra words?
6. How many horses may a Jewish king own?
7. How many Torah scrolls must he have?
8. How was King Shaul punished for disobeying a 'minor' command of the prophet Shmuel?
9. What is meant by "*Nachalas Chamisha*" and "*Nachalas Shiva*"?
10. Certain kosher animals are not included in the law of "*chazeh, shok, and keiva*." Which ones?
11. How many sheep must be shorn before the owner must give a portion of the shearing to a *kohen*?
12. Which three categories of false prophets are executed?
13. What does it mean to "prepare the way" to the cities of refuge?
14. How many witnesses are meant when the word '*eid*' ("witness") is written in the Torah?
15. "Through *the mouth* of two witnesses..." What types of testimony does this verse invalidate?
16. If witnesses in a capital case are proven to be "*zomemim*" (false-conspirators) *before* their 'victim' is executed, how are they punished?
17. Why does the section about going to war follow the laws governing witnesses?
18. The Jewish army is warned of four 'scare-tactics' the enemy might employ. What are they?
19. When a murder victim is found in a field, who determines which city is closest?
20. What happens to the murderer if he is found after the calf has had its neck broken?

BONUS

Q:

"Do not take a bribe, because bribery blinds the eyes of the wise..." (19:19).

In this week's Parsha the Torah says that bribery blinds the "*Chachamim*" — 'wise people.' But in Exodus 23:8, the Torah says bribery blinds the "*Pikchim*" — 'open-eyed people.' Why does the Torah use these two different expressions to describe a judge?

I Did Not Know That!

"And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write two copies of this Torah... And it will be with him and he shall read from it all the days for his life... (17:18,19).

The king would tie the Torah scroll to his arm and wear it like an amulet.

Me'am Loez

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Parshas **Shoftim** — 4 Elul 5757, 5 & 6 September 1997

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Recommended Reading List

Ramban

16:21	Trees
17:11	Obedience
17:15	Kingship
17:20	Conceit
18:15-16	Prophecy
19:8	Our Borders
19:13	Self Defense
20:8	The Torah Army

Sforno

16:21	Beautiful But Bad
17:3	The Sun And the Moon
18:14	Above the Stars

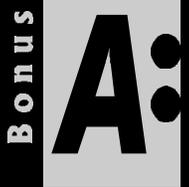
Sefer Hachinuch

491	Securing Justice
496	Antidote to Anarchy
498	Qualities of Leadership
503	Safeguarding the King
510	The Occult
516	True Prophecy
517	False Prophecy
526	Strengthening the Army
527	Humane War

Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 16:18 - <i>Shoftim</i> are judges who pronounce judgment. <i>Shotrim</i> are officers who enforce it. 2. 16:19 - No, because it will sway his judgment. 3. 16:20 - "<i>Tzedek tzedek tirdof...</i>" 4. 16:22 - Because the Canaanites used them for idolatry. 5. 17:9 - To teach that although the judge of a particular generation may not be as eminent as those of previous generations, the Jewish People are still obligated to obey him. 6. 17:16 - Only as many as he needs for his carriages. 7. 17:18 - Two. One stays in his treasury and one he keeps with him. 8. 17:20 - He lost his kingship. 9. 18:2 - <i>Nachalas Chamisha</i> is the land of the first five tribes to claim their inheritance: Reuven, Gad, Menashe, Yehuda, and Ephraim. <i>Nachalas Shiva</i> is the land of the remaining tribes, who didn't inherit until after Joshua's death. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. 18:3 - <i>Chayos</i> (non-domestic-type animals). 11. 18:4 - Five. 12. 18:20 - One who prophesies something he didn't hear, prophesies something that was told to another prophet, or prophesies in the name of an idol. 13. 19:3 - To post signs saying "Refuge" at the junctions to point the way. 14. 19:15 - Two, unless otherwise specified. 15. 19:15 - 1) Written testimony sent to the court; 2) Testimony given through a translator. 16. 19:19 - They are put to death. 17. 20:1 - To teach that if the Jewish People execute judgment in a just fashion they will be victorious in war. 18. 1) Clanging their shields; 2) Making their horses stomp and whinny; 3) Shouting; 4) Blowing horns. 19. 21:2 - The <i>Sanhedrin</i>. 20. 21:9 - He is tried and, if guilty, executed. |
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A judge in a court of Torah law must be wise in two areas. First, he must be expert in all areas of Torah law. Such people are called '*chachamim*' — 'wise.' Second, he must be well-versed in worldly matters so he can properly interrogate the litigants and see if they are trying to fool him. To do this, he has to know "every trick in the book." Such a people are called '*pikchim*' — 'open-eyed.'

Vilna Gaon in Aderes Elyahu



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