

Parshas Shoftim
in a Nutshell
(Deuteronomy 16:18–21:9)

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Aug 21 / Elul 1

Candle Lighting 7:27 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – Aug 22 / Elulv 2

Shacharis..... 10:00 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:55 am

Rabbi Neubort’s Drasha..... 11:30 am

Kiddush Postponed

Mincha 7:30 pm

Rabbi’s Drasha 7:45 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 8:27 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:34 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha / Maariv 8:15 pm

Classes

Chassidus, Mon-Fri Postponed

Halachah, Mon-Fri Postponed

Monday Torah Studies..... Online only

Tuesday Talmud..... Online only

Wednesday Mishna Online only

Thursday B’lyun 9:30-10:00 pm

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.

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Eruv website:
www.fairlawneruv.com
Eruv Hotline: 201-254-9190.



“For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off.”

By the grace of Hashem, following all CDC Guidelines, our Shul is now able to offer Minyanim. See schedule to the left, or contact one of the rabbi for details.

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. ❖

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, August 22
Eastern Daylight Time
Earliest Tallis 5:14 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:34 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:33 PM
Plag Hamincha 6:23 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 8:13 PM

Chassidic Masters

The Human Tree

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

*“For man is a tree of the field”
Deuteronomy 20:19*

The tree's primary components are: the roots, which anchor it to the ground and supply it with water and other nutrients; the trunk, branches and leaves which comprise its body; and the fruit which contain the seeds by which the tree reproduces itself.

The spiritual life of man also includes roots, a body, and fruit. The roots represent faith, our source of nurture and perseverance. The trunk, branches and leaves are the body of our spiritual lives — our intellectual, emotional and practical achievements. The fruit is our power of spiritual procreation — the power to influence others, to plant a seed in a fellow human being and see it sprout, grow and bear fruit.

Roots and Body

The roots are the least glamorous of the trees parts, and the most crucial. Buried underground, virtually invisible, they possess neither the majesty of the tree's body, the colorfulness of its leaves nor the tastiness of its fruit. But without roots, a tree cannot survive.

Furthermore, the roots must keep

pace with the body: if the trunk and leaves of a tree grow and spread without a proportional increase in its roots, the tree will collapse under its own weight. On the other hand, a profusion of roots makes for a healthier, stronger tree, even if it has a meager trunk and few branches, leaves and fruit. And if the roots are sound, the tree will rejuvenate itself if its body is damaged or its branches cut off.

Faith is the least glamorous of our spiritual faculties. Characterized by a simple conviction and commitment to one's Source, it lacks the sophistication of the intellect, the vivid color of the emotions, or the sense of satisfaction that comes from deed. And faith is buried underground, its true extent concealed from others and even from ourselves.

Yet our faith, our supra-rational commitment to G-d, is the foundation of our entire tree. From it stems the trunk of our understanding, from which branch out our feelings, motivations and deeds. And while the body of the tree also provides some of its spiritual nurture, the bulk of our spiritual sustenance derives from its roots, from our faith in and commitment to our Creator.

A soul might grow a majestic trunk, numerous and wide-spreading branches, beautiful leaves and lush fruit. But these must be equaled, indeed surpassed, by its roots. Above the surface, there might be much wisdom, profundity of feeling, abundant experience,

copious achievement and many disciples; but if these are not grounded and vitalized by an even greater faith and commitment, it is a tree without foundation, a tree doomed to collapse under its own weight.

On the other hand, a life might be blessed with only sparse knowledge, meager feeling and experience, scant achievement and little fruit. But if its roots are extensive and deep, it is a healthy tree: a tree fully in possession of what it does have; a tree with the capacity to recover from the setbacks of life; a tree with the potential to eventually grow and develop into a loftier, more beautiful and fruitful tree.

Fruit and Seed

The tree desires to reproduce, to spread its seeds far and wide so that they take root in diverse and distant places. But the tree's reach is limited to the extent of its own branches. It must therefore seek out other, more mobile couriers to transport its seeds.

So the tree produces fruit, in which its seeds are enveloped by tasty, colorful, sweet-smelling fibers and juices. The seeds themselves would not rouse the interest of animals and men; but with their attractive packaging, they have no shortage of customers who, after consuming the external fruit, deposit the seeds in those diverse and distant places where the tree wants to plant its seeds.

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When we communicate with others, we employ many devices to make our message attractive. We buttress it with intellectual sophistication, steep it in emotional sauce, dress it in colorful words and images. But we should bear in mind that this is only the packaging — the fruit that contains the seed. The seed itself is essentially tasteless — the only way that we can truly impact others is by conveying our own simple faith in what we are telling them, our own simple commitment to what we are espousing.

If the seed is there, our message will take root in their minds and hearts, and our own vision will be grafted into theirs. But if there is no seed, there will be no progeny to our effort, however tasty our fruit might be. ❖

From Our Sages

Judges and officers you shall place at all your city gates . . . (Deuteronomy 16:18)

The human body is a city with seven gates—seven portals to the outside world: the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth. Here, too, it is incumbent upon us to place internal “judges” to discriminate and regulate what should be admitted and what should be kept out, and “officers” to enforce the judges’ decisions . . .

-- (Sifsei Kohen)

Justice, justice shall you pursue (Deuteronomy 16:20)

By virtue of three things the world endures: law, truth and peace.

-- (Ethics of Our Fathers 1:18)

The three are one and the same: if the law is upheld, there is truth and there is peace.

-- (Jerusalem Talmud, Taanis 4:2)

A judge who judges with absolute truth becomes a partner with G-d in creation.

-- (Talmud, Shabbat 10a)

When G-d expands your boundaries, as He swore to your forefathers, and He gives you all the land of which He spoke to give to your forefathers . . . you shall add three more cities for yourself, in addition to these (Deuteronomy 19:8–9)

The Torah attests to the coming of Moshiach. . . . Also, regarding the “cities of refuge” it is written: “When G-d expands your boundaries . . . you shall add three more cities.” This never yet came to pass, and G-d did not command it in vain.

-- (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings 11:1–2)

When you approach the battle, the kohen shall approach and speak to the people: “. . . Hear, O Israel, today you are approaching the battle against your enemies” (Deuteronomy 20:2–3)

These are not your brothers, for if you fall into their hands, they will not have pity on you. This is not like the war of Judah with Israel, of which the verse states, “The men who were mentioned by name rose up and took hold of the captives, and clothed all their nakedness from the spoils, and they dressed them and shod them, fed them and gave them to drink, and anointed them, and led them on donkeys, every feeble one, and they brought them to Jericho, the city of the palms, beside their brothers, and they returned to Samaria” (II Chronicles 28:15). You, however, are going against your enemies; therefore strengthen yourselves for battle.

-- (Talmud, Sotah 42a; Rashi)

About the Month of Elul

Elul is the 12th and final month in the Jewish calendar (the sixth month counting from Nisan). It is a month that connects the past year with the coming year—a time when we reflect on where we stand and where we should be going.

It is called “the month of repentance,” “the month of mercy” and “the month of forgiveness.” Elul follows the two previous months of Tammuz and Av—months of tragedies that were brought upon us through our sins. In Tammuz, the Jews sinned with the golden calf; on Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moses ascended to Mount Sinai for a third 40-day period until Yom Kippur, when he descended with the second tablets (luchos) and G-d’s word of joyful, wholehearted forgiveness. (The first time Moses ascended was to receive the first tablets; the second time was after the sin, to ask for forgiveness; and this third time was to receive the second set of tablets.) These were days when G-d revealed to the Jewish people great mercy. Since then, this time has been designated as a time of mercy and forgiveness, an opportune time for teshuvah—repentance.

The four letters of the name Elul are an acronym for the phrase in “Song of Songs” (6:3): “I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me.” “I am to my beloved”—we approach G-d with a desire to return and connect. “And my beloved is to me”—G-d reciprocates with Divine expressions of mercy and forgiveness.

This is the month when “the King is in the field.”

On Yom Kippur, the king is in his palace; G-d reveals Himself in all His majesty. During Elul,

however, the king is in the field; G-d reveals Himself at a level which can be apprehended by man within the framework of his mundane reality.

A field is a place where grain grows. Growing grain and converting it into the food which sustains us requires a great deal of effort. And this effort symbolizes the full scope of our activities within our mundane sphere.

The value of these activities can be seen from the fact that most of our time is spent dealing with our material needs and earning the means by which to provide for them, as it is written, “Six days shall you work, and the seventh day shall be a Shabbos unto the L-rd, your G-d.”

Faced with this state of affairs, we are inclined to wonder why G-d designed a world in which man is forced to involve himself primarily in material rather than in spiritual activities. The reason for this seemingly problematic apportioning of time is that it reflects the purpose of creation. G-d created the world so that He could have a “dwelling place in the lower worlds.” In accordance with this desire, our service of G-d has to center on the ordinary details of existence for the purpose of infusing them with G-dliness, and not on the purely spiritual as it exists on an abstract plane.

In light of this, we can appreciate the significance of our parable to the month of Elul. The king’s presence in the field represents the ultimate purpose of creation. Our efforts must be directed towards bringing G-dliness into our material world. G-d’s presence must be found not only in the royal palace, i.e., where spirituality is manifest; rather, even the lowest realms of existence must be transformed into a dwelling place for Him. ❖

“It would be desirable that you establish the custom of reciting Tehillim — at least a few chapters — in shul during the weekdays as well. Convey to the congregants the words that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related: that reciting Tehillim protects [a person] from many undesirable matters and draws down abundant good for the needs of every single individual.”

-- Lubavitcher Rebbe

16 Iyar, 5711

Haftorah in a Nutshell – 4th Shabbos of Consolation

Isaiah 51:12-52:12

This week's haftorah is the fourth of a series of seven "Haftaros of Consolation." These seven haftaros 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." ❖

From all of us at Anshei-Lubavitch, we hope and pray for the safety and health of you and your loved ones. May the Almighty protect us all and send complete healing to those who need healing. And may our world very soon find the ultimate cure to all diseases with the coming of Moshiach, sooner than we can imagine.

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

