

Parsha Q&A



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For the week ending 7 Elul 5755

1 & 2 September 1995

Parshas Shoftim

Parsha Questions

1. What is the role of *Shoftim*? What is the role of *Shotrim*?
2. What qualifications should one look for when appointing a judge?
3. What is the effect of bribery?
4. What is a *matzevah*?
5. Even though the *Avos* were permitted to use *matzevos*, the Torah forbade them. Why?
6. In verse 17:9, the Torah says, "you shall come to the ... judge that shall be in that day." Since it's not possible to go to someone who lives at a different time, why does the Torah add these extra words?
7. How many horses may a Jewish king possess?
8. How many wives may a Jewish king have?
9. What promise does Hashem give to a king who doesn't amass too much gold, raise too many horses and doesn't marry too many wives?
10. How many Torah scrolls must a king possess?
11. What happens to a king who does not obey Hashem's commands?
12. The Torah obligates non-*Kohanim* to give the *Kohanim matnas kehuna* (the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw) from certain species of animals. Which species are exempt?
13. The Torah requires non-*Kohanim* to give the *Kohanim* a portion of the sheering from their sheep. How many sheep must be shorn before the non-*kohen* is obligated in this gift?
14. When the *Kohanim* served in the *Beis Hamikdash*, they served on a rotational basis according to families. When was this rotation system implemented?
15. How is a false prophet executed by the court?
16. Which three categories of false prophets are executed?
17. How does the Torah command the Jewish People to "prepare the way" to the cities of refuge?
18. When the word "witness" is mentioned in the Torah to how many witnesses does the Torah refer?
19. How must witnesses give testimony?
20. If a defendant is executed through the testimony of witnesses that are found to be plotting witnesses, are the witnesses executed?
21. Why does the section describing going to war follow the laws governing witnesses?
22. Which *Kohen* speaks to the people before they go off to war?
23. When the Jewish People go to war, what symbolizes that Hashem is going with them?
24. When a murder victim is found in a field who determines which city is closest?
25. What happens to the murderer if he is found after the calf has had its neck broken?

Bonus

Q:

In verses 17:14-20, the Torah gives the laws governing Jewish kings. What is the Torah's attitude towards hereditary monarchy?

I Did Not Know That!

"Justice, justice you will pursue." (16:20)

You must pursue justice, but only in a just fashion. The ends do not justify the means.

Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Przysucha

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

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

Sforno

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

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 the judges who pronounce sentence. <i>Shotrim</i> are the officers who execute the sentence. 2. 16:18 - That he is expert in the law and that he is righteous. 3. 16:19 - It distorts the judge's judgment so that he will favor the one who has given the bribe. 4. 16:22 - An altar made from one stone. 5. 16:22 - Because the Canaanites used them for idolatry. 6. 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. 7. 17:16 - Only what is sufficient for his carriages. 8. 17:17 - Eighteen. 9. 17:18 - That his kingdom will endure. 10. 17:18 - Two. One stays in his treasury and one he carries with him at all times. 11. 17:20 - His kingdom will not endure. 12. 18:3 - Undomesticated animals. 13. 18:4 - Five. 14. 18:8 - During the time of David and Shmuel. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. 18:20 - Death by strangulation. 16. 18:20 - One who prophesies something that he did not hear, prophesies something that was told to another prophet, or prophesies in the name of an idol. 17. 19:3 - A sign saying "Refuge" was posted at each crossroads pointing the way. 18. 19:15 - Two, unless otherwise specified. 19. 19:15, 17 - They must speak directly to the judges without an interpreter. They must give their testimony standing. 20. 19:19 - No. The witnesses are punished only if the defendant has been convicted but not yet executed. 21. 20:1 - To teach that if the Jewish People execute judgment in a just fashion they will be victorious in war. 22. 20:2 - The <i>Kohen Meshuach Milchamah</i> (anointed for war). 23. 20:4 - They carry the <i>Aron</i> with them. 24. 21:2 - The <i>Sanhedrin</i>. 25. 21:9 - He is tried and, if found guilty, executed. |
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BONUS	A:	<p>Hereditary monarchy is abhorrent to Hashem. Knowing that the Jewish People would one day stubbornly insist upon having a king, the Torah established guidelines to minimize the damage. Nevertheless, the request by the Jewish People for a king like other nations was a sin and they were punished through the disasters that resulted from having such kings.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sforno</i></p>
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Parshas Shoftim

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