

KRIYAT HaTORAH COMPANION

EVERY ALIYA. A QUESTION (OR TWO).

SHOFTIM

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Aliya 1 | 16:18-17:13

Examine verse 16:18.

What is the purpose of the *Shoftim* and the *Shotrim*? What is the connection between these two positions?

Rashi suggests that the *Shoftim* are the judges that decide the law and the *Shotrim* are the bailiffs that implement the law. **Ibn Ezra** suggests that despite the fact Jews have the opportunity to ask *Kohanim* their questions three times a year, it is still required to establish judges in each city. The **Ohr HaChaim** says that this is the reason this is stated immediately following the command to travel to the *Bet HaMikdash* three times a year. Additionally, he suggests that one cannot have judges without magistrates to implement their rulings. These positions are reliant on one another.

Aliya 2 | 17:14-20

Examine verse 17:14-19.

What is the connection between a *Shofet* and a *Melech*? Is the appointment of a king a *mitzvah* or is it optional?

The Sforno suggests that the difference between the King and *Shofet* was that the monarchy was a hereditary position. Perhaps there is a connection in that the king can only be appointed with the approval of a *Shofet*. This illustrates that the king's agenda should not be to pull the people away from God's agenda, but rather to bring them closer. Perhaps the hesitation in this command is that there is inherent risk in having a monarchy that lacks righteousness.

Aliya 3 | 18:1-5

Examine verses 18:1-2.

Why is this written next to the *Mitzvah* to appoint a king? What does verse 2 add that isn't already stated in verse 1?

The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that the verse is repetitive because you cannot even have a scenario in which a person transfers his land to the Levi. The **Ba'al HaTurim** suggests that the *Kohen* and the king are forever connected because it is the *Kohen* that anoints the king. The **Ohr HaChaim** says that this connection requires of the king give the *Kohanim* his *Trumot* just like any other Jew. His regal status does not exempt him from that *Mitzvah*.

Aliya 4 | 18:6-13

Examine verse 18:6.

To whom is this verse speaking? What parameters is it offering the observer of this law?

Rashi suggests that this verse speaks even to the *Levi'im*. The *Kohanim* & *Levi'im* were permitted to bring sacrifices at any time even if it was not their turn in the service rotation. The **Rashbam** limits this verse as speaking only to *Kohanim* who are currently not performing service in the *Bet HaMikdash*. The **Chizkuni** suggests that this is speaking of the *Levi'im* who had a tendency to be travelers as a result of their mission to educate the Jewish people throughout the land of Israel.

Aliya 5 | 18:14-19:13

Examine verse 18:14.

Why do magical solutions not work for the Jewish people? Do they work for the gentiles?

Rashi suggests that they do not work for the Jewish people because God intervenes directly on our behalf and we should be seeking out His answers through the *Urim VeTumim*. The **Sforno** reminds us of **Talmud Shabbat 156a** which states that there is no 'mazal' overseeing Israel and therefore this magic has no influence. The **Netziv** suggests that the *Navi* communicates the supernatural. Magicians try to manipulate the natural which distracts our attention from the spiritual world.

Aliya 6 | 19:14-20:9

Examine verse 19:14.

How is this command different from the command to not steal? What exactly is being commanded here?

Rashi states that this verse teaches us that, within the borders of Israel, one would violate two restrictions in the Torah is if you were to move the fence of your neighbor. Outside of Israel it would only be one. The **Chizkuni** suggests that this instruction is specifically in the context of *Shoftim* due to many conflict being created over the assigning of land borders. One should be careful to not fight over the borders of one's property, and certainly not violate the borders of another because of the great value of life.

Aliya 7 | 20:10-21:9

Examine verse 20:10-13.

What is the nature of this war? Why does peace have to be offered initially?

Rashi suggests that this is a voluntary war. This is perhaps the reason alternate options need to be explored before blood is shed. The **Ibn Ezra** agrees that peace should only be offered before a voluntary war. The **Talmud Gittin 62** records the instruction that we should proactively greet gentiles with wishes of peace before they have initiated any conversation with us. The **Da'at Zkenim** suggests that this **Talmud** is solidifying for us the need to be sincere in our desire for peace and to not be overly zealous in case our commitment comes off as insincere.

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Shabbat
Shalom