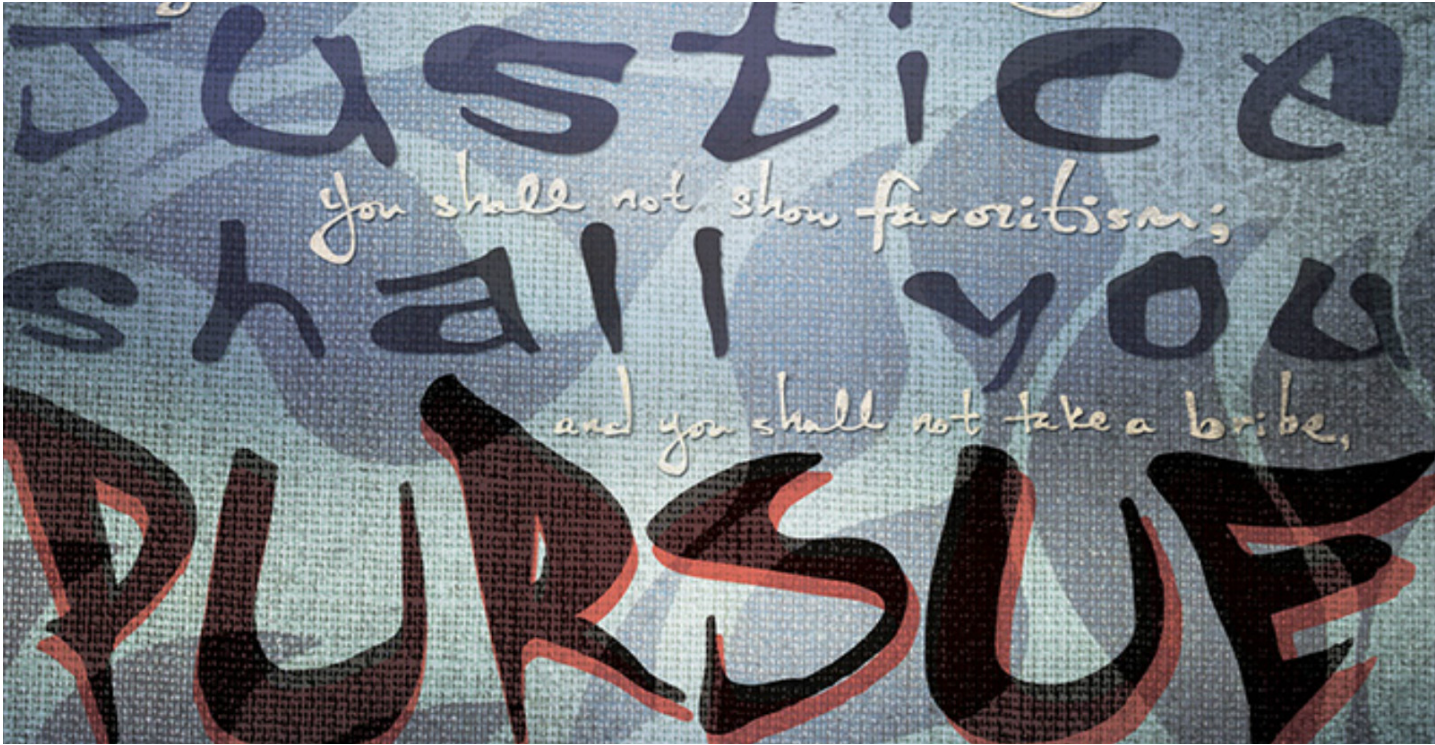




Shearith Israel  
SPANISH &  
PORTUGUESE  
Synagogue of Montreal  
Est. 1768

# SHABBAT BULLETIN

August 19, 2023 | 2 Elul, 5783



## Dvar Torah SHOFTIM 5783

By: Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis

Shoftim is the fifth Parsha in the book of Devarim. It is the second Parsha in which Moshe lays out his vision for what life will look like for the Children of Israel in the land of Israel. This week's Parsha reminds me of the books I used to read as a child that described how ideal cities work. Each member of society provides service and products that they exchange harmoniously with other members of their community.

Moshe starts the Parsha by explaining how the Children of Israel will have judges in each city, with a police force to keep order and carry out the decisions of the judiciary. Moshe then proceeds to introduce the role of the king, for the first time in the whole Torah, and delineate his role and restrictions. The king must have a Sefer Torah that he learns from everyday, and he is limited in the amount of personal wealth and power he can acquire. Moshe then proceeds to limit the property

rights of the priests. The last of the national offices that Moshe gives us instructions about is the prophets. Moshe warns us about the dangers of false prophets. Moshe commands us to test each prophet and to follow them only if their predictions come true.

One of the general rules of reading the Torah is that order matters. The order of words, verses and subjects tells us, amongst other things, about their relative importance. Thus, according to our Parsha judges and a justice system are more important to society and the Jewish community than political leadership. In fact, if you pay attention to the specific language, we are commanded to place judges over our society, while a king is not incumbent, we elect one only if we want one. It is clear from the text that the judges serve not at the will of the political class but rather at the will of the people. The judges answer to society not to the king.

Moshe notably places restrictions on both the king and the priestly class regarding their possessions. This is a position unique in the ancient world,

nowhere else in the ancient world do we see the position of the king and priest so severely restricted. In fact, the Torah makes clear that the situation in Egypt was exactly the opposite.

At the end of Breishit, the first book of the Torah, the only people left owning land in Egypt after years of famine were the king and the priests. This is the situation that leads directly into the enslavement of the Children of Israel. The Torah clearly illustrates how concentrating power into the hands of the political and religious leadership, no matter how enlightened that leadership, will ultimately end up enslaving the people that are supposed to be served by that power.

This week Moshe makes clear that the only way we can have a society that serves all its members is through a foundation of justice, that political leadership needs to be a choice of the people and that the religious authorities need to be more interested in the spiritual well being of those they serve than they are with their own material status.

Shabbat Shalom!

Through these supplications, individuals seek divine assistance in navigating challenges, making ethical decisions, and finding meaning in their lives.

4. **\*\*Spiritual Growth:\*\*** The act of reciting prayers and blessings daily is believed to contribute to personal spiritual growth. Engaging in regular acts of devotion and mindfulness helps individuals develop a deeper connection to their faith and spirituality over time.
5. **\*\*Ritual and Routine:\*\*** Judaism places a strong emphasis on routine and ritual as a way to sanctify time and imbue daily activities with spiritual significance. Daily supplications provide a structured routine that helps people infuse their lives with holiness.
6. **\*\*Community and Unity:\*\*** Many Jewish prayers are written in the plural form, emphasizing a sense of communal belonging. By reciting the same prayers around the world, individuals feel a sense of unity and connection to the broader Jewish community.
7. **\*\*Preserving Tradition:\*\*** Daily prayers and blessings have been a central aspect of Jewish practice for centuries. Engaging in these rituals helps individuals connect to their ancestors and uphold the traditions that have been passed down through generations.
8. **\*\*Mindfulness and Presence:\*\*** Daily

supplications encourage individuals to pause, reflect, and be present in the moment. This mindfulness practice helps individuals center themselves and focus on their spiritual journey amid the busyness of daily life.

Overall, the practice of daily supplications in Judaism serves as a multifaceted tool for fostering spiritual growth, maintaining a connection with the divine, expressing gratitude, seeking guidance, and building a sense of community and tradition.

## SHABBAT SHALOM

Start/Debut 7:39 p.m.	End/Fin 8:44 p.m.
PARASHAT SHOFTIM HERTZ PAGE 820 HAFTARAH ISAIAH HERTZ PAGE 835	
SHABBAT SERVICES SHAHRIT: 8:30A MINHA: 7:30P	

## WEEKLY SERVICES SCHEDULE

SUNDAY	Selihot: 7:30A Shahrit: 8:30A Minha: 6:00P
MONDAY - FRIDAY	Selihot: 6:00A Shahrit: 7:00A Minha: 6:00P

## CHEVRA SHAAS Service Schedule

SHABBOS, August 19 <sup>TH</sup> Schachris 9:30 a.m.
SUNDAY, August 20 <sup>TH</sup> Schachris 8:00 a.m.

## SELIHOT WITH RABBI ELLIS

After the destruction of the 2 tablets and 40 days of begging G'd to forgive the Children of Israel, Moshe Rabeinu ascended Mount Sinai to get the second set of tablets on Rosh Chodesh Elul. From Moshe Rabeinu's actions we learn that the month of Elul is an auspicious time for seeking G'd's forgiveness, favour and closeness.

Thus, we have the ancient custom of waking when it is dark and hurrying to the synagogue to pray Selihot the whole month of Elul in preparation for the coming new year. Selihot are special penitential prayers written by some of the greatest poets of Sefarad designed to soften our hearts in preparation for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. We will start reciting them this year on *Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m.* We pray Selihot everyday, except Shabbat and Rosh Hashana, until Yom Kippur. Selihot start one hour before our regularly scheduled Shahrit service. It's not easy to get up so early everyday for a month, but the beauty of the prayers and the change that they catalyze in our lives make it worth it. We look forward to seeing all of your sleepy faces this year.

## TORAH CLASS

Join **ANDRE ROTCHEL** every Shabbat after services Beit Hamidrash-Refreshments

**HISTORY & EVOLUTION OF THE TORAH** WITH **RABBI ELLIS**  
Every Shabbat 1 hour after Kiddush (1p.m.) Rabbi Ellis

## Rambam's Laws of Repentance

Every Shabbat  
45 minutes before Mincha  
Beit Hamidrash with Rabbi Ellis  
**Welcome all!**

## OPINION

## Got a Question for Reverend/Hazan Daniel Benlolo?

Dear Danny, why does Judaism encourage individuals to recite supplications every day?

Dear reader, the practice of daily supplications in Judaism is rooted in a combination of theological, spiritual, and communal aspects. Here's a more detailed explanation:

1. **\*\*Connection with God:\*\*** Daily prayers and blessings are considered a way to connect with the divine on a regular basis. Judaism places a strong emphasis on maintaining a personal relationship with God, and daily supplications provide a consistent opportunity for individuals to communicate their thoughts, and feelings to the divine.
2. **\*\*Expression of Gratitude:\*\*** Many Jewish prayers and blessings focus on expressing gratitude for the blessings in one's life, both big and small. This practice helps individuals cultivate an attitude of thankfulness and recognize the positive aspects of their lives.
3. **\*\*Guidance and Reflection:\*\*** Daily prayers often include requests for guidance, wisdom, and understanding.



The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal Presents

## HIGH HOLY DAYS INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

with **Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis**  
Develop the tools to make the High Holy Days as meaningful as possible

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Jennifer Abdulezer Mashaal**  
Dietitian & Nutritionist

**Dr. Melanie Bilbul**  
Psychiatrist

DATE  
5 SEPTEMBER

TIME  
7 PM - 9 PM

LOCATION  
BATTAT & CHEVRA SHAAS

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www.thespanish.org

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Join us for an enlightening evening as we delve into the profound aspects of the upcoming High Holidays. Have you ever wondered about the best ways to prepare for the solemn fast of Yom Kippur? Curious about the ancient significance of blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah? Seeking guidance on the path to forgiving those who have caused us pain? And what about the meaningful pursuits during the extended synagogue hours of the High Holidays?



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Jamie & Marc Hadid, in honour of their grandson, Mordechai Joshua Hadid.

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Marc Hadid & Elie Hadid, in memory of their father, Shaoul Hadid z'l.

COMMUNITY

Chevra Shaas  
Words From  
Rabbi Menahem White  
SHOFETIM 5783

“Say it ain’t so.” Well, it is, and we have to respond properly. I am referring, of course, to the fact that this past Thursday and Friday have been Rosh Hodesh of Elul. And that means... Rabbis must make sure their sermons are properly prepared. Hazzanim must make sure their voices and tunes are in the best shape. Shofar blowers must practice making sure all of their teqiot, shevarim, and teru`ot are the proper length. Gabbaim must know to whom to give aliyot. Synagogue offices must make sure all the seats are sold. Stores must be certain that they have the proper inventory of apples, honey, and all of the Rosh Hashanah foods. And especially, for all of us, the month before Rosh HaShanah is the time to refine our “middot,” our actions, to become more meticulous in our mitsvot.

I have often pointed out that my favourite acronym for the month of elul is the verse from Sefer Shemot, parashat mishpatim, “‘ina leyado ve-samti lekha’.” The first four letters of that phrase in Hebrew spell out the word Elul. This verse refers to the establishment of “cities of refuge,” for someone who kills accidentally. And you might think, “what does that have to do with me? I never killed no one.” Well, besides the double negative that kills the English language, it seems to me that there is an important idea in that verse.

Let me explain: We are all good people. We would never want to do any harm to anyone. Nevertheless, we often, without thinking, can say or do something that causes pain to someone else. I wrote the above words this past Sunday evening. And then, Monday morning, well...it had to happen. Someone complained loudly that he had not received an aliya for some time. Now, our gabbaim are very nice people, and they would never intentionally want to hurt anyone’s feelings. But...it does happen. So, Elul is a time to carefully reflect on whatever we say or do, that we should not accidentally hurt anyone.

What is going on in Israel? The holy land, where prominent politicians and military figures are speaking and writing negative things about other Israelis: statements that, chas ve-shalom, could cause terrible harm to the State and to all of the Jewish people. I’m sure that they mean well, but can’t they think about the terrible consequences of their words?

According to Rabbeinu Bahya, in his introduction to parashat Shofetim, the purpose of this week’s parasha’s requirement to appoint judges is that by so doing, fair judgement will lead to peace, upon which the world exists. Perhaps a reasoned compromise on judicial reform!

May we all have a meaningful month of elul, as we prepare ourselves for Rosh HaShanah.

Shabbat shalom, Ketivah va-hatimah Tovah. A sweet and healthy year! A year when the politicians and judges in Israel can make judgements leading to peace, in the way of Rabbeinu Bahya!

Congregation  
Maghen Abraham  
PERASHA "SHOFTIM"  
Thoughts: Mayer Sasson

"Judges and policeman you shall appoint in all your gates...." (16,18)  
Judges and policemen

The commentators such as the "Shlah Hakadosh", Rabbi Haim Vital and others note that the Mitzvah of appointing judges is presented to the singular person and is directed to "You" as an individual and they therefore expand the scope of this requirement beyond the range of the basic requirements upon the communities to appoint Judges and a court system as well as law enforcement officers, in order to preserve the well being of the nation and bring to justice crimes and misconduct that may transpire in the daily life of a human community. The system is also needed to settle disputes and disagreements that could not be sorted out between opposing parties and to provide a moral compass as well as a wholesome code of conduct based on the Torah's guidelines, for the community to follow.

The commentators go on to say that each of us has personal gates located in our head such as ears eyes nose and mouth. A Jew is required to discern and examine the sights, scents and voices as well as the speech that go out and come into his personal gates. A Jew has to be aware that there are looks and glances as well as stares that are proper and permissible and at time even a Mitzvah and we must categorise them in their order of importance whether they are a sight of a Mitzvah or a sight of forbidden and corrupt scenery that should be avoided as they effect the soul to the detriment.

The same is true about hearing - Are we hearing worthy speech? Are we hearing segments expressions that are related to a Mitzvah or lessons of the Torah? Or are we hearing derogatory information and gossip? And when we open our mouth are we careful to examine what we are about to utter? Are we speaking in a calm and friendly soft voice? Or in a cynical cruel manner with intent to humiliate others? Are we as careful and particular of what we say just as what we chose to eat? Are we eating in a restrained fashion or we are consuming food in a coarse way?

The Torah is asking ask to appoint Judges and apply scrutiny and contemplation upon that which is before us and ask the questions based on the guidelines of Torah. We must determine if a certain issue or event or item is allowed and wanted or - should we reject it? Should we say it or should we forbear? Should we express it or should we restrain ourselves?

Just as when people arrive at foreign country they are all examined at the gate and asked to fill in forms and answer questions for the authorities to evaluate whether to let them in or not, we must do the same with every issue including but not limited to habits, opinions, desires and urges. We are all prone to the risk that lays in leaving borders unattended and unsupervised; we all may stumble and fall and be mislead by our own representational systems as it is a given "that the eyes see, the heart covets and the limbs execute the deed".

We can easily fall into the traps of momentary gratification as a benefit and let go of our most treasured asset, the soul.

We also need to apply a filtering system in our thought process, as it all starts with thoughts and opinions that form in our minds; we have to apply a careful selection process and scrutiny and examine each

Mazal Tov To



Jamie & Marc Hadid, on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Mordechai Joshua Hadid, son of Charly Hadid.



Jamie & Marc Hadid, on their 45<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

PARNASS HAYOM  
BEIT HAMIDRASH  
HELWANI

SHABBAT 2 ELUL - AUGUST 19  
Cong. Maghen Abraham, en l'honneur du Beit Hamidrash Helwan.

Perla Bitton & Famille, À la mémoire de son mari Jacob Bitton ז"ל

SUNDAY/DIMANCHE 3 ELUL - AUGUST 20  
Fouad Shahraban Family, in memory of Rosa Shahrabani ז"ל

MONDAY/LUNDI 4 ELUL - AUGUST 21  
Marc & Jamie Hadid, à la mémoire de Shaoul Hadid ben Gilson ז"ל

Elie & Amy Hadid, in memory of his father, Shaoul Hadid ז"ל

Ruth Nader, in memory of her brother, Allan Frederick Soffer ז"ל

TUESDAY/MARDI 5 ELUL - AUGUST 22  
Sidney Elhadad, à la mémoire de son père, Meir ben Freha ז"ל

Ronald Mashaal, in memory of his mother, Doris Mashaal ז"ל

WEDNESDAY/MERCREDI 6 ELUL - AUGUST 23  
in honour of Claudia Aintabi & Karkoukly Families.

THURSDAY/JEUDI 7 ELUL - AUGUST 24  
Rachel & Jim Archibald, in honour of their grand children, Jacob, Chloé, Zachary, Noah, Joshua, Micah & Isaac.



thought that goes through our minds and decide if to adopt it or reject it and not dwell on the thoughts that are not conducive to our well being and that do not conform to the spirit of the Torah. By not doing so we take too big of a risk that they will put us in a harmful way to the extent that we are almost compelled to do an improper act that may ensue from a festering thought that may linger in our minds.

It is also essential for us to know when the "Judges" are effective and when we need to apply "police force"- as at certain times this is the only way we may prevent ourselves from committing a sin and guard ourselves. At times of cloudy judgment and diminished capacity and lack of clarity, our own "judges" may not be suitable and effective and end up taking bribes in form of the pleasure derived from the wrong deed that temporary generate sweetness and pleasure - that later turn sour and onerous (but at certain times we yield to it nevertheless). The Torah tells us that at those times we need to deploy the police force in order to enact fences and strict borders and restrictions that will serve as a precautionary preventive measure and hopefully keep us out of trouble.

May Hashem grant us the wisdom to discern when we have the right state of mind to rely on the "judges" and when it is time to summon the "police".

SHABBAT SHALOM!!

Learning  
with  
Reverend Hazan  
Daniel Benlolo

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R.H. Daniel Benlolo  
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Reading Hebrew is a valuable skill that connects you to a rich cultural and historical heritage. It allows you to engage with sacred texts, understand traditions, and explore a diverse range of literature. Whether for religious, academic, or personal reasons, learning to read Hebrew can open doors to a deeper understanding of a vibrant linguistic and cultural tradition.

FOR SELICHOT:

Selichot  
Thursday August 24 @7pm

The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue  
Congregation Maghen Avraham  
Babylonian Iraqi community  
invite you to  
'A Night At The Selichot'  
\*Mashaal Sanctuary\*

Reciting the Selichot before the High Holidays is a meaningful practice that prepares your heart and mind for the upcoming Days of Awe. These special prayers of repentance and reflection help you to acknowledge your shortcomings, seek forgiveness, and strive for self-improvement. Engaging in Selichot fosters a sense of spiritual readiness, allowing you to approach the High Holidays with a focused and introspective mindset, enhancing the significance of this important period in the Jewish calendar.

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