



# SOUTH HEAD YOUTH PARASHA SHEET

## PARASHAT SHOFTIM



Moshe informs the Jewish people that Hashem will be appointing a Jewish king to rule over the Jewish people. The king will be chosen from the tribe of Yehudah. The king will be responsible for the entire Jewish nation. He will need to ensure that the whole nation follows Hashem's Torah and Mitzvot. He will need to ensure that the land of Israel is governed in accordance with Torah law. He will also be required to lead the Jewish army in war. Moshe also tells the Jewish people that a Jewish king has to perform four Mitzvot specific to a Jewish king. No other Jew is required to perform these Mitzvot. The first Mitzvah forbids a Jewish king from having too many horses.



The reason for this is because the more horses a king has, the stronger his army is. Hashem wants the Jewish king to realise that the strength of the Jewish army comes from Hashem and not from the number of horses a king owns. Hashem is in control of the victories of the Jewish army. The second Mitzvah forbids a Jewish king from collecting too much gold and silver for himself. He is however permitted to collect large amounts of gold and silver for the Beit Hamikdash. This is because if a king has too much gold and silver he will become haughty and full of pride. Hashem does not want the Jewish people to have an arrogant king and it is for this reason that he commands that a Jewish king may not collect too much gold and silver for himself. The third Mitzvah forbids a Jewish king from marrying too many wives. The Torah limits a Jewish king to marrying eighteen wives. The reason for this Mitzvah is because if a king has too many wives he will not be able to control them. He would not be able to ensure that they only acted in an appropriate manner and followed the Torah law. The great King Solomon married a few too many wives - he had one thousand wives! He had so many wives that

in his old age he was unable to control them. Many of them began to worship idols and he was unable to stop them! The fourth Mitzvah of a Jewish king is the Mitzvah to have two Torah scrolls. A Jewish king is required to carry a Torah scroll at all times. No matter where he is a Jewish king always has a Torah scroll in his back pocket. This ensures that the Jewish king remembers Hashem no matter where he is. When a Jewish king carries a Torah scroll with him he will remain humble. He will constantly remember that Hashem is the true King and the One who governs the entire world! The Jewish king keeps his second Torah scroll in his palace. This Torah allows the Jewish king to fulfill his Mitzvah of having a Torah written for the Jewish people for their own personal use.

In addition to the appointment of a Jewish king Moshe tells the Jewish people that a Jewish court will be appointed for the Jewish people. The Jewish court is the Beit Din. The Beit Din base all of their decisions on the Torah law. Moshe tells the nation that every city and town in Israel, no matter its size, is required to appoint a Beit Din consisting of three judges. The Beit Din in the towns and cities are only permitted to judge small cases such as cases of theft. All major cases are required to be brought before the big Beit Din in Jerusalem which is called the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy judges and one leader. They had a special room in the Beit Hamikdash in which they would judge the various cases brought before them. Moshe tells the Jewish people that they may never go against the words of the Sanhedrin nor should they contradict the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin should always have the last word. The Sanhedrin, unlike the Beit Din was permitted to give the death sentence if deemed necessary. Moshe tells the nation that even if they believe the Sanhedrin is wrong they are forbidden by the Torah to go against the word of the Sanhedrin. Any person who doesn't listen to the Sanhedrin will be punished. If a Beit Din was unable to settle a case the case would be sent to the Sanhedrin.

Hashem ensures that the Beit Din and Sanhedrin are set up in a very fair manner. Rule number one is that a Beit Din and Sanhedrin may only judge a case if there were at least two witnesses present at the incident. If there was only one witness they may not judge. The judgement is left for Hashem. During the court case both the Beit Din and Sanhedrin ask each of the witnesses to speak one at a time. While one witness speaks the other witness may not be present in the room. After speaking and questioning both witnesses individually, the Beit Din or Sanhedrin compares the facts given by both witnesses. If the facts given by both of the witnesses are identical then the Beit Din or Sanhedrin know that they're in business and they have a real case before them. However, if the facts do not match up the Beit Din or Sanhedrin will not judge the case but will leave the case for Hashem to judge. Hashem will then reward and punish the innocent and guilty people accordingly. If the Beit Din or Sanhedrin find that the two witnesses had plotted together against another man by making up a case, the two witnesses are punished with the same sentence that the victim would have served had he been found guilty.



It is also the responsibility of the Sanhedrin to ensure that there is clear signage and smooth roads leading towards the Ir Miklat, the city of refuge. The city of refuge was a place for a murderer who killed by accident to take refuge. If a person killed another person by accident he must run to a city of refuge before someone comes after him to take revenge. Once he arrives at the city of refuge he is judged by the Sanhedrin who decide whether the murder was accidental. If the Sanhedrin determine the murderer was indeed guilty then he is put to death. If it is determined that the death was accidental for example an axe fell out of his hand and killed someone, then the man is considered innocent. He does not however return home but rather he lives in the city of refuge until the Kohen Gadol dies. Even though the person is considered innocent he remains in the city of refuge in order that relatives of the person who was killed do not attempt to kill him. As long as he stays in the city of refuge, the relatives of the man who was killed by accident may not kill the accidental killer. The mother of the Kohen Gadol would be worried that the refugees would pray for her son to die. After all the refugees were permitted to go free without the risk of being killed only once the Kohen Gadol died. So in order to ensure that the refugees would not pray for the death of her son the Kohen Gadol's mother would offer food and drink to the refugees. If the refugee dies while in the city of refuge the refugee is buried in the city of refuge. His remains may only be transferred to another cemetery once the Kohen Gadol passes away.



Moshe warns the Jewish people against being superstitious. He reminds them that it is Hashem who runs the world and so we must all place our complete faith in Hashem. This also means that we should not ask a mind reader or a fortune teller to read our minds or palms. We should not ask an astrologer to look into the stars and tell us our destiny. We need to have complete faith in Hashem and trust that He will do what is best for us.

Moshe also tells the Jewish people that they are not permitted to beautify the land outside of the Beit Hamikdash by planting trees. This is because the current inhabitants of the land, the Cannanites would plant trees around their temples. These would then be used for idol worship. In order to ensure the Jewish people do not make the mistake of serving idols and especially not right outside of the Beit Hamikdash, Moshe tells them that they are not allowed to set up trees outside the Beit Hamikdash. He also forbids them from setting up a pillar of stone to honour Hashem as this was also a Cannanite practice which could lead to idol worship. If a Jew was found to be worshipping idols and was seen by at least two witnesses, he was taken to the Beit Din where he was sentenced to death by stoning.

The Parasha also speaks about the Jewish army and its preparation for war. It is very important that the Jewish army always remember Hashem particularly during battle. After all it is Hashem who enables the Jewish army to be victorious. At times when it seemed impossible for the Jewish army to win the war Hashem performed miracles and enabled the Jewish people to win the war. A modern day example of this is the 1967 Six Day War in Israel. It truly seemed impossible for the Jewish people to win this war. However Hashem caused miracles to occur and the Jewish army fighting for the Jewish state of Israel was victorious. The Jewish nation managed to utterly route four powerful enemies; Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Jordan. In the times of the Mishkan and Beit Hamikdash the Jewish people would always follow Hashem's war command. A Kohen was appointed as the Kohen for war. This was done by choosing a Kohen and pouring the anointing oil that was used to anoint the Kohen Gadol over his head. The 'Kohen for war' has the job of providing comfort to the soldiers. He reassured them that Hashem was there with the soldiers helping them win the war. He would lead the Jewish army into the war by chanting the famous verse of Shema. This verse reminded the soldiers that they need not fear because Hashem, the Creator of the heavens and earth was there by their sides protecting them. The Kohen would also announce three categories of soldiers who were exempt from fighting. These exemptions only applied in an optional war. In a mandatory war such as in the conquest of the land of Israel, all Jewish soldiers were required to fight. In the optional wars the soldiers exempt from fighting were soldiers who had just built homes and had not yet moved into their new home, soldiers who were engaged and soldiers who had planted vineyards but had not yet had a chance to eat from its fruits.



**Mission: Tell your friends what qualities you admire in them.**

**It was great seeing you in Shule!  
We hope you enjoy reading this Parasha Sheet and quizzing your family!  
Shabbat Shalom from Brookie and the South Head Youth Crew!**

