

Table Talk Parshat Shoftim

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

דברים ט"ז:י"ח

Deuteronomy 16:18

וְשֹׁטְרִים וְשֹׁפְטִים תִּתֵּן לְךָ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ
אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ לְשִׁבְטֶיךָ וְשֹׁפְטֵי
אֶת־הָעָם מִשְׁפָּט־צֶדֶק:

You shall appoint magistrates and officials for your tribes, in all the settlements that Hashem your God is giving you, and they shall govern the people with due justice.

ספר החינוך תצ"א:ז

Sefer HaChinukh 491:7

וזאת אחת מן המצוות המטלות על הצבור
כלם שבכל מקום ומקום. וצבור הראוי
לקבע ביניהם בית דין, כמו שמבאר
במסכת סנהדרין (ב ב), ולא קבעו להם
בטלו עשה זה, וענשן גדול מאד, כי
המצוה הזאת עמוד חזק בקיום הדת...

And this is one of the commandments that is incumbent on the community, every [community] in each and every place. And a community that is fit to establish a court among them - as is elucidated in Tractate Sanhedrin 2b - and does not establish it for themselves, has violated this positive commandment and their punishment is very great, as this commandment is a strong pillar in preservation of the religion.

"Thus, by definition, morality is a socially shared convention. As such, morality always implies the presence of a group that shares, to some degree, a particular notion of what is moral."

-Colin Wayne Leach, Rezarta Bilali, and Stefano Pagliaro in Projects at Harvard, Harvard University

Let's Talk!

Why do you think it is a mitzvah to set up a system of justice in every community?

How do people help each other act morally or immorally?

How can you be someone who influences others to be better?

Kids, ask your parents!

When were you part of a group that influenced you?

How did the group change you?



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