

SELECTIONS FROM PARASHAT SHOFTIM

שְׁפָטִים וּשְׁלֹרִים פָּמָנוּ לְכָל־שָׂעָרִים אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתָן לְךָ לְשָׁבֵטְךָ וְשָׁפֹט אֶת־הָעָם מִשְׁפָט־אֶתְךָ:

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

לֹא־תִּטְפֹּה מִשְׁפָט לְאַמְתִּיר פָּגִים וְלֹא־תִּקְחֶה שְׁמָד כִּי דְשָׁמָד יָעוֹר עַיִן חֲכָמִים וַיַּסְלֵף דְּבָרֵי צְדִיקִים:

You shall not judge unfairly: you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just.

אֶתְכָּךְ תִּרְבֹּרְךָ לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה וְיִרְשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתָן לְךָ: (5)

Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

לְעַל־פִּי וְשָׁנִים עַדְיִם אוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה עַקְיִם יוֹמָת הַמְּאַת לְאַיִלְתִּי עַד אַחֵד:

A person shall be put to death only on the testimony of two or more witnesses; he must not be put to death on the testimony of a single witness.—

וְיַד הַשְׁעָרִים תִּנְהַדְּבֹּר בְּרִאשָׁנָה לְקָמִיתוֹ וַיַּד כָּל־הָעָם בְּאַחֲרָנָה וּבְעַרְתָּה הַרְבָּה: (6)

Let the hands of the witnesses be the first against him to put him to death, and the hands of the rest of the people thereafter. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst.

כִּי יְפָלָא מִמְּךָ דָּבָר לְמִשְׁפָט בְּיוֹדֶךָ | לְרֹם בְּיוֹדֶךָ לְדוֹן וּבָין נָגָע לְנָגָע דְּבָרֵי רִיאַת בְּשָׂעַרִיךְ וְקָמָת וְעַלְיָת אֶל־הַמְּלָכָה כָּל־אֶתְכָּךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּנָתָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ:

If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, or assault—matters of dispute in your courts—you shall promptly repair to the place that the LORD your God will have chosen,

וְבָאתְ אֶל־הַפְּנִים הַלְוִים וְאֶל־הַשְּׁפָט אֲשֶׁר יְהִי בְּיָמִים הַזֹּם וְזָרֶשֶׁת וְתָגִיזֶת לְכָל אֶת־דָבָר הַמִּשְׁפָט:

and appear before the leitical priests, or the magistrate in charge at the time, and present your problem. When they have announced to you the verdict in the case,

וְעַשְׂתָּה עַל־פִּי כְּכָבֵר אֲשֶׁר יָגִידוּ לְךָ מִן־הַמְּקוּם הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִבְנֶר יְהָה וְשָׁמְרָת לְעַשְׂוֹת כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֹרֶה:

you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place that the LORD chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you.

על-פי התוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יֹרֶךְ ועַל-המְשֻׁפֵּט אֲשֶׁר-יָאִמְרוּ לְךָ פָּעָשָׂה לֹא תַּפְעַשְׂה לְכָךְ יְמִין וַשְׁמָאל:

You shall act in accordance with the instructions given you and the ruling handed down to you; you must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you either to the right or to the left.

כִּי-תַּבָּא אֲלֵהֶן אֶרְץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתָן לְךָ וַיַּשְׁפַּת הָבָה וַיַּשְׁבַּת הַבָּה אֲשֶׂר עַלְיָה מֶלֶךְ כָּל-הָגָן אֲשֶׁר סִבְבָּתָה:

If, after you have entered the land that the LORD your God has assigned to you, and taken possession of it and settled in it, you decide, “I will set a king over me, as do all the nations about me,”

שָׁוֹם תְּשִׁים עַלְיָה מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּתַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּוּ מִקְרָב אֲתֶיךָ תְּשִׁים עַלְיָה מֶלֶךְ לֹא תַּוְלִל לְתַת עַלְיָה אִישׁ נָכָרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-אָסִיךְ הוּא:

you shall be free to set a king over yourself, one chosen by the LORD your God. Be sure to set as king over yourself one of your own people; you must not set a foreigner over you, one who is not your kinsman.

רַק לֹא-יַרְכֶּה-לּוּ סְוִים וְלֹא-יַשִּׁיב אֶת-הָעָם מִצְרַיָּה לְמַעַן קָרְבָּת סְוִים וְיְהוָה אָמָר לְךָם לֹא תַּסְפּוּן לְשׁוֹב בְּגָרָה כַּנְּהָעָד:

Moreover, he shall not keep many horses or send people back to Egypt to add to his horses, since the LORD has warned you, “You must not go back that way again.”

וְלֹא יַרְכֶּה-לּוּ נְשִׁים וְלֹא יַסּוּר לְכָבָו וְכָסֶף וְזָהָב לֹא יַרְכֶּה-לּוּ מְאָד:

And he shall not have many wives, lest his heart go astray; nor shall he amass silver and gold to excess.

וְהִנֵּה כַּשְׁבָּתוֹ עַל כְּפָא מַמְלָכָתוֹ וְכֹמֶב לֹא אֶת-מְשֻׁבָּה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל-סְפִּר מִלְּפָנֵי הַלְּבָנִים הַלְּוִיִּים:

When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Teaching written for him on a scroll by the levitical priests.

וְהִיְתָה עָמוֹ וְקָרְאָה בָוּ כָּל-יִמְיָה לְמַעַן וְלִמְדָה לִירָא אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְרָה אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה כְּזֹאת וְאֶת-הַחֲקִים הַאֲלֵהָה לְעַשְׂתָם:

Let it remain with him and let him read in it all his life, so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God, to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching as well as these laws.

לְכָלָתִי רְוִיָּה לְכָבָבִי מְאָתָיו וְלְכָלָתִי סָור מְוֹדָה מְאָתָה יְמִין וְשְׁמָאל לְמַעַן יְאִלֵּיךְ יְמִים עַל-מַמְלָכָתוֹ הוּא וְבָנָיו בְּקָרְבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

(ס) Thus he will not act haughtily toward his fellows or deviate from the Instruction to the right or to the left, to the end that he and his descendants may reign long in the midst of Israel.

כִּי-יָכֹרַת יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ אֶת-הָנוּם אֲשֶׁר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ נָטוֹ לְךָ אֶת-אֶרְצָם וַיַּשְׁבַּת בָּעָרֵיכֶם וַיַּבְּתִיּוּם:

When the LORD your God has cut down the nations whose land the LORD your God is assigning to you, and you have dispossessed them and settled in their towns and homes,

שְׁלֹושׁ עָרִים מִבְּקִיעַל לְךָ בַּתּוֹךְ אֶרְצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ נָטוֹ לְךָ לְרַשְׁתָה:

you shall set aside three cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

סְבִיכָו לְכָה קָדְרָה וְשְׁלֹשֶׁת אֶת-גָּבוֹל אֶרְצְךָ אֲשֶׁר נִנְחִילְךָ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ וְהָלְהָ לְנוּס שָׁמָה כָּל-רָצָם:

You shall survey the distances, and divide into three parts the territory of the country that the LORD your God has allotted to you, so that any manslayer may have a place to flee to.—

וְזֹה דָּבָר הָרָצָם אֲשֶׁר-דִּינָוּס שָׁמָה וְתַיִן אֲשֶׁר יָבָה אֶת-דָּרְעָה בְּבָלִיְּדָעַת וְהָוָא לְאַשְׁנָא לֹא מִתְמַלְל שְׁלִשָּׁם:

Now this is the case of the manslayer who may flee there and live: one who has killed another unwittingly, without having been his enemy in the past.

וְאֲשֶׁר יָבָא אֶת-דָּרְעָה בִּירוּם לְחַטֵּב עַצְּים וְנִנְקַה הַדָּוֹן בְּגַרְזֵן לְכָרְתָה הַעַז וְנִשְׁלַּח הַבְּרֵזֵל מִן-הַעַז וְמֵאָא אֶת-דָּרְעָה וּמִתְהַוֵּא נָנוּס אֶל-אַתָּה קָעָרִים-הַאֲלָה וְתַיִן:

For instance, a man goes with his neighbor into a grove to cut wood; as his hand swings the ax to cut down a tree, the ax-head flies off the handle and strikes the other so that he dies. That man shall flee to one of these cities and live.—

פּוֹדִירְדָּה גָּאֵל הַקּוֹם אַחֲרֵי הָרָצָם כִּי-יָמָם לְבָבוֹ וְהַשִּׁיגְוּ כִּי-יָרָבֶה קָדְרָה וְהַכְּהֵנוּ גְּבָשׁ וְלוֹ אֵין מִשְׁפְּט-מִנּוֹת כִּי לֹא שָׁנָא הָוָא לֹא מִתְמַלְל שְׁלִשָּׁם:

Otherwise, when the distance is great, the blood-avenger, pursuing the manslayer in hot anger, may overtake him and kill him; yet he did not incur the death penalty, since he had never been the other's enemy.

עַל-כֵּן אָנֹכִי מֵצָוֶה לְאֹמֶר שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים מִבְּקִיעַל לְךָ (ס)

That is why I command you: set aside three cities.

וְאִם-יָרְחֵיב יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ אֶת-גָּבְלָה כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתָּה וְגַם לְכָה אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דָּבָר לְתַת לְאַבְתָּה:

And when the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you all the land that He promised to give your fathers—

כִּי-תִשְׁמַר אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת לְעַשְׂתָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מֵצָוֶה כַּי-יּוֹם לְאַבְתָה אֶת-יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ כָּל-הַיּוֹם וְנִסְכְּתָה:

if you faithfully observe all this Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day, to love the LORD your God and to walk in His ways at all times—then you shall add three more towns to those three.

וְלֹא יִשְׁפַּךְ דָם גָּדוֹל בְּקָרְבָּ אֶרְצָךְ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נְחַלָּה וְתֵהָא עַלְיךָ ذְמִימָה: (ס)

Thus blood of the innocent will not be shed, bringing bloodguilt upon you in the land that the LORD your God is allotting to you.

וְקִידְוּנֵה אִישׁ שְׂנִיא לְרֹעֵהוּ וְאֶרְבָּ לֹו וְקַם עַלְיוֹ וְהַכְהֵה בָּשָׂר וְמַתָּה וְנַס אֶל-אַחֲתָה הַעֲרִים הָאָל:

If, however, a person who is the enemy of another lies in wait for him and sets upon him and strikes him a fatal blow and then flees to one of these towns,

וְשָׁלַחַו זָקְנֵי עִירָוּ וְלֹקְחֵו אֹתוֹ מֵשָׁם וְנַתְנֵנוּ אֹתוֹ בֵּין גָּאֵל הַקְּרָם וְמַתָּה:

the elders of his town shall have him brought back from there and shall hand him over to the blood-avenger to be put to death;

לְאַדְמָחָס עִינֵךְ עַלְיוֹ וּבְעַרְתָּה דָם-יְהוָה מִשְׁרָאֵל וּפּוֹב לְךָ: (ס)

you must show him no pity. Thus you will purge Israel of the blood of the innocent, and it will go well with you.

לֹא תִסְלַג גְּבוּל רַעַם אֲשֶׁר גָּבַלוּ רְאַשְׁנִים בְּנְחַלְתָּךְ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ לְרֹשֶׁתָּה: (ס)

You shall not move your countryman's landmarks, set up by previous generations, in the property that will be allotted to you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

לֹא תִקְרַם עַד אֶחָד בְּאִישׁ לְכָל-עַזְן וּלְכָל-חַטָּאת בְּכָל-חַטָּא אֲשֶׁר יִחְטֹא עַל-פִּי | שְׁנִי עַזְים אוֹ עַל-פִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה-עַזְים יְקִים דְבָרָה:

A single witness may not validate against a person any guilt or blame for any offense that may be committed; a case can be valid only on the testimony of two witnesses or more.

כִּי-יְקִים עַד-חַמֵּס בְּאִישׁ לְעֵנֹת בּוֹ סָרָה:

If a man appears against another to testify maliciously and gives false testimony against him,

וְעַמְדוּ שְׁנִי-הָאֶנְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-לָהֶם קָרֵב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְפָנֵי כְּפָנִים וְהַשְּׁפֵטִים אֲשֶׁר יְהִי בִּינָם הָהֵם:

the two parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests or magistrates in authority at the time,

וְדַרְשָׁו הַשְּׁפֵטִים הַיְתָב וְתֵהָא עַד-שְׁלֹךְ רַחֲד שְׁקָר עֲנָה בָּאֲחֵי:

and the magistrates shall make a thorough investigation. If the man who testified is a false witness, if he has testified falsely against his fellow,

ונְשִׁיחַתְּמָם לֹא פָּאֵנָר זָמָם לְעַשֹּׂות לְאָחִיו וּבְעַרְתָּתְּ הַנָּעַ מִקְרָבָה:

you shall do to him as he schemed to do to his fellow. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst;

וְהַנְּשָׁאָרִים יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיַּרְאוּ וְלֹא יִפְּסֹר לְעַשֹּׂות עוֹד כִּי בְּרָרָה הַרְבָּה בְּקָרְבָּה:

others will hear and be afraid, and such evil things will not again be done in your midst.

וְלֹא תַּחֲזֹס עִגָּל גַּפֵּשׁ בְּגַפֵּשׁ עֵין בְּעֵין שָׁוֹן בְּשָׁוֹן יָד בְּיָד גָּל בְּרָגָל: (ס)

Nor must you show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

כ/20

כִּי-מֵצָא לְפָלַחֲמָה עַל-אִיבָּרִיךְ וּרְאִיתְ סָוס וּרְכֶבֶל עַם רַב מִפְּךָ לֹא תַּרְאָ מִתְּמָמָם כִּי-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עַמָּךְ הַמָּעָלָךְ מִאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

When you take the field against your enemies, and see horses and chariots—forces larger than yours—have no fear of them, for the LORD your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, is with you.

וְהִנֵּה בְּקָרְבָּם אֶל-הַפְּלַחֲמָה וְגַנְגַּשׁ הַכָּנוֹן וְדָבָר אֶל-הָעָם:

Before you join battle, the priest shall come forward and address the troops.

וְאָמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְּמָרְקָרְבִּים הַיּוֹם לְמַלְחָמָה עַל-אִיבָּרִיכֶם אֶל-יְרָךְ לְבָבְיכֶם אֶל-מִרְאֵוֹ וְאֶל-תְּחִפּוֹן וְאֶל-תְּעִירָוֹן מִפְּנֵיכֶם:

He shall say to them, “Hear, O Israel! You are about to join battle with your enemy. Let not your courage falter. Do not be in fear, or in panic, or in dread of them.

כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַתְּלַךְ עַמְּכֶם לְהַלְלָם לְכֶם עַמְּדָאִיבִּיכֶם לְהַזְּיעַ אֶתְּכֶם:

For it is the LORD your God who marches with you to do battle for you against your enemy, to bring you victory.”

וְדַבְּרוּ כְּשַׁטְּרִים אֶל-הָעָם לְאָמַר מֵרַחָאָאֵישׁ אֲשֶׁר בְּנָה בֵּית-חֶדֶשׁ וְלֹא חָנָכוּ יְלָךְ וְיִשְׁבֶּב לְבִיתְּוֹ פּוֹרִים מֹות בְּמַלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אַחֲרֵיכֶם:

Then the officials shall address the troops, as follows: “Is there anyone who has built a new house but has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another dedicate it.

וְמִי-הָאֵיֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִנְצָעַ כֶּרֶם וְלֹא חָלַלׁוּ יָלֹךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב לְבִתּוֹ פָוִידִימֹת בַּמְלֹחָמָה וְאֵישׁ אַחֲרֵי יִסְלָלָנוּ:

Is there anyone who has planted a vineyard but has never harvested it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another harvest it.

וְמִי-הָאֵיֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-אָרַשׁ אֲשֶׁר וְלֹא לִקְחָה יָלֹךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב לְבִתּוֹ פָוִידִימֹת בַּמְלֹחָמָה וְאֵישׁ אַחֲרֵי יִקְחָה:

Is there anyone who has paid the bride-price for a wife, but who has not yet married her? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another marry her.”

וַיִּסְפּוּ הַשְׂטָרִים לְדַבָּר אֶל-הָעֵם וְאָמְרוּ מִי-הָאֵיֶשׁ הַיָּרָא וְרָה כַּלְבֵב יָלֹךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב לְבִתּוֹ וְלֹא יִמְסֶ אַת-לִבֵּב אַחֲיו כַּלְבֵב:

The officials shall go on addressing the troops and say, “Is there anyone afraid and disheartened? Let him go back to his home, lest the courage of his comrades flag like his.”

וְהַיְהּ בְּכָלְתַּה הַשְׂטָרִים לְדַבָּר אֶל-הָעֵם וַיְקַרְוּ שֶׁבְּיַצְבָּאֹת בַּרְאָשׁ הָעֵם: (ס)

When the officials have finished addressing the troops, army commanders shall assume command of the troops.

כִּי-תִקְרַב אֶל-עִיר לְהַלְׁקָם עַלְיכָה וְקָרָאת אֶלְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם:

When you approach a town to attack it, you shall offer it terms of peace.

וְהַיְהּ אֶם-שְׁלוּוּם קָעֵנֶךָ וְפָתַחַתָּה לְךָ וְהַיְהּ כָּל-הָעֵם הַנִּמְצָא-בָּהּ יִהְיוּ לְךָ לְמַס וְעַבְדוּךָ:

If it responds peaceably and lets you in, all the people present there shall serve you at forced labor.

וְאֶם-לֹא מִשְׁלִימֵם עָפָךְ וְעַשְׂתָּה עָפָךְ מִלְחָמָה וְצִרְעָה עַלְיכָה:

If it does not surrender to you, but would join battle with you, you shall lay siege to it;

כִּי-תִצְוַר אֶל-עִיר יְמִים רְבִים לְהַלְׁקָם עַלְיכָה לְתִפְשָׁה לְאַ-מְשִׁיחָה אַת-עַצְמָה לְנַדְּךָ עַלְיוֹ גַּרְזָן כִּי מִקְרָנו תָּאֵל וְאַתָּה לֹא חֲגַרְתָּ כִּי הָאָדָם עַז הַשְׁׁלָה לְבָא מִפְּנֵיכָךְ בְּמִצּוֹרָה:

When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?

לְקַעַז אֲשֶׁר-פָּרָע קִירָלָא-עַז מְאַכֵּלְהוּא אָתָּו מִשְׁׁקָה וְכָרְבָּה וּבְנִיתָ מִצּוֹר עַל-הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר-הָוּא עַשְׂה עַפְקָה מִלְחָמָה עַד רַקְמָה:
(פ)

Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.