

Discourse 64

“Shoftim v’Shotrim Titein Lecha - Judges and officers shall you appoint”

Shabbat Parshat Shoftim,

7th of Elul, 5725

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁴²⁴ “Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities.” In *Ohr HaTorah*¹⁴²⁵ (which was recently published)¹⁴²⁶ he brings the statement in *Pardes Rimmonim*,¹⁴²⁷ that from the perspective of Understanding-*Binah* the *Sefirot* are all called “judges-*Shoftim*-שופטים,” particularly the *Sefirah* of Splendor-*Tiferet*, which is called “Judge-*Shofet*-שופט.”

The reason is because Understanding-*Binah* is called the powers of Might-*Gevurot*, (for, as known, Understanding-*Binah* is the source of Judgments-*Gevurot*),¹⁴²⁸ since from it judgment (*Din*) is bestowed to below. (This is because the source of all bestowal is drawn from Understanding-*Binah*, and therefore, when it is necessary to bestow new light, there must

¹⁴²⁴ Deuteronomy 16:18

¹⁴²⁵ *Ohr HaTorah*, *Devarim* Vol. 2 (Eikev-Tavo), beginning of *Shoftim* (p. 817)

¹⁴²⁶ 5th of Menachem-Av, on the morning into the 6th of Menachem-Av

¹⁴²⁷ *Pardes Rimmonim*, Shaar 23 (Shaar Erchei HaKinuyim) Ch. 21, section on “*Shofet*-שופט.”

¹⁴²⁸ See *Pardes Rimmonim*, Shaar 23 *ibid.* section on “*Gevurah*-גבורה”;

be judgment (*Din*) as to whether the world is fitting of this.) Thus, when the power of judgment (*Din*) spreads forth from [Understanding-*Binah*], all the *Sefirot* are called “Judges-*Shoftim*” שופטים.” When there is a dominance of this over the quality of Splendor-*Tiferet*, it then is called “Judge-*Shofet*” שופט.” (This concludes the quote of his words.)

In continuation to this, he also brings the statement in Me’orei Ohr,¹⁴²⁹ that “Judge-*Shofet*” שופט is from the side of Splendor-*Tiferet*, and “Officer-*Shoter*” שוטר is from the side of Kingship-*Malchut*, being that it is what hits and smites etc., (this being the effect of Kingship-*Malchut* within the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*)).

The Ya’ir Netiv cites the statement in Ra’aya Mehemna,¹⁴³⁰ “All the *Sefirot* are [called] Judges (*Shoftim* שופטים) from the side of the Upper Mother-*Imma Ila’ah* (Understanding-*Binah*), whereas these Officers (*Shotrim* שוטרים) are from the side of Kingship-*Malchut*.”

2.

He continues to explain this as it relates to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹⁴³¹ That is, the matter of “Judges-*Shoftim*” שופטים (which stems from Understanding-*Binah*) is the drawing down of the Upper Fear (*Yirah Ila’ah*) in the soul, whereas the matter of “Officers-*Shotrim*” שוטרים

¹⁴²⁹ Me’orei Ohr, Ot Shin-ש, section 11.

¹⁴³⁰ Zohar II 112b

¹⁴³¹ Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 112b

(which stems from Kingship-*Malchut*) is the Lower Fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*).

This is why there must be both the matter of “Judges-*Shoftim*-שופטים,” as well as the matter of “Officers-*Shotrim*-שוטרים.” This is because some people are in a state and standing in which, through contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) etc., they can reach the Upper Fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*), [this being] fear of the exaltedness (*Yirat HaRomemut*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

However, there are those whose intellects do not have the capacity to contemplate matters of Godliness etc., and they thus must awaken the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*) within themselves, at the very least, fear of punishment (*Yirat HaOnesh*). This is the matter of “Officers-*Shotrim*-שוטרים,” who according to the ruling of the “Judges-*Shoftim*-שופטים,” smite all those who do not obey with a rod ¹⁴³² This refers to the fact that it is necessary to smite the animalistic soul with a rod etc.¹⁴³³

This is to the extent that there are those who are in such a state that in order to smite them, it first is necessary to bind them (as in the words of Rashi on the Torah portion of Devarim,¹⁴³⁴ “‘Officers-*Shotrim*-שוטרים’ refers to those who bind and flog etc.”), so that they will not escape,¹⁴³⁵ being that

¹⁴³² Rashi to Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 16b – entitled “*Shotrim*.”

¹⁴³³ Also see Torah Ohr, end of Vayeishev (30d), cited in Ohr HaTorah ibid.

¹⁴³⁴ Deuteronomy 1:15

¹⁴³⁵ See Talmud Bavli, Makkot 23a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Sanhedrin 17:6

they want to remain an existence unto themselves etc.¹⁴³⁶ This is because the Torah even speaks to the lowest levels etc.

3.

Now, we should connect this matter with the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the month of Elul,¹⁴³⁷ the subject matter of which is [as indicated by the verse],¹⁴³⁸ "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine-*Ani LeDodi v'Dodi Lee*-אני לדודי ודודי לי."

This is like the analogy of a king,¹⁴³⁹ who before his arrival to a city, the people of the city go out to greet him and receive his face in the field, at which time whosoever wishes, may to go out and greet his face, and he receives them all and fulfills their requests with a radiant face etc. [Elul] is therefore a time when it is necessary to increase one's study of Torah and the fulfillment of its *mitzvot*, and [increase] in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in general etc.¹⁴⁴⁰

¹⁴³⁶ It is recalled that in regard to this matter, the [Russian (Chassidic)] expression "I myself am a shoemaker-sam sapazhnik-סאפאזשניק" was used. (See *Sefer HaSichot* 5698 p. 264.) [The story is told of a gentile shoemaker who stole a pair of Tefillin from a Jew. When the Jews saw the Tefillin in his possession and accused him of stealing them, he replied "I myself am a shoemaker and I made them myself." This story is used to illustrate the relationship between a Chassid and his Rebbe, in that the Chassid is not an independent "shoemaker" unto himself. (Also see *Torat Menachem*, *Hitva'aduyot* 5742, Vol. 1, p. 303 and elsewhere.)

¹⁴³⁷ Also see the discourse entitled "*Ani LeDodi*" 5746 (*Torat Menachem*, *Sefer HaMaamarim* Elul, p. 230 and on).

¹⁴³⁸ Song of Songs 6:3; See Abudraham, *Seder Rosh HaShanah uPirusha*, Ch. 1; *Reishit Chochmah*, *Shaar HaTeshuvah* Ch. 4 (115b); *Pri Etz Chayim*, *Shaar Rosh HaShanah*, Ch. 1; *Ba'Ch to Tur*, *Orach Chayim*, 681 (section beginning "*v'He'eveeroo*"); *Likkutei Sichot* Vol. 29 p. 272 and on.

¹⁴³⁹ *Likkutei Torah*, *Re'eh* 32b

¹⁴⁴⁰ This concludes the portion of this discourse that we have available to us.