

TELL IT TO THE JUDGE

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"You shall appoint judges and police in all of your gates, and they will judge the people a righteous judgment."

Our Parasha begins with instructions to the people of Israel to set up a judicial system in all of their cities and with an admonition to judges to judge their cases fairly. Our Sages teach that all of the Torah portions that we read in the days between Rosh Hodesh Elul and Yom Kippur contain allusions to the battle with the evil inclination, the Teshubah process and character improvement -- all the elements necessary for a successful trial on Rosh Hashanah. The Kli Yakar points out that the verse says, "you shall appoint judges for yourself [Lecha] "--indicating that one should judge himself or herself before they point a finger at others. Check your character and behavior, fix your faults and only then can you judge others fairly. "Appoint judges for yourself" and then you will certainly "judge the people a fair judgment" Others say that the word "lecha"-- "for you" advises one to treat others as they would treat themselves. One should not be strict with others and lenient when it comes to themselves. Rabbi Simha Bunim from Peshischa says that when one is constantly evaluating their own behavior and they realize that they are not perfect then it will certainly lead them to see the strong points in someone else. In other words the verse is telling us that when you "appoint judges for yourself" then certainly you will "judge the people fairly". The Shelah HaKadosh sees in this instruction a command to control what goes in and out of you "gates" A person has eyes, ears, a mouth and nose. To reach spiritual perfection one must set judges and policemen at all of your gates. Should we all exercise caution and monitor carefully what goes in and out of our physical "gates" i.e. what we look at, what we say and what we listen to then we can all be assured of "righteous judgment" on that crucial day Rosh Hashanah.

May we all take advantages of this special period of grace and favor called Elul and concentrate on self improvement and forgiveness so that G-d will also only see good when He judges every individual, every community and every country on this Rosh Hashanah for life filled with blessing and happiness Amen. Shabbat shalom.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

One is permitted to begin a "melacha" [labor that is forbidden to perform on Shabbat] on Friday afternoon, even late in the day, even though the "labor" will continue on Shabbat and be completed on Shabbat without human intervention.

It is permitted to put a pot with food that is still raw on a fire even though it will cook on Shabbat. Clothing may be put in an AUTOMATIC washing machine on Friday close to sunset, so long as the machine will complete the cleansing and turn itself off on Shabbat.[This law applies to those who follow the rulings of Maran Yosef Karo who does not forbid melacha of this type because of the fact that the machine makes noise on Shabbat -see your local rabbi for explanation] (Source Yalkut Yosef Siman 252]

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