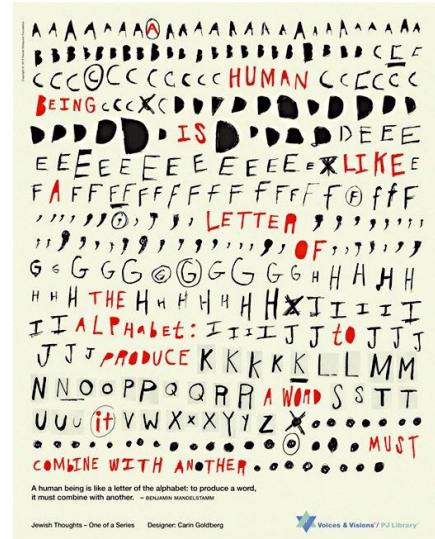


PARSHAT SHOFTIM  
30 AV 5780/20 AUGUST 2020



*Etz Hayim*  
painting by Susan Spektor



*A Human Being is Like a Letter*  
poster by Carin Goldberg

LEADERSHIP IS SERVICE

1. "...you shall be free to set a king over yourselves..." (Deuteronomy 17:15)  
"...Adonai your God has chosen him [the priest]...to be in attendance for service in the name of Adonai..." (Deuteronomy 18:5)  
"Adonai your God will raise up for you a prophet..." (Deuteronomy 18:15)
2. "When you enter the land Adonai your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it and you say, 'Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us...'" (Deuteronomy 17:14)
3. "he shall not keep many horses...he shall not have many wives...nor shall he amass silver and gold to excess." (Deuteronomy 17:16-17)
4. "he shall read it [this Torah] all the days of his life, so that he may learn to revere Adonai his God...and so that he will not consider himself better than his fellows." (Deuteronomy 17:19-20)
5. "You shall appoint for yourselves judges and officers in all your gates..." (Deuteronomy 16:18)

It is written in Pirke Avot, "Do not judge your fellow until you come to their place." Judges need to be drawn from the same environment as the defendants. They need to know not only what they have done; they need to have experienced the environment which brought

them to do what they had done. (Based on the teachings of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson)

It was this principle that was behind God's command to Moses when the Israelites had made the golden calf: "Go, get yourself down, for your people have dealt corruptly."

6. "Appoint for yourselves judges and officers throughout your land" (Deuteronomy 16:18). This can be read in connection with the hint that my grandfather, of blessed memory, found to the month of Elul in the verse: "He has made us and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3). There is a variance between the written text and the oral reading in this verse. One says ve-lo' anachnu ("and not we ourselves") while the other reads ve-lo anachnu ("and we are His"). These two words lo' and lo make up the spelling of the name Elul. And these two aspects depend upon one another. (Sefat Emet)

הוּא עֲשֵׂנוּ וְלֹא אֲנַחְנוּ [וְלוֹ]

7. "A human being is a tree of the field..." (Deuteronomy 20:19)

"A human being is like a letter of the alphabet: to produce a word, it must combine with another." (Benjamin Mandelstamm)