



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

SUMMER EDITIONS | שופטים - SHOFTIM

Vol. 17 Num. 34 (#691) · 2 Elul 5786 / August 15, 2026

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Branches of Leadership

Parshat Shoftim lays out our national Leadership structure. Over the course of the Parsha, it introduces four different institutions of leadership: the Shoftim — the judges and Beit Din; the Melech — the king; the Kohanim; and the Navi — the prophet.

There is a separation of Powers. No single person and no single institution carries every form of authority. Jewish society requires different kinds of leadership, each with its own responsibility, its own source of authority, and its own limitations.

The clearest example is the distinction between the Beit Din and the king.

The Ran, in his Derashot, explains that every society needs laws that allow it to function. Without government capable of maintaining order, protecting people and responding to the practical realities of society, "איש את רעהו חיים" — society would descend into chaos.

But that, says the Ran, is not the primary purpose of the Torah's judicial system.

The role of the judges is to administer "משפט צדק" — the justice of Torah itself. Torah law is not simply a mechanism for creating an efficient society. It is the means through which God's values and God's will enter human life. Its objective is not merely social order but to create a society shaped by kedushah and by the Divine presence.

Sometimes those two goals overlap. But sometimes they do not.

There may be situations in which the strict standards of Torah law — requirements of evidence, witnesses and warning, for example — make punishment impossible even though society clearly needs protection. For those situations, the Ran explains, there is a king. The king is responsible for the "סידור המדינה", the practical

functioning of the nation. The Beit Din asks: What does Torah demand? The king must also ask: What does society require in order to function?

This is not precisely the modern distinction between judicial, legislative and executive branches, but the underlying idea is remarkably familiar: different forms of authority are deliberately separated.

Indeed, the Torah goes even further. The authority to interpret Torah belongs to the Chachamim and the Beit Din — not even to the prophet.

When thousands of halachot were forgotten after Moshe's death, Chazal tell us that the response was not to ask a prophet to retrieve them from Heaven. The answer was: "לא בשמים" — Torah is no longer decided in Heaven. Similarly, "אין הנביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה" — a prophet cannot create a new law of Torah. Torah must now be studied, interpreted and applied through the human process of Torah Shebaal Peh.

That separation is extraordinary. A Navi may speak directly in the name of God, yet that does not give him control over the halachic system. The same structure appears in a different way when we compare the Kohen and the Navi.

The Kohen's movement is, in a sense, from the Jewish people toward God. When the Kohen Gadol enters the Mikdash, he carries the names of the twelve tribes upon his shoulders and over his heart. The Torah emphasizes that Aharon bears the names of Bnei Yisrael "לפני ה' תמיד" — before God continually. He enters the sacred space carrying Klal Yisrael with him.

The Navi moves in the opposite direction.

God tells Moshe: "ונתתי דברי בפיו ודבר אליהם את כל" — "אשר אצוונו" — "I will place My words in his mouth, and he will speak to them everything that I command him."

The Navi brings the word of God to the people. As Rav Hirsch explains, the Navi is not our representative whom we consult in order to discover what we want to know. He is God's messenger, sent to tell us what God wants us to hear.

We therefore find two parallel balances.

In the practical life of the nation, there is Beit Din and Melech: Torah truth on one side and the requirements of social and political order on the other.

In the spiritual life of the nation, there is Kohen and Navi: the Kohen carrying Israel toward God, and the Navi carrying God's message toward Israel.

Jewish leadership is not meant to be concentrated in a single voice. The person who governs the nation is not given the final authority to determine Torah. The person who speaks prophetically in the name of God does not determine halachah. The religious service of the Kohen has a different function from the moral challenge of the Navi.

Each institution needs the others.

The Torah's model of leadership is therefore not simply about choosing good leaders. It is about creating a structure in which different kinds of leadership balance and complete one another.

No one leader carries the whole Torah.

Only together — Shoftim, Melech, Kohen and Navi — can they build the complete Jewish society that the Torah imagines.



Birkat Me'ein Sheva in a Summer Minyan

Question: Shalom Rabbi, I hope you're enjoying your summer vacation! I'm currently in the mountains, where on Shabbat morning we daven in a local shul that is a little far from where we are staying. On Friday night, however, we daven at our house with a minyan. Last Friday night, a debate came up: Are we supposed to say *Birkat Me'ein Sheva* after the Shemoneh Esrei on Friday night? What should we have done?

Answer: This is a very common question during this time of year, when people are away for the summer and temporary minyanim are set up in all kinds of places — private homes, camps, hotels, and other locations.

First, a little background: **Why was Birkat Me'ein Sheva instituted in the first place?**

The Gemara in *Shabbat* (24b) explains that Me'ein Sheva was instituted *mipnei hasakanah* — because of danger. Rashi explains that in those times, people would generally not come to shul during the week, but on Shabbat they would come. Many shuls were located outside the city, and people would sometimes arrive late. There was concern that they might be harmed by mazikim on their

way home. Therefore, Chazal added Me'ein Sheva to allow everyone to finish davening together and leave as a group.

he **Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 268:10)** rules that Me'ein Sheva is not recited in a *Beit Chatanin* or *Beit Avelim*, because the original reason for the takanah does not apply. The implication is that Me'ein Sheva was instituted specifically for a regular shul, and not for a private home.

So, a **one-time minyan in someone's home** certainly does not require Me'ein Sheva.

But what happens when a temporary minyan becomes more established? Can a "temporary shul" acquire the status of a shul for this halacha?

There are different opinions among the Acharonim:

1. Mishnah Berurah (268:24): Two things are necessary: some degree of permanence and a Sefer Torah. He gives the example of temporary shuls at fairs. Based on this, a

hotel or summer community that establishes a designated shul for several weeks and has a Sefer Torah would recite Me'ein Sheva.

2. Taz: A Sefer Torah is not necessary. What matters is establishing the place as a regular location for davening for several days. The *Igrot Moshe* appears to follow this approach and writes that even if a house is used regularly only for Friday-night davening, it can have the status of a shul for this purpose.

Practically: If your home is being used for a minyan only for the one week you are there, only for Friday night, and there is no Sefer Torah, you **do not need to say Me'ein Sheva**.

However, if your home has been designated throughout the entire summer as a regular Friday-night shul, there is certainly room to say Me'ein Sheva, based on the opinions of the Taz and Igrot Moshe.

Similarly, in a **camp or hotel**, if a room has been designated as a shul for several weeks and there is a Sefer Torah, it would appear that **according to all opinions, Me'ein Sheva should be recited**.



There Will Be No Third Destruction

Based on Kima Kima by Rav Chaim Drukman

During the Second World War, Rav Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Herzog, then Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael, was in the United States receiving medical treatment. As the Nazi army approached the borders of the Land of Israel, President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged him to remain in America rather than return to a place facing such grave danger.

Rav Herzog replied:
"מקובלנו שיהיו רק שני חורבנות; חורבן שלישי לא יהיה!"
"We have a tradition that there will be only two destructions. There will be no third destruction."

He then returned immediately to Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Chaim Druckman explains that Rav Herzog's declaration was not merely an expression of courage or optimism. It rested on the belief that once the "revealed end" — and the process of the final redemption have begun, there may still be setbacks and periods of decline, but there cannot be another complete destruction. לא ירידות אמנם ייתכנו, אך חורבן — לא. declines remain possible, but destruction does not.

This principle is rooted in the words of Chazal. The Mechilta teaches that there are ten songs of redemption, with the tenth belonging to the future:
"עשר שירות הן... העשירית לעתיד לבא, שנאמר: 'שירו לה' שיר חדש, תהללתו מקצה הארץ.'"
"There are ten songs... the tenth will be in the future, as it says: 'Sing to Hashem a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth.'"
— *Mechilta deRabbi Yishmael, Beshalach, Masechta DeShirah* 1; *Yeshayahu* 42:10

The Mechilta notes that the earlier songs are described in the feminine form, while the song of the future is masculine:
כל השירות שעברו קראות בלשון נקבה, כשם שהנקבה יולדת — כך התשועות שעברו היה אחריהם "שעבוד, אבל התשועה העתידה להיות אין אחריה שעבוד."
"All the previous songs are expressed in the feminine form. Just as a woman gives birth, the previous salvations were followed by subjugation. The future salvation, however, will not be followed by subjugation."

The earlier redemptions "gave birth" to new periods in Jewish history, but none was permanent. The Exodus was eventually followed by further exile, and the return from Babylonia was followed by the destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash. The future redemption will be fundamentally different:

"שכשם שהזכר אינו יולד — כך התשועה העתידה לבא לא יהא אחריה שעבוד."
"Just as a male does not give birth, so too the future salvation will not be followed by subjugation."

The Mechilta concludes with Yeshayahu's promise:
"ישראל נושע בה' תשועת עולמים, לא תבשו ולא תכלמו עד עולמי עד."
"Israel is saved by Hashem with an everlasting salvation; you shall never again be ashamed or humiliated." — *Yeshayahu* 45:17

Tosafot explain the symbolism more directly:
"שהנקבה יש לה צער לידה, אף כל הנסים יש אחריהם צער, חוץ מלעתיד שאין אחריה צער."
"A woman experiences the pain of childbirth; similarly, all the previous miracles were followed by suffering, except for the future redemption, which will not be followed by suffering." — *Tosafot, Pesachim* 116b, s.v. *VeNe'emar*

The same principle appears in Midrash Tehillim:
"וכל הגאולות שעברו על ישראל — יש אחריהן שעבוד, אבל מיכן ואילך — אין אחריהן שעבוד."
"All the redemptions that Israel experienced were followed by subjugation, but from this point onward there will be no further subjugation." — *Midrash Tehillim* 118:24

Rav Herzog did not believe that the final redemption would unfold without wars, crises or painful reversals. He believed that these difficulties would occur within the process of redemption, not bring it to an end. The path may rise and fall, but its essential direction cannot be reversed. The third redemption may experience setbacks, but it will never be followed by a third destruction.

In the coming weeks, we will examine how this principle is developed further in the writings of the Rishonim and Acharonim.