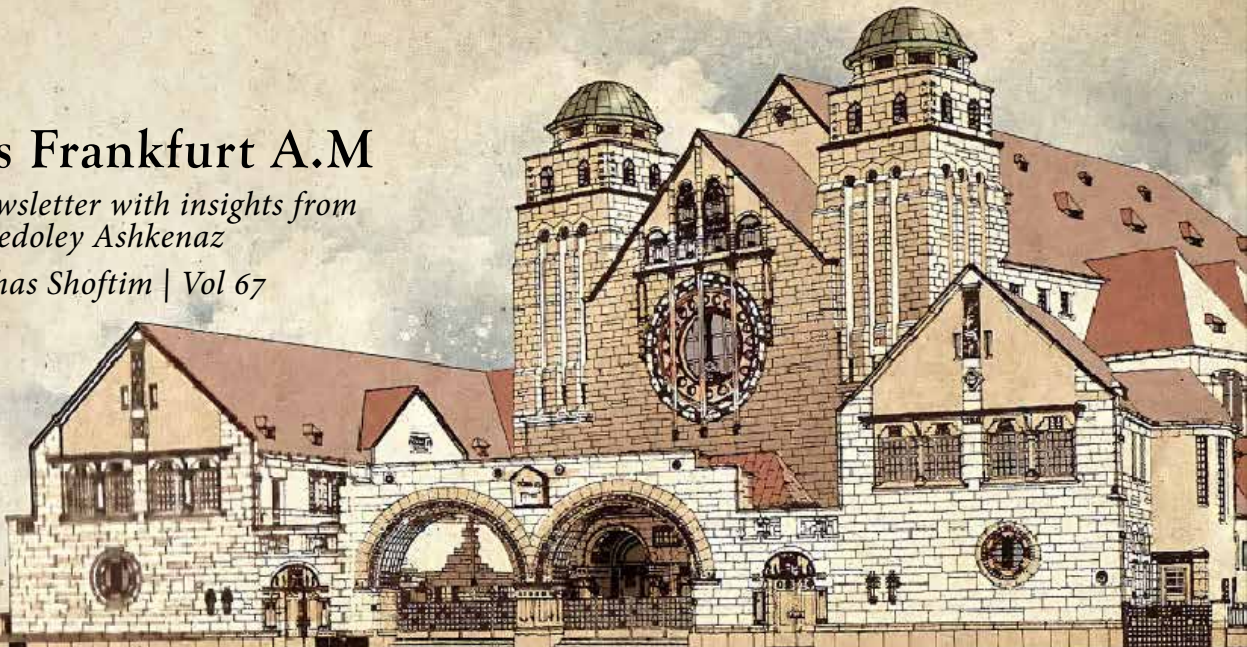


# Yeshivas Frankfurt A.M

A weekly newsletter with insights from  
Gedoley Ashkenaz

Parshas Shoftim | Vol 67



newsletter@yeshivasfrankfurt.org +97235740190 - 25 Harav Ben Yakov St. Bnei Brak

## The Fire and The Glow

Based on the Torah commentary of Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch - Rabbi Yisroel Kahn (Queens, NY)

*You shall appoint judges and executive officers for your tribes...and they shall judge the people with due justice. If the judgment of anything baffles you... you shall go up to the place that Hashem, your G-d will choose. And appear before the Kohanim the Levi'im, and to the judge who shall be in those days and inquire, and they will tell you the ruling of judgment. And you shall do according to the word which they tell you from that place that Hashem will choose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you.* Shoftim-16:18, 17:8-10

Parshas Shoftim begins with the commandment to appoint judges/courts and court officers in every city and town in Eretz Yisrael. The highest of all courts was the Sanhedrin Hagadol, a court of 71 judges who were all of the highest spiritual and scholarly caliber.

The seat of the Sanhedrin Hagadol was the לשכת הגזית / the Chamber of Hewn Stone in the Bais Hamikdash. From our pesukim it is clear that a close connection exists between the Bais Hamikdash, the Kohanim, and the Sanhedrin Hagadol. In fact, the physical presence of the Sanhedrin Hagadol in the Bais Hamikdash has halachic ramifications. Capital cases could only be tried -by any court- when the seat of the Sanhedrin Hagadol was in the Bais Hamikdash, if it was located elsewhere no capital cases were held .

Additionally, in a case of זקן ממרא / Rebellious Elder, where a halachic authority is liable to death for refusing to submit to the authority of the Sanhedrin Hagadol, it is only if he defied the Sanhedrin Hagadol while they are seated in the לשכת הגזית /

## Rav Schwab on this week's

### Parsha

Yaakov de Wolff, London

“וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה-לוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יָסוּר לְבָבוֹ וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב לֹא יִרְבֶּה-לוֹ מְאֹד:”

“[The king] shall not have many wives, lest his heart will be led astray, and [neither] should he have excessive silver and gold” (Devorim 17:17).

The Midrash in Shemos Rabbo (6:1, also in Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 2:6 and Vayikro Rabbo 19:2) records that Sheloumou ha-Melech justified him marrying many wives by saying that, contrary to this posuk, his heart would not be led astray. Chazal report that at that moment the yud from the word “יִרְבֶּה” pleaded with Hashem: “You have said that not a single letter from the Torah should be omitted, and yet this is what Sheloumou has done with me!” Hashem responded: “Sheloumou and a thousand like him will be eliminated, and still the crown on your head will not be abolished.” The question remains why specifically the letter yud protested, and not the entire posuk.

Rav Schwab זצ"ל explains that Sheloumou was fully aware that he could only marry a maximum of 18 wives. Still, he considered that the issur did not apply in situations where the words “וְלֹא יָסוּר לְבָבוֹ” were not in effect. After all, he wrote Shir Hashirim, the most holy part of Kesuvim (Rabbi Akiva in Mishno Yodayim 3: 5) and it is full of messages of Ahavas Hashem. No amount of women would negatively affect Sheloumou's relationship with Hashem. The issue was with regards to the application of this posuk to other kings (the “yud” indicating the future tense, and therefore other kings that came after him). It was for this reason that the letter yud protested his misinterpretation of the posuk.

the Chamber of Hewn Stone that he receives the death penalty.

#### Questions

Why is the Sanhedrin Hagadol, the supreme authority of halacha, located in the Bais Hamikdash-the supreme place of Avodah. Further, why is the full functioning of the Sanhedrin Hagadol dependent on its being located in the Bais Hamikdash?

#### Understanding

The Bais Hamikdash is located in the place chosen by Hashem (בית הבחירה) to be the central point for Avodah/Divine service; till this day we orient ourselves towards this place when we say the Shemoneh Esrei.

The holiest area in the Bais Hamikdash is the "Holy of Holies" where the Aron Kodosh/Holy Ark rested. The Ark derives its holiness from its contents, the Luchos/Tablets, and the sefer Torah written by Moshe Rabbeinu as dictated to him by Hashem.

The Luchos/Tablets are physical evidence of Hashem having given the Torah to Moshe Rabbeinu at Har Sinai; and the sefer Torah written by Moshe Rabbeinu is the source for every authentic Torah written to this day.

In short, the principal and holiest point of the Bais Hamikdash around which all service and vessels revolved was the Written Torah, in the form of the Luchos/Tablets and the Torah written by Moshe Rabbeinu as dictated to him by Hashem.

The guardians of the Written Torah were the Kohanim and Levi'im/priests who were dedicated solely to it and teaching by action the life it demands.

However, the Written Torah is only one aspect of Torah, only when together with the Oral Torah is Torah complete:

Of course, the Written Torah was not the only thing received by Moshe Rabbeinu at Har Sinai: All the commandments given to Moshe on Sinai were given together with their oral explanation, as it is stated: "And I will give you the tables of stone, and the Torah and the Commandment" (Ex. 24:12.); the Torah, is the written Torah; and the Commandment, its oral explanation. Moreover, He commanded us to observe the Torah by the word of the Commandment; thus, it is this commandment which is called Oral Torah. [Rambam Intro. to Yad Hachazaka]

The Written Torah, a physical object, rested inside the Aron Kodosh/Holy Ark in the Bais Hamikdash under the care of the Kohanim.

The Oral Torah, though a non-physical object, was too located in the Bais Hamikdash, resting inside the minds and hearts of Klal Yisrael's greatest scholars, dedicated solely to it, and the life it commands. Namely,

the members of the Sanhedrin Hagadol:

The Sanhedrin Hagadol in Yerushlayim is the essential source of the Oral Torah, the foundation of all applications of Torah Law, and the body whose laws and decrees are binding on the entire Jewish nation. And the Torah gives certainty to all its decisions irrespective of how wrong they seem, commanding us to follow them. [Rambam-Hilchos Mamrim 1:1]

It is now understood why the Sanhedrin Hagadol was so connected to the Bais Hamikdash. Just as the Aron Kodosh/Holy Ark the repository of the Written Torah was located in the Bais Hamikdash under the care of its ministers dedicated solely to it- the Kohanim and Levi'im; so too, the repository of the Oral Torah the Sanhedrin Hagadol, was located in the Bais Hamikdash under the care of its ministers dedicated solely to it – the 71 members of the Sanhedrin.

Aside from demonstrating the equal status of the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, the connection of the Sanhedrin Hagadol to the Bais Hamikdash teaches other basic Torah truths.

There is a tendency for people to make a false distinction between the so called, "ritual laws" and "moral laws" of the Torah. Thus, they may give consideration and importance to some mitzvos over others. Some consider keeping Shabbos as "ritual law", or something totally devoid of and separate from a "moral act". While others consider, compensating someone for damaging their property a "moral law" completely devoid of and separate from an act of ritual devotion to Hashem.

This is false. The Bais Hamikdash housed both the paradigm of "ritual law", the avodah and karbanos, and the paradigm of "moral law"- the Sanhedrin Hagadol. This is to symbolize that there is no distinction of, "moral law" and "ritual law", every mitzva is equally a moral act and an act of ritual service.

Further, the Torah can be classified into two broad categories, "mitzvos between man and G-d" and "mitzvos between man and his fellow man". The place where "mitzvos between man and G-d" is expressed in its purest form as a model for Klal Yisrael to learn from and emulate was the Bais Hamikdash; correspondingly, the Bais Hamikdash was the place where "mitzvos between man and his fellow man" were taught, clarified, and applied at the truest level by the Sanhedrin Hagadol.

"Justice" and "Righteousness" have one source - G-d's Law, the Torah. Only alongside Torah Justice can there be true Torah Righteousness, and only alongside Torah Righteousness can there be true Torah Justice.

MAY THIS TORAH SERVE AS A MERIT TO ALL THOSE ILL IN KLAL YISRAEL AND TO THE CONTINUED HEALTH OF ALL OF KLAL YISRAEL

# Ashkenaz Briefs

Events in Ashkenaz History and Yahrzeits of Chachmei Ashkenaz

by R' Mordechai Perlman, Ramot, Yerusholayim

## Elul 08

This day is the 134th Yahrzeit [5648/1888] of **Moreinu HaRav Shlomo Zalman b"r Aharon Yechiel Michel Geiger zt"l**.

He was born in Frankfurt am Main on the 24th of Sivan 5552. He spent his life immersed in learning Torah. Initially, he taught Torah to many students. However, when he saw that some had left the path of Torah in which he had instructed them, he gave up teaching altogether and dedicated his time to learn and help the Jewish community.

When he reached the age of seventy, he began to write Divrei Kehillos, in which he described the Minhogim of the Synagogue of Frankfurt and other communities that followed its lead, giving reasons and the source for the Minhogim. As he wrote in his introduction about the purpose of the work, "To make known how wise and learned Frankfurt's elders were in teaching the Minhogim of Frankfurt even if they were sometimes different than the way of other communities, and also to provide satisfaction for the pious souls who are thirsty to follow the ways of their ancestors." He also wrote Iggeres M'leches Machsheves, a short commentary on the Sefer M'leches Shomayim of Moreinu HaRav Yitzchok Dov HaLevi Bamberger zt"l.

He was the Chazan of the Beis HaMidrash of Frankfurt for many years and he was a member of its Chevra Kadisha for 54 years.

• 129 years ago [5653/1893], the people of Switzerland voted to outlaw Shechita. This has been the law of the land until now. That same year, Shechita was prohibited in the German region of Saxony.

## Elul 09

- 673 years ago [5109/1349], like the Jews of Mainz (Germany) did two days before, so did the Jews of Cologne do to avoid torture or baptism by force; they set fire to their homes and died in the blaze. ה"ר

• This day is the 64th Yahrzeit [5718/1958] of **HaRav Yonasan b"r Zvi Steif zt"l**. He was born in Kolta (Slovakia) in 5637. He learned in the Yeshiva of Pressbug (Slovakia) by Moreinu HaRav Simcha Bunim Sofer zt"l (Sheivet Sofer). He also heard Shiurim from the head of the Beis Din, Moreinu HaRav Dovid Neiman-Lakenbach and he became his main disciple. In 5667, he became a poseik in Guta (Hungary) and in 5672, he became a Dayan in Ungvar (Hungary). In 5683, he became a Dayan in Budapest (Hungary) and eventually became the head of the Beis Din there. During the Second World War he was saved from death by being put on the "Kašner Train", which left Bergen-Belsen in 5705 to Switzerland. In Switzerland he ran a Yeshiva in Beatenberg. After the War, he emigrated to the United States. Initially, he lived in the Nitra Yeshiva of HaRav Michael Ber Weissmandl zt"l and taught a Shiur there. Later, he moved to Williamsburg and became the Rav of Viener Kehillah, K'hal Adas Yereim. He was also the Vice-President of the Central Rabbinical Congress of the United States and Canada.

He wrote the Sefer Chadoshim Gam Yeshonim on a number of Masechtos, Chumash Limudei HaShem, Mitzvos HaShem about Eemunah, and two Seforim about the Seven Noachide Laws. After his passing, his letters were collected and published as Responsa MaHar"i Steif. HaRav Moshe Feinstein zt"l and HaRav Yoel Teitelbaum zt"l (Satmar Rov) respected him exceedingly and called him the Gadol HaDor.

## Elul 10

338 years ago [5444/1684], because of rumors that the Jews of Padua (Italy) had given help to Buda (the historic capital of the Kingdom of Hungary and since 5633 has been the western part of the Hungarian capital Budapest, on the west bank of the Danube) during the siege by the Austrian and Venetian armies, the populace sacked the Jewish ghetto in Padua on the 20th of Elul. Loss of life was narrowly prevented by the intervention of the army and the town authorities. As a result of the outbreak, the death penalty was established for causing riots. To commemorate the community's rescue, a day of thanksgiving (Purim di-Buda) was celebrated each year in Padua on the 10th of Elul. I have not managed to ascertain why it is celebrated ten days before the event's occurrence.

## Elul 11

459 years ago [5323/1563], the Jewish community of Neutitschein

(Moravia) was expelled.

This day is the 31st Yahrzeit [5751/1991] of **HaRav Dr. Kalman b"r Binyomin Zev HaKohen Kahana-Heller zt"l**.

He was born in Brody (Galicia), then under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on the 22nd of Iyyar, 5670. He went to a traditional Jewish elementary school and graduated from a Jewish high school in his hometown. He then studied at and graduated from the Berlin Rabbiner Seminar and completed studies of philosophy, semitic languages, history and pedagogy at the universities of Berlin and Würzburg. He obtained his doctorate. His doctoral thesis concerned the Sefer "Seder Tano'im Va'amora'im".

He was among the founders of the Agudas Yisroel Youth movement in Germany. When he completed his studies in the Berlin Rabbiner Seminar, he moved to Fulda (Germany) where he initially served as a teacher of Hebrew language. After his marriage to the eldest daughter of the Rav of Fulda, HaRav Boruch Kunstadt zt"l, he helped him to run his Yeshiva in Fulda.

He was a delegate to the 3rd Knessiah Gedolah of Agudas Yisroel in Marienbad (Bohemia) in 5697.

In 5698, he moved to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Kibbutz Chofetz Chayim in Kfar Saba, and in 5700, he became the Rav of the Kibbutz.

He became very close to the Chazon Ish and served many times as his agent in various undertakings, the most famous one being a message to the Brisker Rav on Erev Yom Kippur 5701 that the Mirrer Yeshiva in Shanghai "should eat on Wednesday, fast Yom Kippur on Thursday, and not worry about anything."

Before the Shemittah year of 5705 he produced a booklet of Hilchos Shemittah and worked to marshal support for Keren HaShemittah.

HaRav Kahana was one of the leaders of the Po'alei Agudas Yisroel party and a member of the Provisional State Council on behalf of Po'alei Agudas Yisroel. He was a member of the Knesset for the first nine Knesset mandates on behalf of Po'alei Agudas Yisroel.

In 5739, he moved to Yerusholayim and established the Beis HaMidrash HaGovo'a L'Halachah B'his'yashvus Hachaklo'is and Keren HaMa'asros.

He wrote many Seforim, the most famous of them being "Taharas Bas Yisroel" on family purity, and "Mitzvos Ho'oretz" about laws that are applicable only in Eretz Yisroel, mostly of an agricultural nature.

## Elul 12

- 77 years ago [5705/1945], in the Bergen-Belsen DP camp, **HaRav Shlomo Zev Zweigenhaft zt"l**, the head of the Shoctim in pre-war Poland, performed the first kosher slaughter in Germany since its ban by the Nazis ימשי"ז in 5693.

This day is the 680th Yahrzeit [5102/1342] of **Rabbeinu Shimon b"r Asher z"l** (8th son of the Rosh) of Toledo (Spain), who died in a plague.

## Elul 13

80 years ago [5702/1942], 7000 Jews were rounded up by the Nazis ימשי"ז in the Vichy Free Zone of France.

## Elul 14

81 years ago [5701/1941], Reinhard Heydrich ע"ה decreed that all Jews over six years of age in the Reich, Alsace, Bohemia-Moravia and the German-annexed territory of western Poland (called the Warthegau), were to wear the yellow Star of David on their outer clothing in public at all times. The word "Jew" was to be inscribed inside the star in German or the local language. During the Nazi era, German authorities reintroduced the Jewish badge as a key element of their larger plan to persecute and eventually to annihilate the Jewish population of Europe. They used the badge not only to stigmatize and humiliate Jews but also to segregate them, to watch and control their movements, and to prepare for deportation.