**\*Miller’s Musings פרשת** **שופטים**  **\***

**\*Selection of Protection\***

For anyone with a discerning eye and an interest in the truth, apparent questions on the Torah are generally very easy to come by.  This week’s Parsha begins with something of a bonanza of difficulties that require resolving.  The Torah tells us “Judges and officers you shall give for you in all your gates” which leads to the following questions, just to name a few. Firstly what is the meaning of **giving** the Judges for you? Secondly, why is the word “for you” in the singular, when surely it is intended for the general populace? And thirdly why is the word “gates” used, a word apparently meant to imply cities, rather than simply the word cities?

There are many that explain that parallel to the simple understanding of the Posuk being a commandment to ensure a functioning legal system, there is also a deeper connotation being insinuated here of a need for us to make sure that we all individually establish a personal system of judgement for what we allow ourselves to experience.  This is what we give singularly to ourselves, a means by which we carefully discriminate between what is beneficial to us and what will have a damaging effect.  The word “gate” is utilised here perhaps because this is where this safeguard must come into effect, at the entrance to all that we potentially would come in contact with.  It is not best employed to drive away those dangers we are already involved in, but to ward off the risks to our spirituality before they can do us any harm and should be used as such.

There are multiple lessons to be gleaned from this idea, such as to understand the importance of pre-empting ruinous influences by setting up defences to block detrimental things from coming into our life **before** they have a chance to cause damage.   Yet if we look even more carefully, we might notice that we are asked to set up judges, plural, which may be to teach us another most important idea.  Shielding ourselves is essential to our growth, but every circumstance and context must be judged individually.  What must be opposed at one time, may in fact be necessary at another.  What would be injurious to one person, may be entirely vital for another and harmful for it to be suppressed.  To know where and when to apply restraint requires a deep understanding of the Torah and its ideals, which may necessitate the counsel of those who live constantly according to its guidance.  Our guard must be up throughout our lives, but the key to its success lies in **multiple** judgements of its application according to each particular context.

\*May the peacefulness of Shabbos grant us clarity in all we do\*

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם

לרפואה שלימה:  שרה יעל בת ברכה אסתר

