



What's Jewish About Voting?

Shemot (Exodus) Chapter 18:13 – 26

<p>^{יג}וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיֵּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה לְשִׁפְט אֶת-הָעָם וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעָם עַל-מֹשֶׁה מִן-הַבֹּקֶר עַד-הָעָרֶב:</p>	<p>¹³The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around Moses from morning till evening.</p>
<p>^{יד}וַיֵּרָא חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה לָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר מֶה-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה לָעָם מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב לְבַדְךָ וְכָל-הָעָם נֹצֵב עָלֶיךָ מִן-בֹּקֶר עַד-עָרֶב:</p>	<p>¹⁴Moses's father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people; he said, "What is this thing you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"</p>
<p>^{טו}וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹתֵנוּ כִּי-יָבֹא אֵלַי הָעָם לִדְרֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים:</p>	<p>¹⁵Moses answered his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will.</p>
<p>^{טז}כִּי-יְהִי לָהֶם דָּבָר בָּא אֵלַי וְשִׁפְטֹתִי בֵין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ וְהוֹדַעְתִּי אֶת-חֻקֵּי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֶת-תּוֹרֹתָיו:</p>	<p>¹⁶Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I decide between one person and another and I make known God's laws and teachings."</p>
<p>^{יז}וַיֹּאמֶר חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵלָיו לֹא-טוֹב הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה:</p>	<p>¹⁷Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good.</p>
<p>^{יח}יָנֹכַל תִּבְלֵל גַּם-אַתָּה גַּם-הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עִמָּךְ כִּי-כָבֵד מִמֶּךָ הַדָּבָר לֹא-תוּכַל עֲשֹׂהוּ לְבַדְךָ:</p>	<p>¹⁸You and these people who come to you will surely wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.</p>
<p>^{יט}עַתָּה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי אִיעֲצֶךָ וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ יִהְיֶה אַתָּה לָעָם מוֹל הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִבֵּאתָ אֹתָהּ אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים:</p>	<p>¹⁹Now listen to my voice; I will give you advice, and may God be with you. You be the people's representative before God and bring the disputes to God.</p>
<p>^כוְהִזְכַּרְתָּה אֹתָם אֶת-הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת-הַתּוֹרֹת וְהוֹדַעְתָּ לָהֶם אֶת-הַדָּרֶךְ יֵלְכוּ בָּהּ וְאֶת-הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֻׂן:</p>	<p>²⁰Teach them the laws and teachings, and make known to them the way they are to go and how they are to behave.</p>
<p>^{כא}וְאַתָּה תַּחֲזֶה מִכָּל-הָעָם אַנְשֵׁי-חַיִּל יְרֵאֵי אֱלֹהִים אַנְשֵׁי אֱמֶת שֹׂנְאֵי בָצַע וְשֹׂמְרֵי עֲלֵהֶם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים שָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שָׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֵת:</p>	<p>²¹And you shall provide from all the people capable men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and you shall set them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.</p>
<p>^{כב}וְשִׁפְטוּ אֶת-הָעָם בְּכָל-עֵת וְהָיָה כָל-הַדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל יָבִיאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וְכָל-הַדָּבָר הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפְּטוּ-הֶם וְהָקַל מֵעֲלֶיךָ וְנָשְׂאוּ אֹתָךְ:</p>	<p>²²They shall judge the people at all times, but have them bring every major case to you; but the simple cases they shall judge themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you.</p>
<p>^{כג}אִם אַתָּה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה תַּעֲשֶׂה וְצִוָּךְ אֱלֹהִים וְיָכַלְתָּ עָמִיד וְגַם כָּל-הָעָם הַזֶּה עַל-מְקוֹמוֹ יָבֹא בְּשֻׁלוֹם:</p>	<p>²³If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and also all these people will go home satisfied."</p>



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כד וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה לְקוֹל חֹתָנוּ וַיַּעַשׂ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר אָמַר:	²⁴ Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did everything he said.
כה וַיִּבְחַר מֹשֶׁה אֲנָשִׁי-חַיִּל מִכָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם רִאשִׁים עַל-הָעָם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים שָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שָׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֵת:	²⁵ Moses chose capable men from all Israel and made them heads of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.
כו וַיִּשְׁפְּטוּ אֶת-הָעָם בְּכָל-עֵת אֶת-הַדִּבְרֵי הַקָּשֶׁה וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְכָל-הַדִּבְרֵי הַקֶּטָּן יִשְׁפֹּטוּ הֵם:	²⁶ They judged the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but every simple case they decided themselves.