

Shabbat Shoftim Shalom



by Phyllis Chesler

And here we have another parsha filled with divine law and terrifying punishments. On the one hand, our judges are required to “not pervert justice or display favoritism;” we are also commanded to have two or three witnesses before we punish someone, and told to establish of sanctuary cities, and given the many merciful reasons one may defer or avoid army duty, etc.

The parsha is also filled with contradictions and leads to many questions. The King of the Jews should not have too many horses or wives, or an abundance of silver and gold and he must also write a Torah scroll for himself and read it all the days of his life (18:18-19).

But Shlomo ha' Melech violated the prohibitions about wives and horses and certainly about material splendor—and he consulted soothsayers and consorted with foreign women such as the Queen of Sheba, and yet he was chosen to build the Temple and was considered the wisest of men. And David, his father, the Psalmist, and from whose line we expect the Messiah to arise, committed numerous sins and yet he was also God's beloved.

Something to ponder.

Have a very sweet Shabbos.