

# In Your Own Sight!

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle revised 3-04

**“In those days there was no sovereign in Yisrael-EVERYONE did what was right in their own eyes.” Shophetim (Judges) 17:6; 19:1; 21:25**

This inspired utterance in *Sefer Shophetim* is meant to be a commentary upon the condition of Yisrael during the time when there was NO KING to reign over them. This verse explains the MORAL RELATIVISM of their times, and may be a prophetic proclamation concerning today. Rather than follow and obey the Torah of Yahweh, the nation of Yisrael had become a torah unto themselves. We find a people who were supposed to know Yahweh in a real and personal way. Instead of following Yahweh, they were lying, cheating, stealing, and trying to justify their own anti-Torah behavior.

- **RELATIVE:** *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* page 976:#3-not absolute or independent:comparative
- **RIGHT:**#3476*Yosher*;theright,meet,equal,upright:#3477*YaSHaR*straight,CONVENIENT,equity,just, upright,meet from #3474 *YaSHaR*- to be straight,even,good,pleasant,right,prosperous

The behavior of the Yisraelites was independent of any absolutes found in the Torah. Each person had their own “interpretations” of the Torah and how they should live their lives. Their behavior “seemed” upright, and righteous. But in reality it was **convenient**:

- *Webster's* meaning: suitable to personal comfort and easy to perform; suited to a particular situation; affording ACCOMMODATION or advantage! Living life on the path of least resistance and inconvenience.

There are THREE steps or characteristics to spiritual APOSTASY in the book of Shophetim:

1. Religious syncretism: Syncretism is the combination of different forms of belief or PRACTICE (for example-trying to mesh together Greek and Hebraic thought and practices). It is also the fusion of two or more original different inflectional forms (or forms that curve away from one another at a certain point).
2. Moral Relativism
3. Extreme Materialism: A doctrine that teaches that the only or highest values or objectives lie in the material well being and in the furtherance of material progress or success!

In Shophetim we have the apostasy of the Danites (Ephraimites), the making of graven images and idols, unauthorized priests serving for hire (the priest being an opportunist finding a place to serve that would suit HIM), the establishment of private worship sanctuaries (where they could worship how THEY wanted), the movement of the Lewites from their assigned cities, and the justification for stealing. We find that the average Yisraelite was ignorant of the true content of the Torah. What is worse, in this setting, is that we find a Lewite, who was supposed to teach the Torah, accept a position in spite of what he knew concerning the Torah and its prohibition of idolatry. He did ALL THIS FOR MONEY!

The fact that there was NO KING in Yisrael reminds us of the political and religious confusion (BABYLON) in Yisrael due to the lack of a unified leadership in the nation. There was no ONE authority to lead and unify the nation of Yisrael.The last verse of this book reiterates the self-justified form of situational ethics that was in Yisrael during the time of the Judges.There was an absence of strong leadership and a serious lack of spiritual discernment that almost led to the total disintegration of Yisrael as a distinct nation. This great nation that had been unified under Moshe, lead to great victories by Yehoshua, had now fallen into sin and disunity. This confusion all started with the tragic sin of **COMPROMISE** with a world and people that did not esteem Yahweh and His Torah.

- **“The way of the fool looks right in his own eyes...” Mishle (Prov.) 12:15a**
- **“There is a way that seems right to a man, BUT its END is the way of DEATH” Mishle 14:12**
- **“The backslider in heart is satisfied with his own ways...” Mishle 14:14**
- **1 Corinthians 10:11.<sup>11</sup> Now, these things happened to those ones as moftim (examples), but it was written for our admonition, to whom the Kitzei haOlamim has come.**