

# Legal Process

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

This week's reading from the Torah is one of the most important from a legal point of view. Like the Domesday Book or indeed the American Constitution, it is the basis of Jewish law in terms of principles and foundations. Of course, over thousands of years like all other systems it has changed, advanced and developed.

The first principle (Deut.16.18) is that one needs an enforceable legal system open to everyone. No one, neither religious nor political should ever be above the law. This is particularly true of such phenomena as revenge killing and vendettas and honor killings (19) all have continued to plague society long, long after the Torah was given.

The Judicial system requires honesty, (16.19) the honesty the Judges, the system and at least of two witnesses (no circumstantial evidence unlike the USA). Something that is still far from universal today

Any system requires a process of appeal and a framework for change (17.8)

Torah also deals with international affairs, that one must always pursue peace before going to war as a last resort (20.10).

Society has to accept responsibility for its failures. An unsolved crime becomes the responsibility of everyone (21).

The Torah is not only concerned with religious ritual but life in general.