

Blessing for Torah Study:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ–הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסֹק בְּדִבְרֵי–תוֹרָה.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher
kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei torah.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has
sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us to study words
of Torah.

Shabbat Shoftim 2021 "Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue": Guidelines for Judges and Disputants

Based on Source Sheet by Rabbi Oren J. Hayon

Deuteronomy 16:18-20

(18) You shall appoint magistrates and officials for your tribes in all the settlements that Adonai your God is giving you, and they shall govern the people with justice. (19) You shall not judge unfairly: you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just. (20) **Justice, justice shall you pursue**, that you may thrive and occupy the land that Adonai your God is giving you.

דברים ט"ז:י"ח-כ'

(יח) שֹׁפְטִים וְשָׂרִים
תִּתֶּן-לָךְ בְּכָל-שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר
יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ לְשִׁבְטֶיךָ
וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת-הָעָם
מִשְׁפַּט-צֶדֶק: (ט)
לֹא-תִטָּה מִשְׁפָּט לֹא תִכָּר
פָּנִים וְלֹא-תִקַּח שֹׁחַד כִּי
הַשֹּׁחַד יַעֲוֶר עֵינֶי חֲכָמִים
וַיִּסְלַף דְּבַרִּי צְדִיקִים:
(כ) צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף לְמַעַן
תַּחֲיֶה וִירֶשֶׁת אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר-יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ:

Rashi on Deuteronomy 16:20:1

Justice, justice shall you pursue. Seek out a reliable court.

Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 16:20:1

Justice, justice. This is addressed to each of the litigants. The repetition of "justice" implies that they should pursue a fair verdict, whether it brings them profit or loss. Or perhaps it means that they should continue to pursue justice time after time, as long as they live. Or it may simply be for emphasis.

Understanding the Prisoner's Dilemma - Investopedia

The typical prisoner's dilemma is set up so that both parties have an incentive to protect themselves at the expense of the other participant. As a result, both participants find themselves in a worse state than if they had cooperated with each other in the decision-making process. The prisoner's dilemma is one of the most well-known concepts in modern game theory.

The prisoner's dilemma presents a situation where two parties, separated and unable to communicate, must choose between cooperating or betraying the other player. The worst outcome occurs when both players choose to betray each other.

Sanhedrin 32b:6

As it is taught: "Justice, justice, shall you follow," one for strict judgment and one for compromise. How so? Like two boats that encounter one another while traveling on the river: if each goes to pass the other simultaneously, both of them sink; if they go one after the other, both of them may pass. And similarly, when two camels encounter one another while ascending Beit Horon: if both go to ascend simultaneously, both of them fall; if they go one after the other, both of them may ascend.

Sanhedrin 32b:7

How? If one of them is laden with cargo and the other is not laden, the one that is unladen should defer to the one that is laden with cargo. If one is close to its destination and the other is far from its destination, the one that is close should defer to the one that is far from its destination. If both of them were close to their destinations, or both of them were far away, they must compromise, and one must compensate the other.

Mei HaShiloach, Volume II, Deuteronomy, Shoftim 4

The reason why the word "tzedek" is repeated is as follows: The first "tzedek" refers to how God watches our conduct vigilantly. The second refers to us: if you should see a friend transgressing the Torah (God forbid!), and you feel angry at him, the Torah tells you "tzedek!", because God does not want you to resent or blame your friend! ... This is akin to the way in which the Sanhedrin would postpone carrying out a punitive sentence after judgment had been rendered - even if they knew they had ruled correctly! - in the hope that God would open their eyes and shine a new light by way the judges could discover a way to acquit a Jew who had been indicted.

Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulay (18th century Jerusalem/Western Europe/North Africa)

Justice, justice... The rabbis say that if one hastens to give *tzedakah*, it is worth double, as if one gave *tzedakah* twice. "***Tzedek tzedek***" means that it will be considered as two *tzedakahs* if "you pursue" it, striving to give it as soon as possible.

Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshishcha (18th century Poland)

Justice, justice you shall pursue... With justice, you shall pursue justice. Even the pursuit of justice must employ only just means, and not falsehood.