

The Torah insists on proper administration of justice:

‘You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour’(Leviticus 19:15).

‘I charged your judges at that time: ‘Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien. You must not be partial in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God’s’(Deuteronomy 1:16-17).

‘You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.’

(Deuteronomy 16:19).

## Psalms 99-101

Psalm 99 acknowledges YHWH as a God of Justice: ‘Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob’(Psalm 99:4).

Psalm 100 celebrates the fact that God’s justice is eternal: ‘YHWH is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations’(Psalm 100:5).

In Psalm 101 the psalmist declares that this exercise of justice is realised through the governing of the king.

‘When he has taken the throne of his kingdom, he shall have a copy of this law written for him in the presence of the levitical priests. It shall remain with him and he shall read in it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear YHWH his God, diligently observing all the words of this law and these statutes’(Deuteronomy 17:18-19).

The focus in Psalm 101 is on avoiding ministers who are arrogant, ambitious and greedy.

‘A king will reign in righteousness,  
and princes will rule with justice’(Isaiah 32:1).

‘A wise king winnows the wicked’(Proverbs 20:26).

‘Take away the wicked from the presence of the king,  
and his throne will be established in righteousness.’

(Proverbs 25:5).

‘If a ruler listens to falsehood,  
all his officials will be wicked’(Proverbs 29:12).

‘As a judge is, so are his officials;  
as the ruler of a city is, so are all its inhabitants.’  
(Sirach 10:2).

On the importance of good government see the following from Proverbs:

‘By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just;  
by me rulers rule, and nobles, all who govern rightly.’

(Proverbs 8:15-16)

‘It is an abomination to kings to do evil,  
for the throne is established by justice’(Proverbs 16:12).

‘A wise king winnows the wicked, and drives the wheel  
over them ... Loyalty and faithfulness preserve the king,  
and his throne is upheld by justice’(Proverbs 20:26,28).

‘Take away the wicked from the presence of the king,  
and his throne will be established in justice’(Proverbs 25:5).

‘If a king judges the poor with equity,  
his throne will be established forever’(Proverbs 29:14).