

# YITHRO (Jethro)



**Exodus 18:1** When heard of Jethro, the priest of Midian, father in law of Moses, **את** all that Elohim had done for Moses and for Israel his people and that had brought **את־יהוה** Israel out of Egypt.

**C-MATS**

**Question:** What news did Jethro hear that made such an impression that he came to see Moses? The splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek. (Chumash)

**Question:** Who was Jethro? He was minister of Midian and former adviser to Pharaoh. He helped Moses organize the nation's judicial system. His name Reuel was changed to Jether-means addition, because he added to the laws. When he converted to serve **יהוה**, the letter *vav* was added to his name, which changed his name from Jether to Jethro. (Chumash)

**Question:** What was the difference between Jethro and Amalek? Both of them heard about the Exodus, but Jethro reacted by casting his lot with the nation of **יהוה**, while Amalek became the symbol of treachery and evil by defying **יהוה** and launching an unprovoked sneak attack on a weak and weary people. Miracles alone do not transform the beliefs of the Amaleks of the world. Those who refuse to recognize the hand of **יהוה** will always interpret events to suit their own purposes. (Chumash)

**Exodus 18:2** After Moses had sent her back, then took Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, אֶת־Zipporah, Moses אִשְׁתּוֹ wife. C-MATS

**Question:** Why was Zipporah sent back to her father's house? When יהוה said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt" (Exodus 4:19), "And took Moses אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶת־his wife וְאֶת־and his sons and set them upon a donkey and he returned to the land of Egypt." When Aaron later met with him "at the Mount of Elohim" (Exodus 4:27), he said to him: "Who are these?" Said Moses, "This is my wife whom I married in Midian and these are my children" "Where are you taking them?" asked Aaron. "To Egypt," said Moses. Aaron said to Moses, "We are grieving over the ones already in Egypt, so why should you add to their number!" So Moses said to Zipporah, "Return to your father's house", and she took her two sons and went away. (Chumash)

**Exodus 18:3** וְאֶת־And her two of her sons; which the name of one was Gershom; for Moses said, I have been an alien in a strange land: 4 And the name of the other was Eliezer; Moses said, The Elohim of my father was my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh: 5 And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses into the wilderness where he encamped at the Mount of Elohim: 6 And Jethro said to Moses, I have come to you וְאִשְׁתּוֹ and your wife and her two sons with me. 7 And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and prostrated himself and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. C-MATS



Jethro comes to Moses

**Question:** Why did Jethro come to the desert to see Moses? Jethro lived amidst the greatest honor of the world, but his heart prompted him to go forth to the desert wasteland to hear words of Torah. So Moses went out toward Jethro, prostrated himself and kissed him. Jethro was afforded great honor at that time. Since Moses went out, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu also went out, and everyone went out to greet Jethro. (Chumash)

**Exodus 18:8** And Moses told his father-in-law, **את** All that יהוה had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake **and את** all the troubles that had come upon them along the way and *how יהוה had delivered them.* **9** And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which יהוה had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. **10** And Jethro said, Blessed *be יהוה* who has delivered **אתכם** you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, Who has delivered **את** the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. **11** Now I know that יהוה *is* greater than all gods: for *He was above them who were treated so arrogantly.* C-MATS

**Question:** "Now I know that יהוה *is* greater than all gods". What was Jethro saying? This teaches us that Jethro was knowledgeable about every type of idolatry in the world, and there was no pagan deity that he did not worship, but he realized that יהוה was greater than all other deities. (Chumash)

**Question:** For with the same thing that the Egyptians plotted to judge Israel, with that יהוה judged them. How did יהוה judge the Egyptians? With water, they planned to destroy the Israelites (by drowning the babies in the Nile), and they were destroyed with water (in the Red Sea). יהוה did to them what they had plotted to do to the Israelite infants, measure for measure. (Chumash)

**Question:** What does "measure for measure" mean? The dictum of "measure for measure" means that יהוה treats people in accordance with their own deeds, both for the good and for the bad, although the fairness of His judgment is not always apparent to us. (Chumash)

**Question:** One of the hardest but greatest things to do is admit when we have been wrong. That is just what Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, did. He was a famous and well respected high-priest of an idol-worshipping nation. But when he learned the truth, that there was only one Elohim, he admitted he had been wrong in his beliefs and gave up all his fame and glory to live for the truth. We can learn from him to seek the truth and not be afraid to change once we find it. What do you think are some reasons people choose to live with lies and not admit that they are wrong? A lot of it has to do with ego in an unhealthy sense. We become ego-invested in our opinions and what we perceive as people's opinions of us. We may feel the pain of admitting we've been wrong is too much to bear. However, the exact opposite is true. It is a person's lies and ego-based posing that weigh heavily on his soul. When we learn to let that go and live for the truth, wherever it takes us, we will only then feel truly free.

**Question:** Jethro was especially moved by the world-shaking events that the Israelites had encountered during their deliverance from Egypt. Why do you think that יהוה would place a person into a life-shaking situation, like a car accident or death in the family? Every one of us has come into the world to live a meaningful life based on genuine values. Yet the distractions of everyday life can often confuse our priorities, and draw us off course. יהוה then does us the favor of confronting us with intense, life-shaking events that wake us up, and snap us out of some of the illusions that we had fallen into. This leads us to reconsider our priorities, and begin again living for what really matters.

**Exodus 18:12** And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, made a burnt *offering* and sacrifices for Elohim: Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with Moses father-in-law before Elohim. C-MATS

**Question:** How did Jethro celebrate his conversion to יהוה? Jethro converted through circumcision and immersion, and the dignitaries of Israel joined him in a festive meal to celebrate the event. An elevation-offering which is burnt in its entirety on the altar is offered by all new converts, and the feast-offerings were expressions of gratitude to יהוה for having allowed him to enter under the wings of the Divine Presence. (Chumash)

**Question:** Where was Moses during this celebration, since his name was not mentioned? Instead of being seated, he stood over the guests and served them. It is characteristic of the greatest people that they are more considerate of the comfort to others than of their own. (Chumash)



Moses instructs the Israelites

**Exodus 18:13** And it came to pass on the next day that Moses sat *down* to judge את־ the people: and stood the people by Moses from morning to evening. **14** And when saw *the* father-in-law of Moses את־ all that Moses did to the people he said, What *is* this thing that אתה־ you are doing to the people? Why *do* אתה־ you sit alone and all the people stand by you from morning to evening? **15** And Moses said to his father-in-law, The people come to me to inquire of Elohim: **16** When they have a matter, they come to me and I judge between one and another and I make them know את־ statutes of Elohim את־ and His Torah. **17** And Moses father-in-law said to him, This thing that אתה־ you are doing is not good. **18** You will certainly wear out both אתה־ you and this people with you: for this thing *is too* heavy for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. **19** Listen now to my voice. I will give you counsel and Elohim will be with you: אתה־ you should *represent* the people of Elohim, but bring אתה־ you את־ the disputes to Elohim: **20** And you will teach *them* את־ ordinances את־ and Torah and will show them את־ the way they must walk wherein את־ and the works that they must do. C-MATS

**Question:** Who gave us the Torah? Exodus 18:20 makes it clear that the statutes, ordinances and commandments of Torah came from יהוה Father through את Yahusha and they are given to show the את way and the את work that they/we should walk in to obtain the promised blessings and avoid the curses. Yahusha confirms this protocol before His death and resurrection in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." C-MATS

Exodus 18:21 אתה And you will choose out of all the people able men who fear Elohim, men of אמת truth, hating covetousness; and place them over the people to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens: 22 And let them judge את the people at all times and every great matter they will bring to you but every small matter they will judge, so will it be easier for you and they will bear the burden את with you. 23 If you do this את thing and Elohim command you so, then you will be able to endure and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. 24 So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he said. 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made את them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens. C-MATS



Jethro and Moses (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

**Question:** What men did Moses choose to help judge the people? Moses chose men of substance-wealthy men, who do not have to flatter or show favoritism. Men who fear יהוה. Men of truth who keep their promises, upon whose words one may rely, and thereby, their commands will be obeyed. Men who hate monetary gain will also hate to have their own property in a lawsuit. Any judge who is forced to pay money through a lawsuit is not fit to be a judge. (Chumash)

**Question:** We all need help at times, and there's nothing wrong with asking for it. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, advised him not to wear himself out by settling all the nation's disputes by himself, but rather appoint others to help him. If someone as great as Moses can ask for help, certainly we can, too. Why don't people ask for help? People can be too stubbornly proud to ask for help, but we should know, there's nothing wrong with asking for help when we need it.

**Question:** Do you think it's a sign of strength or weakness ever to ask for help? On the outside it looks strong to not ask for help, but really, often it takes much more inner strength to admit we need help and ask for it than to deny it.

**Question:** Do you think that there is anyone so independent that they never need help? No. **יהוה** made the world for people to cooperate and help each other. No one can go it entirely alone. And certainly, we all need help from **יהוה**.

**Question:** Should a person strive to be independent? It's a good trait not to want to unnecessarily burden or depend on others. But when we have a legitimate need, there is no shame in asking for help.

**Spiritual Exercise:** Do not be prideful this week. If you need someone to help you, ask them humbly.

**Exodus 18:26** And they judged **את** the people at all times: **את** disputes *that were hard they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.* C-MATS



Moses listened to only the difficult cases

**Exodus 18:27** And let leave Moses **את** his father-in-law leave and he went back to his own land. C-MATS

**Question:** Where did Jethro go? After Jethro had stayed a year with Moses, he went back to his land to convert the members of his family. Jethro and his family lived in the Amalekites' territory, but served **יהוה**. When King Saul was ordered to attack Amalek, he showed Israel's gratitude by warning Jethro's descendants to evacuate the area of the impending war. Jethro stayed in Midian, but his children joined the Israelites and were given a fertile tract of land near Jericho. (Jashar)



**Exodus 19:1** In the third month, *after the Children of Israel had לָצֵאת gone forth out of the land of Egypt, on the same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.* C-MATS

**Question:** A most puzzling thing in this account is the fact that on the first day of Sivan--the day on which the people of Israel arrived at the place where they would receive the Torah--"Moses did not say anything at all to them, on account of their exhaustion from the journey." For six weeks the children of Israel had been eagerly awaiting the most important event in their history--their receiving of the Torah from יהוה. They literally counted the days (hence our annual practice of "counting the omer" during the weeks that connect Passover to Shavuot). Does it make sense that on the very day they arrived at Mount Sinai they would do *nothing at all* in preparation for the great day? So the day on which "Moses did not say anything at all to them" was an integral part of their preparations for receiving the Torah. This was the day on which they undertook the most "exhausting journey" of emptying their souls of intellectual vanity and make themselves fit receptacles of the divine truth. "An empty vessel can receive; a full vessel cannot receive." The Torah was given on the next day, Shabbat. (Chumash)



**Exodus 19:2** For they departed from Rephidim and came to the desert of Sinai and had pitched *their tents* in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mountain. C-MATS

**Question:** What does it mean by “they departed from Rephidim”? It refers not only to a geographic entity, but an attitude. They left after the attack of the Amalek in repentance and returned to Sinai in repentance. Here at Sinai there was not a breath of complaint. They camped like a single person, with a single desire. Only when Israel was united in its goal of hearing the word of יהוה could it receive the Torah. (Chumash)



Mount Sinai blackened where יהוה came to Moses



**Exodus 19:3** And Moses went up to Elohim and יהוה called to him out of the mountain saying, You will say to *the* House of Jacob and tell *the* Children of Israel; 4 אתם You, ראיֶתם you see what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore אתכם you on eagle's wings and brought אתכם you to Myself. C-MATS



**Question:** What did יהוה mean by “I bore אתכם you on eagle’s wings? All other birds place their young between their feet since they fear another bird flying above them. The eagle, however, fears only man, lest he shoot an arrow at it, because no other bird flies above it. Therefore, it places its young on its wings. It says, “Rather the arrows pierce me and not my children.” When young eagles are learning to fly, the mother eagle flies under them with her wings spread out to catch them. יהוה too did that: “Then the angel of יהוה...moved ...And he came between the camp of Egypt, and the Egyptians shot arrows and catapult stones, and the cloud absorbed them.” (Chumash)

**Exodus 19:5** Now therefore, if you will obey My voice and keep את־ My covenant, then you will be a peculiar treasure to Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: 6 And ואתם and you will be a kingdom of priests and a sacred nation to Me. These *are* the words which you will speak to *the* Children of Israel. C-MATS

**Question:** What does it mean by “kingdom of priests”? The Torah is a system of living in which יהוה reveals the blueprint for ultimate personal and societal happiness. From the time that we received the Torah we were given the special responsibility of being the world's 'priests', by demonstrating this system by living it, and thus setting an example for the rest of the world, of a lifestyle which, by adopting some of its values, would bring them to greater peace and happiness. You should be set apart from others, because you remove yourself from the temptations and urges that drag human beings down from the Divine state to which they should aspire. While this responsibility doesn't make us better than anyone else, it does give us a different function within the community of mankind. (Chumash)

**1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of Elohim: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. C-MATS

**Question:** Should we change our behavior just because of the impression it will make on others? While we shouldn't let people's opinions or peer pressure cause us to deviate from our values and do what we feel is wrong, we *can* use it as a positive tool to help ourselves grow. By keeping in mind that our actions will influence others to behave similarly, we will find the strength to stick to our higher values in situations where otherwise we might not.

**Question:** Is it hypocritical to adopt values that we know are good and true, yet we aren't ready to incorporate into our own lives? Although the ideal is to live according to our highest values, human nature is such that our ideals will always be one step ahead of our ability to live by them. As long as we are sincerely striving to live by our values, it is not hypocritical to promote them. Yet merely paying lip service to a value with no desire to attain it is hypocritical.

**Spiritual Exercise:** Who are you a role model for? What kinds of things do you think they learn from you?

**Question:** Did יהוה offer the Torah to other nations? יהוה offered the Torah to other nations, as well, but they all refused it because the commandments of the Torah were in conflict with their national characteristics. Esau's offspring would not tolerate a law that prohibited murder. Ishmael's could not live with a law that banned thievery. Lot's would not accept a ban on adultery. (Chumash)

**Exodus 19:7** And Moses came down the mountain and called for the elders of the people and *told them to their faces* את all these words which יהוה commanded him. **8** And all the people answered together and said, All that יהוה has spoken we will do. And returned Moses את words of the people to יהוה. C-MATS

**Question:** How did the people receive יהוה's words? "All that יהוה has spoken we will do." Their acceptance was unanimous and enthusiastic. After Moses told יהוה that they would accept His words, then יהוה told Moses how to prepare the people to receive the Ten Commandments. (Chumash)



Mount Sinai

**Exodus 19:9** And יהוה said to Moses, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and believe in you forever. And told Moses את words of the people to יהוה. **10** And יהוה said to Moses, Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow and let them wash their clothes. C-MATS

**Question:** How did the people sanctify themselves? They were to cleanse themselves physically by washing their clothes and immersing their bodies in water, but also to cleanse themselves spiritually. (Chumash)

**Exodus 19:11** and be ready on the third day: because on the third day יהוה will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. **12** And you will set boundaries around את the people saying, Be careful that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it: whoever touches the mountain will be put to death: **13** No one's hand should touch it or he will be stoned or shot through; whether it is a beast or man, it will not live: when the shofar sounds long, they will come up to the mountain. C-MATS

**Question:** What shofar was used? The shofar of Sinai was the left horn of the ram offered by Abraham at the Akeidah, after he removed Isaac from the altar. Its right horn is the shofar that will herald the coming of Messiah. (Chumash)

**Exodus 19:14** And Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified את the people; and they washed their clothes. **15** And he said to the people, Be ready on the third day: have no sexual relations with your wives. C-MATS

**Question:** Be ready on the third day: have no sexual relations with your wives. Do not have intimacy with her for all these three days of preparation in order that the women may immerse themselves on the third day and be pure to receive the Torah. Why three days? If they have intercourse within the three days, the woman could involuntarily emit semen after her immersion and become unclean again. After three days have elapsed since intercourse, however, the semen has already become putrid and is no longer capable of fertilization, so it is pure from contaminating the woman who emits it. (Chumash)



יהוה speaks to the Israelites

**Exodus 19:16** And it came to pass on the third day *in the morning* that there were voices (*thunderings*) and lightning and a thick cloud upon the mountain and the voice of the shofar *was exceedingly loud*; so that all the people that *were* in the camp trembled. **17** And brought out Moses **את** the people of the camp to meet Elohim; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. **18** And Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because יהוה descended upon it in fire: and the smoke from it rose like the smoke of a furnace and the whole mountain *shook violently*. **19** And when the voice of the shofar sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke and Elohim answered him *with His voice*. C-MATS

**Question:** It is customary for mortals that the longer one blows long notes on a horn, the weaker and fainter its sound becomes. Here, however, it constantly grew stronger. Now why at the beginning was there a weak sound? In order to let their ears hear what they were able to hear and not shock them suddenly. (Chumash)

**Question:** How could Moses speak to all the millions of people so they could hear him? When Moses would speak the commandments, יהוה would assist Moses by giving him strength, so that his voice would be strong and easy to hear. (Chumash)

**Exodus 19:20** And יהוה came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain: and יהוה called Moses *up to the top of the mountain*; and Moses went up. C-MATS

**Question:** How high did Moses have to climb to go up the mountain? Mount Sinai which is also called Jebel el-Lawz is 8,465 ft or 2580 m.



Moses Forbids the People to Follow Him (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Exodus 19:21 And יהוה said to Moses, Go down and *warn* the people, otherwise they *may* break through *the boundaries* to gaze upon יהוה and many of them *will* perish. 22 And let the priests who come near to יהוה, sanctify themselves, otherwise יהוה will break out upon them. 23 And Moses said to יהוה, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai: because אתה you warned us saying, Set boundaries around את the mountain and sanctify it (*Him*). 24 And יהוה said to him, Go down and when you come back up, bring אתה you and Aaron with you: but do not let the priests and the people break through *the boundaries* to come up to יהוה, otherwise He *will* break out upon them. C-MATS



Moses receives the commandments

Exodus 19:25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them. Exodus 20:1 And spoke Elohim את all these words saying. C-MATS

**Question:** What does it mean by “And spoke Elohim את all these words”? Israel heard all Ten Commandments simultaneously from יהוה, but since all the words were uttered in a single instant, they could not comprehend them. Then יהוה began to repeat them word for word, so that the people could understand. After יהוה had completed the first two, the nation pleaded with Moses that they could not tolerate the intense holiness of this direct communication by יהוה, and they asked Moses to teach them the rest. Thus they heard all ten from יהוה, but were taught eight of them by Moses. (Chumash)





Moses Receiving the Tablets (painting circa 1900 by Gebhard Fugel)



Moses receiving the tablets of the law by João Zeferino da Costa. 1868

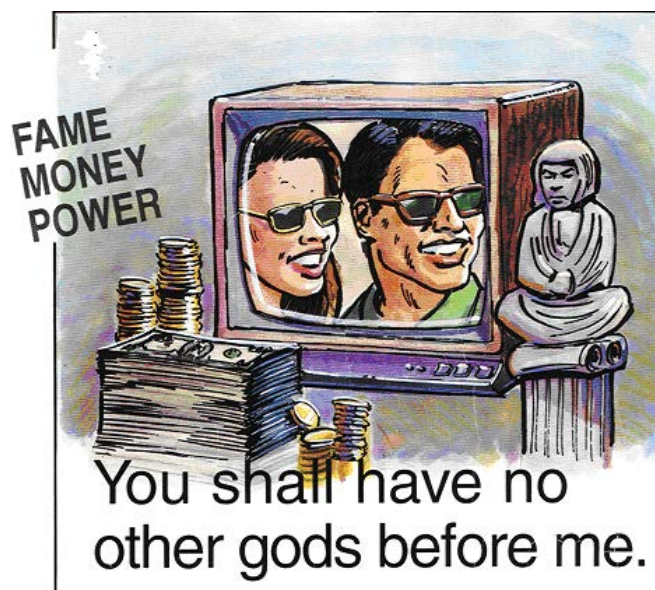


**1<sup>st</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:2 I am יהוה your Elohim who has brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage (*believe in Me*). C-MATS**

**Question:** What happened when יהוה spoke? When יהוה gave the Torah no bird twittered, no fowl flew, no ox lowed, none of the angels stirred a wing, the seraphim did not say "Holy, Holy," the sea did not roar, the creatures did not speak, the whole world was hushed into breathless silence and the voice went forth: "**I am יהוה your Elohim.**" The world waited to see if Israel would accept the Torah. (Chumash)

**Question: I am יהוה your Elohim.** Why is this verse considered the First Commandment? To believe in יהוה as the only Elohim is a necessary prerequisite to being able to keep any of the other commandments. You must accept יהוה's sovereignty before you can accept his decrees. (Chumash)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:3 You will have no other gods before Me. C-MATS**



**Question:** What does this commandment mean?

- 1) You are forbidden to believe in idols
- 2) You are forbidden to make or possess idols.
- 3) You are forbidden to worship an idol through prostration, animal slaughter, or bringing offerings or libations to the idol's altar
- 4) You are forbidden to worship an idol by any means that is unique to that idols' worship (tarot cards, horoscope, etc.) (Chumash)



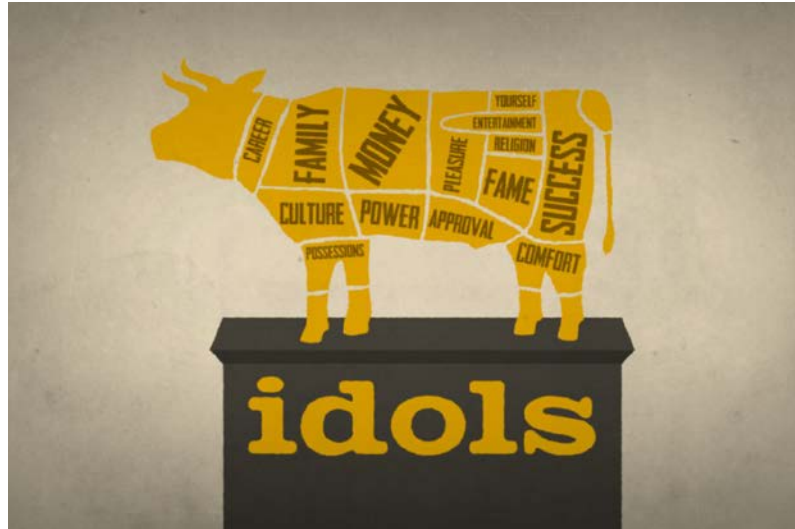
**Question:** What idols does America have? Idols from Hollywood, music idols, and sports idols are given praise as if they are gods. Power, fame, and wealth are major gods in America.

**THE IDOLS WE WORSHIP**

An illustration of a golden bull standing on a stone altar. A crowd of people in ancient attire is gathered around, some holding torches and others pouring offerings into a large bowl.	A photograph of the large, bronze Bull of Wall Street, a symbol of the stock market.
<b>Canaan</b> ca 1300 BCE	<b>Wall Street</b> ca 2000 CE

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**Spiritual Exercise:** What idols may be in your possession that יהוה wants you to remove from your presence? What do you put first before יהוה? This week put יהוה before everything else in your life.

**Exodus 20:4** You will not make *any* graven image or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in the heavens above or that *is* in the earth below or that *is* in the water under the earth. C-MATS



**Question:** What images is this verse referring to? A carved image is a three-dimensional, accurate representation of something, while a likeness is a symbolic image, which may be sculpted, drawn, or produced in any other way. (Even pictures on a wall can be considered an idol.) (Chumash)



Mary Worship

**Question:** How is getting angry similar to worshipping an idol? יהוה is able to do anything He wants, is directly involved in every detail of our lives, and is constantly placing us in the best possible situation for our ultimate spiritual well-being. Worshipping an idol (or anything else other than יהוה) is so wrong because it denies the above. So too, when we get angry, we are in effect saying that we don't agree with the way יהוה is running our lives at the moment and that we know better than He does.

**Question:** Is there ever a time that getting angry is a positive thing? When we see injustice or the corruption of values, anger can motivate us to get involved and make a positive change. However, we should never get so angry that we lose control of ourselves and harm others with our words or actions.

**Spiritual Exercise:** If יהוה is allowing this to happen in your life, why are you becoming angry? Who is really making you angry? Think through every situation and control your anger this week.

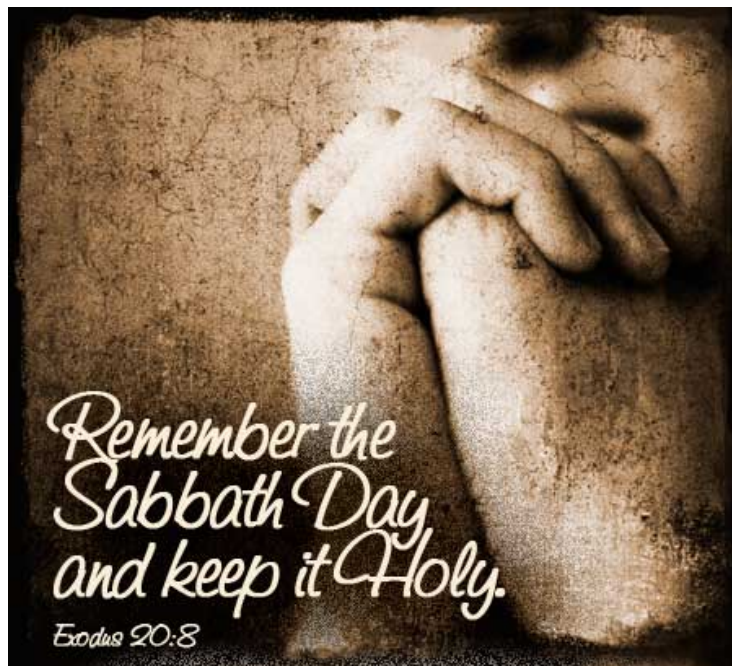
**Exodus 20:5** You will not bow down to them or serve them: because I יהוה your Elohim *am* a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the **אבות** fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 But showing mercy to thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments. C-MATS

**Question:** Will יהוה punish children for sins they did not commit? Children are punished only if they carry on the sinful legacy of their parents as their own, or acquire the life-style that was shown to them. As sins are repeated over the course of generations, they become recognized as a “culture” or an independent “lifestyle,” so that they become regarded as a way of life and a new set of values. Children who adopt the way of their parents are in a sense committing more destructive sins than they would be if they acted only on their own. The punishment of the sins of parents does not go beyond the fourth generation. However, יהוה shows kindness to at least two thousand generations into the future. Thus, the reward for good deeds is 500 times as great as the punishment for sin. (Chumash)



**3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:7 You will not take **את** name of יהוה your Elohim in vain; for will not hold him guiltless יהוה **את** that takes **את** His name in vain. C-MATS**

**Question:** What constitutes a vain oath? It is forbidden even to utter יהוה's name casually for no valid purpose. If a man uses יהוה's Name to validate an oath, it is as if the person says that his word is as true as יהוה's existence. For him to violate his oath, shows that he holds יהוה in contempt and יהוה will not absolve him from the oath. (Chumash)



**4<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:8 Remember **את** Day, the Sabbath and keep it (*Him*) consecrated (*set apart*). C-MATS**

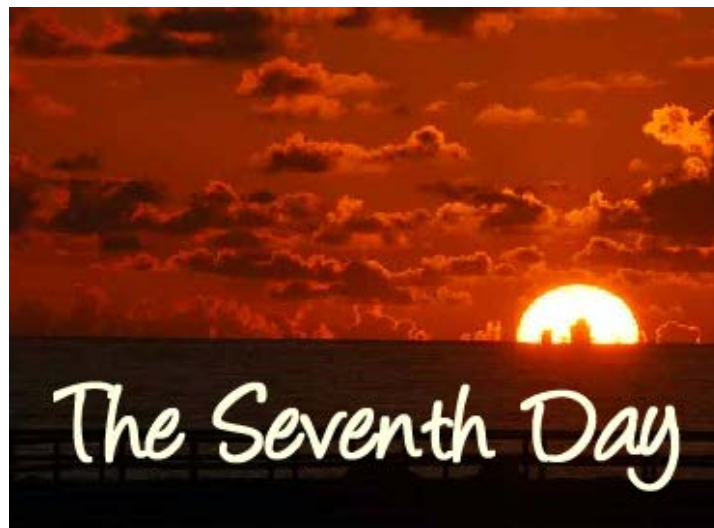
**Question:** What is יהוה commanding us to do? You must remember that יהוה is the Creator by observing the Sabbath, for it is the constant reminder that יהוה created for six days and rested on the seventh day. (Chumash)

**Question:** How do we remember the Sabbath? We should do such things as wearing fine clothes, eating fine food, devoting the day to the study of Torah and the service of יהוה. The Sabbath and how to honor it should always be on your mind. How you honor the Sabbath is how יהוה will honor you during the week.

### **Exodus 20:9 Six days you will labor and do all your work. C-MATS**

**Question:** Is this also a command? This, too, is a divine decree. Just as the people of Israel were commanded to rest on Shabbat, so, too, were they commanded to work on the other days of the week.

**Question:** Is it then possible for a person to do "all your work" in six days? When the Sabbath arrives, it should seem to you as if all your work is done, so that you do not think about work. Let your mind also rest from the burden of work.



**Exodus 20:10** But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath to ליהוה your Elohim: *in it* you will not do any work, אתה *you* or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant, or your cattle, or the stranger who *is* within your gates. C-MATS

**Exodus 20:11** For *in* six days made יהוה את the heavens את and earth and את the sea את and all that *is* in them and *He* rested *on* the seventh day and blessed יהוה את Day, the Sabbath and consecrated (*set apart*) it. C-MATS

**Question:** What blessing is on the Sabbath Day? The Sabbath is blessed in that it is the source of blessing for the rest of the week. How you keep Sabbath will limit or prosper your blessings during the week. יהוה created the world to last for only six days plus the Sabbath. Then the Sabbath gives the world the spiritual energy to exist for another week, and the cycle goes on continuously. Without Sabbath we have no life. (Chumash)



*Rest from Work Van Gough*

**Question:** What is the difference between this commandment in Deuteronomy and here in this verse? The commandment in Exodus ties Sabbath observance to יהוה's creation of the universe in six days, while in Deuteronomy it is connected to the slavery in Egypt. The passages refer to two equally valid aspects of Sabbath observance. Exodus focuses on the sanctity of the Sabbath, which flows from the fact that יהוה ceased His labor of Creation on this day. In Deuteronomy the Torah states that believers should rest on the Sabbath in order to remember their past as Egyptian slaves and the awesome miracles of the Exodus proved that יהוה not only created but still maintains absolute power to intervene and override the laws of nature at will. The Death Angel took the life of the first born on Sabbath, so we should always remember the day we were redeemed. (Chumash)

**5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:12 Honor את־ your father וְאת־ and your mother: so that your days may be long upon the land which יהוה your Elohim gives you. C-MATS**

If you honor your parents, your  
children will honor you.

**Question:** Why is this commandment important? There are three partners in man: **יהוה**, his father, and his mother. When a man honors his father and his mother, **יהוה** says: "I consider it as though I had dwelt among them and they had honored Me." The Ten Commandments were engraved on two tablets--five on the first and five on the second. The first tablet contains commandments that refer to man's relationship with **יהוה**, while the commandments on the second tablet govern the relationship between people. When people honor their parents, **יהוה** regards it as if they honor Him. Respect for parents is a cornerstone of faith in the entire Torah, for our tradition is based on the chain from Abraham and Sinai to all successive generations of parents and children. This commandment is the guarantor of the previous four commandments. (Chumash)

**Question:** What punishment will you pay for not obeying your father and mother? If you honor your parents, your life will be lengthened, and if not, it will be shortened. (Chumash)

**Question:** What does Yahusha say about honoring your parents? **Matthew 15:1 Then came to Y'shua scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of Elohim by your tradition (<sup>1</sup>takanot)? 4 For Elohim commanded, saying, Honor your father and mother: and, He that curses father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But you say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever you might be profited by me; 6 And honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have you made the commandment of Elohim of none effect by your tradition (<sup>1</sup>takanot). 7 You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draws nigh unto me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11 Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. C-MATS**

**Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in Adonai: for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; 3 That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth. C-MATS**

**Question:** Do you think a person is still required to honor his parents after he himself grows up and is on his own? The concept of honoring ones parents really has nothing to do with age, or being under parents' supervision. It is a lifetime expression of gratitude and respect toward the people who gave us our lives, and so much more.

**Question:** What does it mean by honoring your parents? You should do deeds that raise the status of parents, so provide them with comfort, such as giving them food and drink, dressing them, and escorting them. The honor due to parents is similar to that which the first three commandments render to **יהוה**. They must acknowledge who their parents are, not do anything that might cause them to be disgraced or degraded, serve them unselfishly and not for the sake of an inheritance or any other ulterior motive, and not swear in their name. You should not offend them or reduce the esteem in which they are held. (Chumash)

**Question:** What are some practical ways that a person can honor his parent? Two of the most important ways are through doing things for your parents that you know they like, and by treating them with extra respect. Even if we may disagree with our parents, we should express our feelings respectfully.

**Question:** Does honoring your parents require compromising one's independence? Real independence is an ability to make mature decisions and act upon them. A person who develops a mature attitude toward his parents will realize that they are people who brought him into the world and who do their best, according to the level of their abilities to provide for his various needs. For this alone they deserve our recognition and respect. Far from being a sacrifice of our independence, the decision to rightfully honor one's parents is an act of maturity and self-confidence.

**Question:** Do you think that all the hard work parents have to put in to raise their children makes it harder or easier for them to feel love for their children? On the surface one might think that it would be harder. After all, parents do have to give up a lot of their own personal comfort for the sake of their children. But in reality it makes it easier. A surprising aspect of human nature is that when we give to someone we come to feel a greater closeness and love for that person. Since in so many ways a parent relates to a child through giving, the results will be that strong feelings of love will develop.



**6<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:13 You will not murder. C-MATS**

**Question:** In what order were the Ten Commandments given? Five on one tablet and five on a second tablet. This means that "**You will not murder**" on one tablet corresponds to "I am יהוה your Elohim" on the other tablet. The Torah is telling us that one who sheds blood it is as if he has reduced the image of יהוה, as it is written (Genesis 9:6): "**Whoever sheds man's blood, by man will his own blood be shed, because in the image of Elohim made He אָדָם Adam (man).**" (Chumash)

**Question:** Humiliating someone is like murdering them or 'murdering' their reputation. How can you understand these harsh terms? A human being is more than just his physical body. Each person also has thoughts and emotions that are just as real as his body. When a person gets humiliated, true, his body may live on, but inside, even if he doesn't show it, he has just suffered a devastating blow that could cause him intense pain for the rest of his life. Who would want to be responsible for doing that to someone?

**Question:** What are some other things that are comparable to murder, but may not be liable to the death penalty? This commandment extends deeper than the act of killing, but also includes causing someone significant embarrassment, failing to provide food and safety for travelers, causing someone to lose his livelihood, ruling on judicial matters for which one is not qualified, and refusing to rule when one's wisdom is needed. (Chumash)

**Question:** What does Yahusha say about murder? **Matthew 5:21 You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of Gehenna fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has ought against you; 24 Leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Agree with your adversary quickly, whiles you are in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. 26 Verily I say unto you, You shall by no means come out thence, till you have paid the uttermost farthing. C-MATS**



**7<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:14 You will not commit adultery. C-MATS**



**Question:** What is adultery? This term refers only to intercourse with a married woman, which is a capital offense. It is parallel to the second commandment, which forbids idolatry, for someone who betrays the marital relationship can be expected to betray יהוה. This commandment also extends to improper flirting and other behavior that can incite sensual lust as being considerable to adultery itself. (Chumash)

**Question:** What does Yahusha say about adultery? **Matthew 5:27 You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if your right eye offend you, pluck it out, and cast it from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into Gehenna. 30 And if your right hand offend you, cut it off, and cast it from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into Gehenna. C-MATS**

**Question:** Does Yahusha want you to cut off your hand if you sin? The right hand is selected for the same reason as the right eye, because it is one of the most important members of the human body. The idea is, that the dearest earthly objects are to be sacrificed rather than that we should commit sin; that the most rigid self-denial should be practiced, and that the most absolute self-government should be maintained at any sacrifice, rather than that we should suffer the mind to be polluted by unholy thoughts and impure desires. (Barnes Notes on the Bible)



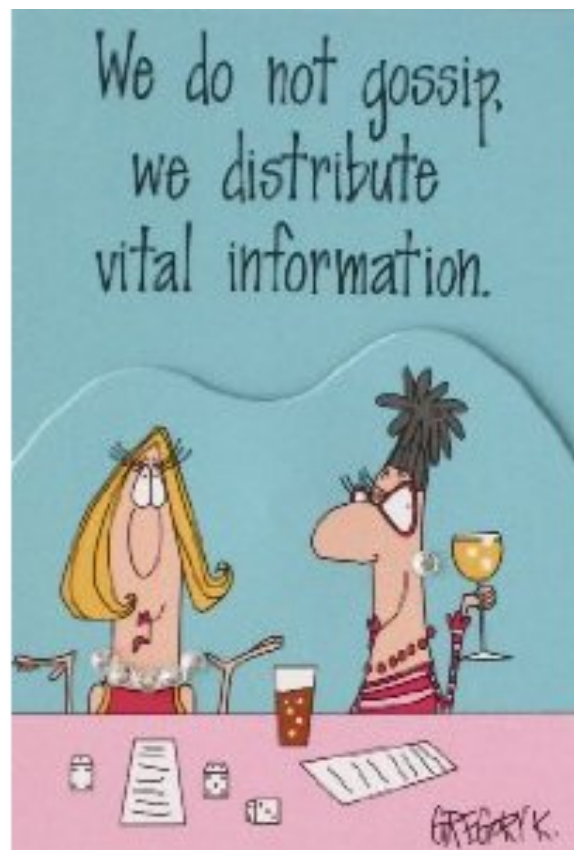
**8<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:15 You will not steal. C-MATS**

**Question:** What acts does this refer to? This commandment refers specifically to only one kind of thief: a kidnapper who forces his victim to work for him and then sells him into slavery. The only theft liable to the death penalty is the case of kidnapping. This commandment also alludes to many forms of behavior that are morally related to theft. Failure to respond to a greeting is a theft of a man's self-respect and to win someone's gratitude or regard through deceit is a form of thievery. (Chumash)



**9<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:16 You will not give false testimony against your neighbor. C-MATS**

**Question:** What is the meaning of this commandment? Its literal meaning is false testimony in court, but this commandment also prohibits gossip and slander. This commandment is parallel to the fourth commandment of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a testimony that **יהוה** created the world in six days, thus one who lies in court may well come to deny **יהוה** as the Creator. (Chumash)



**Spiritual Exercise:** Are you guilty of gossiping? Ask יהוה to help you control your tongue today.

**Proverb 11:13** He that goes about as a tale-bearer (*gossip*) reveals secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter. C-MATS

**Proverb 16:28** A perverse man scatters abroad strife; and a whisperer separates chief friends. C-MATS

**Proverb 20:19** He that goes about as a tale-bearer reveals secrets; therefore, do not keep company with him that opens wide his lips. C-MATS

**2 Corinthians 12:20** Let there not be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings (*slander*), whisperings (*gossip*), swellings, tumults. C-MATS

**Question:** If you want to have a good life filled with good things, what should you do?

**1 Peter 3:10** “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. 11They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of יהוה are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of יהוה is against them that do evil. (Peter is quoting Psalm 34:12-16)



**10<sup>th</sup> Commandment:** Exodus 20:17 You will not covet your neighbor’s house; you will not covet your neighbor’s אִשָּׁת *wife* or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbors. C-MATS

**Question:** What does it mean to covet? To covet means to be jealous and desire someone else’s possessions. If someone had complete faith in יהוה, he would recognize that property that יהוה wanted his neighbor to have is necessary to him in his life. One who covets what is not his demonstrates a lack of faith in יהוה. This parallels the fifth commandment by showing that a covetous person will have children who dishonor him, because selfishness can lead people to overstep all bounds of decent conduct, putting selfish desires above all other considerations. (Chumash)

**Question:** How can covetousness lead to other sins? Covetousness is a root sin and dates back to the Garden of Eden when Cain coveted Abel's sacrifice. His hatred of his brother led to murder. King Saul was jealous of David's success and coveted the praise and honor which David received for his victories (1 Samuel 18:8 **And Saul was very angry and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? 9 And Saul eyed אֶת־ David from that day and forward.**). As a result King Saul plotted to murder David and ended up losing the Kingdom. King David coveted the wife of his neighbor Uriah. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and then connived to have Uriah killed to cover up his sin. (2 Samuel 11:15 **And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set you אֶת־ Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and retire you from him, that he may be struck and die.**) Bathsheba's son died after he was born.

**Question:** Who speaks the 10 commandments to the Israelites? In Exodus 20:1-2 it is Elohim אֱלֹהִים together that speak from אֶת־ Mount Sinai and proclaims the 10 Commandments to the Israelites for both the FIRE and the CLOUD were present on top of Sinai. It is important to notice that the אֱלֹהִים is used in 3 of the 10 commandments; they are as follows: 1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:7 *not to take אֱלֹהִים name of יהוה your Elohim in vain; because יהוה אֱלֹהִים will not hold him guiltless, who takes אֱלֹהִים His name in vain;* and 2). The 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:8-11 *to remember אֶת־ day, the Sabbath and keep it consecrated (set apart);* and 3). The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Exodus 20:12 *to honor אֶת־ your father and your mother.* The Ten Commandments are repeated in Deuteronomy chapter 5:6-21 with the same Aleph/Tav אֱלֹהִים Symbols. C-MATS

**Question:** Why is אֱלֹהִים placed in these 3 commandments? The reason the אֱלֹהִים is placed in these 3 commandments is because they are monumental in the life of every covenant believer as to how we establish a firm foundation to build our lives from and if these 3 are not obeyed it will be impossible to prosper in אֱלֹהִים Kingdom. These 3 are the key to maintaining an intimate relationship with the Yah-head. The commandment to honor His Name is actually a *catch-all* to keeping ALL His commandments by striving to walk blamelessly before Him. Consequently when we break His commandments we are not honoring His Name which has been placed on us through covenant. The keeping of the Covenant of Sabbath (Exodus 31:16 **Therefore, you shall keep, the Children of Israel אֶת־ the Sabbath, to observe אֶת־ the Sabbath throughout all their generations, for a perpetual (everlasting/forever) COVENANT.**) opens a doorway to the Yah-head whereby we can be intimately refreshed and know אֱלֹהִים Father, or better yet, be known by אֱלֹהִים Father by name. If you cannot honor your parents who are in a divine position of physical authority over you, then you will not honor the Yah-head whom you cannot see. All three of these were a capital offense, punishable by stoning, if they were broken in the covenant land. C-MATS

**Question:** How can someone avoid jealousy? One way to avoid jealousy is to know and trust that אֱלֹהִים takes personal care of each one of us and gives us just what we need for our best good. If it would be truly better for us to have more, אֱלֹהִים would have given it to us. Wanting and getting something just because someone else has it, is not the key to happiness.



Avoid Jealousy

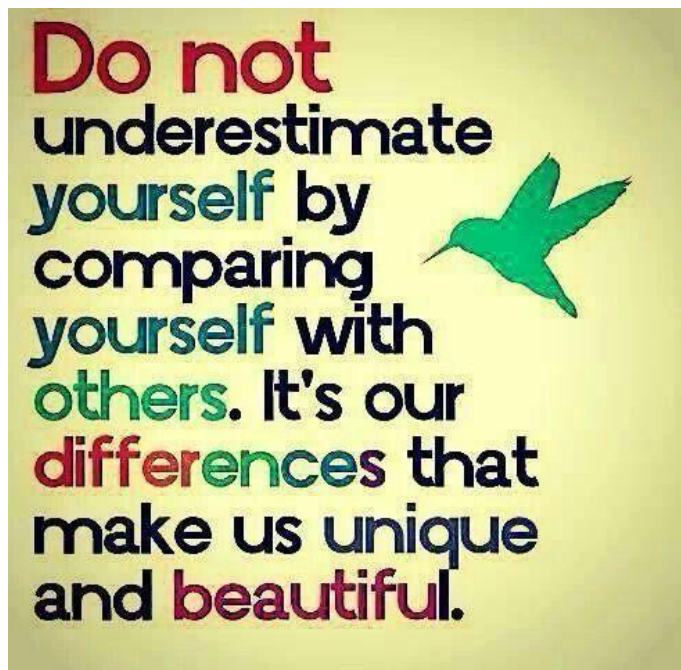
**Question:** Does avoiding jealousy mean not standing up for what's coming to us or trying to get the most out of life? Not at all. **יהוה** wants us to try to maximize our lives, only that we don't fall into the trap of wanting things just because someone else has them or being jealous of those who have what we do not.

**Question:** Do you think it is possible for another person to take something away from us that we are meant to have? It seems logical to think that if there's only one piece of cake and he takes it, then I've lost out. However, the deeper reality is not like this. **יהוה** has designed the world with each individual in mind. He sees to it that each of us is provided with exactly what we need to fulfill our ultimate purpose. There is nobody and nothing in the universe that can prevent us from receiving these things. Likewise, it is impossible for us to take away something that was meant for someone else. Any appearance to the contrary is an opportunity sent by **יהוה** to strengthen our faith and trust in Him.

**Question:** A rich man is one who is content with what he has. How do you understand this concept? The feeling of wealth or poverty is often very subjective. Someone with a million dollars could suddenly feel poor, while rubbing elbows with a billionaire. While another person, walking the street penniless, could suddenly feel rich when he finds a \$20. A feeling of wealth clearly isn't determined by what one does or doesn't have -- it is an attitude of being content with whatever we have. This feeling of contentment is the essence of wealth. And it's accessible to all of us at any moment. By harnessing it we can become rich overnight!

**Question:** Jealousy can make a person physically ill. Why do you think that is? One reason is that when we are jealous we are out of balance and disconnected from the flow of life. In truth, **יהוה** gives each of us what is for our best and when we are jealous we are in a state of denial of that truth which causes anguish, anxiety and damages our health.

**Spiritual Exercise:** Can you think of a time you got something that you thought you wanted but it didn't make you happy? What is something that you really want now? Is it what יהוה wants you to have or what you think that you need? Ask יהוה if this desire is from Him, and if not to take the desire away from you.



**Question:** What does Yahusha say about keeping his commandments? **Matthew 19:16** And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? **17** And he said unto him, **Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is, Elohim: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.** **18** He saith unto him, Which? Yahusha said, **You shall do no murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,** **19** **Honor your father and your mother: and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** **20** The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? **21** Yahusha said unto him, **If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.** **22** But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. **23** Then said Yahusha unto his disciples, **Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.** **24** And again I say unto you, **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Elohim.** **25** When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, **Who then can be saved?** **26** But Yahusha beheld them, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with Elohim all things are possible.** **27** Then answered Peter and said unto him, **Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed you; what shall we have therefore?** **28** And Yahusha said unto them, **Verily I say unto you, That you which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** **29** And every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. **C-MATS**

**Question:** Are you a hypocrite if you say you are a believer and say you keep the commandments, and you don't? **Romans 2:17 Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the Torah, and make your boast of Elohim, 18 And know his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Torah; 19 And are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which have the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Torah. 21 You therefore which teach another, teach you not yourself? You that preach a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You that say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege? 23 You that make your boast of the Torah, through breaking the Torah dishonoring you Elohim?**

**Question:** What qualities should a righteous man have? 1 Timothy 3:1-12

1. He must be blameless (innocent, doing nothing wrong)
2. He must be faithful to his wife
3. Sober-minded (serious), Self-controlled
4. Orderly, Hospitable
5. Able to teach the Torah
6. He must not drink excessively
7. He must not get into fights
8. He must be kind and gentle
9. He must not be a lover of money, Not be greedy for dishonest gain
10. He must manage his own household well, having children who obey him
11. Not gossiping
12. Faithful in everything.



**Exodus 20:18** And all the people saw אֶת־ the thunder אֶת־ and lightning (fire) אֶת־ and noise of the shofar אֶת־ and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it* they *stepped back* and stood far away. C-MATS

**Question:** What does it mean by “**all the people saw**”? Since the verse says that all the people saw-and elsewhere we are told that they all heard and answered-all blind, deaf, and mute people were miraculously healed. Anyone who attaches himself completely to the Torah should be cured of all physical imperfection. (Chumash)

**Question:** “**When the people saw *it***” How can you see voices? They saw what was audible, which is impossible to see elsewhere. The voices were sent forth from the mouth of the Almighty. Many voices were coming from every direction, and from the heavens, and from the earth. He bent down the [lower] heavens and the highest heavens and spread them out upon the mountain. So [Scripture] says: “**And He rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, He soared upon the wings of the wind.**” (Psalms 18:10) (Chumash)

**Exodus 20:19** And they said to Moses, אַתָּה You speak with us and we will hear: but *do not* let Elohim speak with us or we *will* die. C-MATS



**Question:** What lesson was יהוה teaching us at Sinai? Since the nation had seen that יהוה spoke to it directly without an intermediary, we are never to seek symbols of the Divine (saints, angels, pastors, priests, etc.). We pray directly to יהוה and our service to Him must revolve around ways to elevate earthly matter to do His will. (Chumash)



**Question:** What is the difference between the Israelites at Mount Sinai and our arrival at Mount Zion?  
**Hebrews 12:18** For you are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, **19** And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: **20** For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: **21** And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” **22** But you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living Elohim, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, **23** To the general assembly and assembly of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to Elohim the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, **24** And to Yahusha the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. **25** See that you refuse not him that speaks. For if those who refused him who spoke on earth did not escape, how much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven: **26** Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he has promised saying, “Yet once more I will shake not the earth only but also heaven.” **27** And this word, “Yet once more,” signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. **28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve Elohim acceptably with reverence and godly fear: **29** For our Elohim is a consuming fire. C-MATS

**Exodus 20:20** And Moses said to the people, *Do* not fear, because Elohim has come to test אַתְּכֶם *you*, that יִרְאַתּוֹ *His fear* may be before your faces *and you will* not sin. **21** And the people stood far away and Moses drew *closer* to the thick darkness where Elohim was.

**Question:** What types of darkness are written in scripture? There are three types of darkness: the "heavy darkness" of the Covenant Between the Pieces (**Genesis 15:17** It came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark that a smoking furnace and a flaming torch passed between those pieces of meat.); the "tangible darkness" of the ninth plague in Egypt (**Exodus 10:22** There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days); and the "thick darkness" at the giving of the Torah. (Chumash)

**22** And יְהוָה said to Moses, you will say to *the* Children of Israel, אַתְּכֶם *you*, רְאִיתֶם *you see* that I have talked with you from heaven. **23** You shall not make אֱלֹהִים *with Me* other gods of silver or gods of gold. C-MATS



Noah's Altar in Turkey

**Exodus 20:24** You will make for Me an altar of earth and will sacrifice on it **את** your burnt offerings **את** and your peace offerings, **את** your sheep **את** and your oxen: in all places where I record **את** Name of Mine I will come to you and I will bless you. C-MATS

**Question:** What were **יהוה** requirements to build an altar? The altar should be attached to the ground, meaning that it should not be built on pillars or on a block of wood. Moses would fill the hollow of the altar with earth when the Israelites encamped. From the beginning, it shall be made in My name. It should not be made for another purpose and then later used as an altar. Only the flesh and blood is to be put on the altar, but the slaughtering is not to be performed on top of the altar. The burnt offerings and your peace offerings would come from your sheep and your cattle. I will permit you to mention My Explicit Name, there I will come to you and bless you. I will cause My Shechinah to rest upon you. From here you learn that permission was given to mention the Explicit Name only in the place to which the Shechinah comes, and that is in the Temple in Jerusalem. There permission was given to the priests to mention the Explicit Name when they raise their hands to bless the people. (Chumash)



A Stone Altar

**Exodus 20:25** And if you make Me an altar of stone, you will not build it from carved stone: if you put your tool upon it, *then* you have profaned it. 26 You will not go up by steps to my altar, *so* that your nakedness *will* not be exposed on it. C-MATS

**Question:** Why was a sword not suitable to use to make any altar? Iron was created to shorten the life of man, and the Altar was created to lengthen the life of man; so it is not fitting that that which shortens (sword) should be lifted upon that which lengthens (Altar). (Chumash)

**Question:** How should you go up to the altar? When you build a ramp for the altar, do not make it with steps, but it must be smooth and slanting. Because due to the steps, you must widen your stride, although it would not be an actual exposure of nakedness, for it is written: **And you will make them linen breeches (*shorts*) to cover their nakedness from the loins (*waist*) to the thighs (*below the knee*).** (Exodus 28:42). Nevertheless, widening the strides is close to exposing the nakedness of the one ascending the steps. (Chumash)

**Question:** The way we act and dress says a lot about who we are. The Torah instructs the Hebrew priests to be sure to dress and walk modestly in the Tabernacle to show it respect. So, too, when we dress and behave in a modest, dignified way, we show that we respect others - and ourselves. What does it mean to be 'dignified?' It means to have a sense of self-worth and appropriate self-esteem.

**Question:** What does our external appearance and behavior have to do with that? While a person's true dignity is something internal, someone with dignity would never choose to portray himself - through dress or behavior - in a way that cheapens him in the eyes of others. We're not always aware that how we present ourselves makes a statement about who we feel we are. Someone who acts and dresses in a dignified way is saying he cares about himself and takes himself seriously.

**Question:** How does יהוה want us to dress? יהוה wants us to adorn ourselves with good works, not suggestive clothing. 1 Timothy 2:8 I want men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 9 In like manner also, women should adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly display; 10 But which becomes women professing godliness with good works. C-MATS

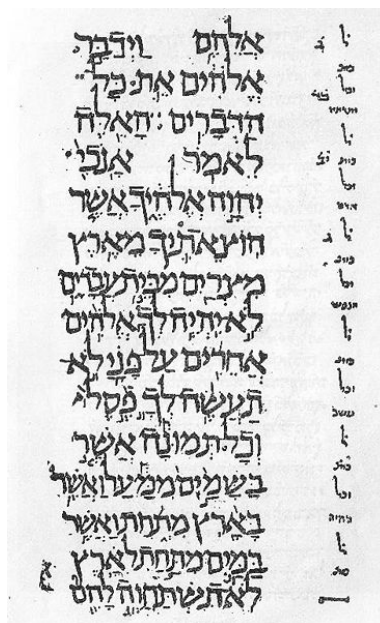


Modest apparel

**Spiritual Exercise:** Should a righteous person expose his/her chest and legs? Are you causing others to sin by exposing yourself? Even though the world says that it is okay, should we as believers expose ourselves? Ask יהוה to convict you about how you dress.

**1 John 2:15** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. **17** And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of Elohim abides forever. C-MATS

**Colossians 3:5** Therefore, put to death the earthly parts of your nature — sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed (which is a form of idolatry); <sup>6</sup> for it is because of these things that Elohim’s anger is coming on those who disobey him. <sup>7</sup> True enough, you used to practice these things in the life you once lived; <sup>8</sup> but now, put them all away — anger, exasperation, meanness, slander and obscene talk. <sup>9</sup> Never lie to one another; because you have stripped away the old self, with its ways, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is continually being renewed in fuller and fuller knowledge, closer and closer to the image of its Creator. <sup>11</sup> The new self allows no room for discriminating between Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, foreigner, savage, slave, free man; on the contrary, in all, the Mashiach is everything. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, as Elohim’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with feelings of compassion and with kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with one another; if anyone has a complaint against someone else, forgive him. Indeed, just as Elohim has forgiven you, so you must forgive. <sup>14</sup> Above all these, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together perfectly; <sup>15</sup> and let the *shalom* which comes from Elohim be your heart’s decision-maker, for this is why you were called to be part of a single Body. And be thankful — <sup>16</sup> let the Word of the Mashiach, in all its richness, live in you, as you teach and counsel each other in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude to Elohim in your hearts. <sup>17</sup> That is, everything you do or say, do in the name of Adonai Yahusha giving thanks through him to Elohim the Father. C-MATS



The 10 Commandments

## Do You Know?

1. Moses' father-in-law, who made an important suggestion, was \_\_\_\_\_
2. Moses' father-in-law suggested that Moses appoint \_\_\_\_\_
3. Moses' wife was \_\_\_\_\_
4. Moses had how many sons?
5. The Israelites heard the blast of a \_\_\_\_\_ coming from the Mountain
6. When the Israelites received the commandments, there was thunder and \_\_\_\_\_
7. The Israelites received the commandments from Mount \_\_\_\_\_
8. The Israelites prepared for \_\_\_ days to meet יהוה.
9. The first commandment is \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.
10. The second commandment is "Do not make an \_\_\_\_."
11. The third commandment is "Do not take the \_\_\_ of יהוה in vain."
12. The fourth commandment is to \_\_\_ the Sabbath Day.
13. Six days you should \_\_\_ but on the seventh day you should \_\_\_\_.
14. The fifth commandment is to "honor your \_\_\_\_."
15. What is the reward for keeping the fifth commandment?
16. The sixth commandment is "Do not \_\_\_\_." (kill)
17. The seventh commandment is "Do not commit \_\_\_\_."
18. The eighth commandment is "Do not \_\_\_\_."
19. The ninth commandment is "Do not give false \_\_\_ against your neighbor."
20. The tenth commandment is "Do not \_\_\_ anything that is your neighbor's."

### Answers:

1. Jethro
2. judges
3. Zipporah
4. two
5. shofar
6. lightning
7. Sinai
8. three
9. I AM יהוה
10. idol
11. name
12. remember
13. work, rest
14. parents
15. long life
16. murder
17. adultery
18. steal
19. witness or testimony
20. covet

## Haftorah

This week's Haftorah discusses Isaiah's vision of the Heavenly Chariot, a revelation that was experienced by all the Israelites when יהוה spoke the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai -- an event recounted in this week's Torah reading. Isaiah perceives יהוה sitting on a throne surrounded by angels. Isaiah vividly describes the angels and their behavior. During the course of this vision, Isaiah volunteers to be יהוה's messenger to transmit His message to the Israelites. He is immediately given a depressing prophecy regarding the exile the nation will suffer as punishment for their many sins -- and the Land of Israel will be left empty and desolate.



Isaiah's lips anointed with Fire 1784 by Benjamin West

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also אֲדֹנָי Adonai sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and His train filled אֲתֵּר the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet and with two he did fly. 3 And one cried to another and said, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is יְהוָה of אֲזָרוֹת Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. 4 And the אֲזָרוֹת posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips and I live in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for אֲתֵּר the King, יְהוָה of אֲזָרוֹת Hosts, my eyes have seen. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth and said, See this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin purged. 8 Also I heard אֲתֵּר voice of יְהוָה saying, Who will I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me! 9 And He said, Go וְאָמַרְתָּ and you say to this people, Hear you indeed, but understand not; and see you indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes; otherwise they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert and will be healed. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Isa. 6:9-10 Parables fall on deaf ears-Matthew 13:13-15; When Isaiah saw His glory-John 12:40-41.* 11 Then said I, Adonai, how long? And He answered, until the cities are wasted without inhabitant and the houses are without men and the land is utterly desolate, 12 and have removed far away יְהוָה אֲתֵּר men (Adam) for in the midst of the land there is a great desertion. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Isa. 6:9-12 Blinded to Messiah and deaf to His words-Acts. 28:23-29.* 13 But yet in it will be a tenth and it will remain even though it will be eaten: as a terebinth tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the sacred seed will be the substance of it. C-MATS

Isaiah 7:1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, King of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 When the House of David was told saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. 3 Then said יְהוָה to Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, אָמַרְתָּ you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fullers field; 4 וְאָמַרְתָּ and you say to him, Be careful and be quiet and do not be afraid. Neither be fainthearted because of these two smoking stumps of firebrands or for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against you saying, 6 Let us go up against Judah and trouble it and let us make a breach in it for us and set a king in the midst of it, even אֲתֵּר the son of Tabeal (*pleasing to El*); 7 so says Adonai יְהוָה, it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. 8 For the head of Syria is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people: 9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established. 10 And יְהוָה spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 Ask you a אֵימֶת sign of יְהוָה your Elohim; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt יְהוָה אֲתֵּר. 13 And he said, Hear you now, O House of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that you will weary my אֲתֵּר Elohim also? 14 Therefore, יְהוָה Himself will give you a אֵימֶת sign: surely, a (\**virgin*) shall conceive and bear a son וְקָרְאתָּ and she [shall] call His name Immanuel. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Isa. 7:14 To be born of a virgin-Luke 1:35; To be Emmanuel-Elohim with us... Matthew 1:18-23.* C-MATS

## Brit Chadashah

**Question:** What did Yahusha say about keeping the 10 commandments? **Mark 7:5** Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not your disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? **6** He answered and said unto them, **Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7** Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. **8** For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do. **9** And he said unto them, **Full well you reject the commandment of Elohim, that you may keep your own tradition. 10** For Moses said, **Honor your father and your mother; and, Whoso curses father or mother, let him die the death:** **11** But you say, **If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever you might be profited by me; he shall be free. 12** And you suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; **13** Making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition, which you have delivered: and many such like things do you. **14** And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, **Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: 15** There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. C-MATS

**Luke 18:18** And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? **19** And Yahusha said unto him, **Why call you me good? none is good, save one, that is, Elohim. 20** You know the commandments, **Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and your mother.** **21** And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. **22** Now when Yahusha heard these things, he said unto him, **Yet lack you one thing: sell all that you have, and distribute unto the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 23** And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. **24** And when Yahusha saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, **How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Elohim! 25** For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Elohim. **26** And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? **27** And he said, **The things which are impossible with men are possible with Elohim. 28** Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed you. **29** And he said unto them, **Verily I say unto you, There is no man that has left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of Elohim's sake, 30** Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the age to come life everlasting. C-MATS

**Mark 10:17** And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? **18** And Yahusha said unto him, **Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is, Elohim. 19** You know the commandments, **Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor your father and mother.** **20** And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. **21** Then Yahusha beholding him loved him, and said unto him, **One thing you lack: go your way, sell whatsoever you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the stake, and follow me. 22** And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. **23** And Yahusha looked round about, and said unto his disciples, **How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Elohim! 24** And the disciples were astonished at his words.



Mark 10:24 But Yahusha answered again, and said unto them, **Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of Elohim! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Elohim.** 26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27 And Yahusha looking upon them said, **With men it is impossible, but not with Elohim: for with Elohim all things are possible.** 28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed you. 29 And Yahusha answered and said, **Verily I say unto you, There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,** 30 **But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life.** 31 **But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.** C-MATS

**Question:** Did the disciples keep the 10 commandments? Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the Torah sin? Elohim forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Torah: for I had not known lust, except the Torah had said, You shall not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the Torah sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the Torah once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. 12 Wherefore the Torah is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. C-MATS

Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loves another has fulfilled the Torah. 9 For this, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 10 Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the Torah. C-MATS

James 2:8 If you fulfill the royal Torah according to the scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well: 9 But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the Torah as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole Torah, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the Torah. 12 So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Torah of liberty. 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that has showed no mercy; and mercy rejoices against judgment. C-MATS

**Question:** Jethro gave Moses this advice to help lead the people: Exodus 18:21 אֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה לְךָ אֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי חֹזֵק וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֻנָה וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי חֵן וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֻנָה וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי חֵן וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֻנָה *And you will choose out of all the people able men who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place them over the people to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens.* What characteristics did the disciples look for in men who would help lead the people of Elohim?

Titus 1:5 For this cause left I you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed you: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of Elohim; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

**2Timothy 2:2 And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit you to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**

**Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of Elohim, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look you out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Ruach haKodesh and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Ruach haKodesh, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of Elohim increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.**

### **Embarrassing Others**

In this week's Torah portion, we learn the famous Ten Commandments that יהוה gave us on Mt. Sinai. One of these is not to murder. Thankfully, most normal people would never consider murdering anyone, yet you might publicly humiliate someone -- or 'murder' their reputation. This is so harmful that it is, in a way, almost as destructive as actually murdering them. Therefore, we should be super careful not to embarrass others.

### **“THUMBS UP”**

"Okay, guys. We'll be there in about an hour and a half. I want every one of you kids to behave, or else." Kevin, the teacher's assistant sternly warned as the bus taking Marc and his classmates on their school trip pulled out of the school parking lot. Though the trip had barely started, Marc had already heard more than enough from this bossy Kevin. True he was two grades older than they were, but did that give him the right to order them around treat them like babies? "Slide over, kid. I'm taking the window seat -- assistant's privilege." Marc turned to face the voice and groaned. Of all the seats on the bus, Kevin had decided to sit right next to him! The boy begrudgingly moved over. He'd already taken out his camera and had planned to take a lot of pictures of the passing scenery through the bus window, but now he'd just have to sit there like a dummy next to this guy who thought he was so cool. The trip went along and as they were about to pass by a famous waterfall, Marc decided to ask Kevin if he could at least switch seats with him for a minute so he could get one good picture. As he turned, he got a big surprise -- the obnoxious bigger kid had fallen asleep and was sucking his thumb like a toddler! Forgetting about the waterfall, Marc pulled out his digital camera and took a couple of choice photos of this hilarious scene. He could hardly wait until the next rest stop, when he'd show these embarrassing pics around to the rest of the class. Kevin would never be able to live them down -- or be able to act like a boss over them again... "Okay, guys -- you've got exactly five-minutes before everyone has to be back to the bus. I hope you all know how to tell time!" Kevin chortled as the kids piled off at the rest stop. Marc smiled to himself, knowing that was the last put-down that kid was going to make. The secret picture he took of him would kill his 'cool guy' reputation and put him in his place once and for all.

Most of the class had gathered in front of the drink stand and Marc -- camera in hand -- began jogging over their way. He couldn't wait to...WHOA!... Suddenly, stepping on a patch of ice, his feet slipped out from underneath him and he found himself flat on his face, sprawled out like a rag doll. As he stood up and brushed himself off Marc was happy he was okay, but even happier that none of the kids had seen him fall. They'd have had a good laugh at his expense, and he would have felt totally embarrassed and foolish. He checked his camera to make sure his fall hadn't caused the precious pictures to get erased. Nope, Kevin's 'baby picture' was still on the screen. Marc marched closer to the group, but surprisingly felt his feet slowing down. *Is this really okay?* he thought to himself. *If I was just so happy no one saw me take that embarrassing fall -- everyone seeing Kevin sucking his thumb is going to embarrass him a hundred times as much. With each step Marc took, the idea of putting Kevin in his place was starting to feel less heroic and more just plain hurtful. True, Kevin was obnoxious, but did that justify humiliating him like this?* "Hey, Marc, cool-looking camera, man. You got any good shots of the trip so far?" asked his friend Ron as Marc reached to the group. The boy took a deep breath. "Nah, nothing yet." he said. Nothing -- Marc thought to himself -- *except for those two pictures he'd just permanently deleted, saving Kevin his reputation and saving himself from doing something very wrong.*

**Question:** What life-lesson do you think Marc learned that day? When he caught Kevin in an embarrassing position, his first thought was to use it to knock the kid down -- then he realized that humiliating someone is no joke, but rather a very serious and extremely harmful thing to do -- and thankfully he stopped himself in time.

**Question:** What should a person do if he sees someone in an embarrassing situation? If there is any way he can help, without embarrassing the person further, he should. Otherwise, he should simply turn or walk away and act as if he'd never seen it.

**Question:** Do you think it is ever justified to publicly embarrass another person? While in general it is certainly wrong, if there is someone whose improper conduct or values may seriously endanger those around him and more subtle methods won't get him to stop, there are times that embarrassing him into stopping or to prevent others from being influenced by him may be in order. But these cases are few and far between.

### "EXTRA CREDIT"

Janet could tell by the fascinated looks on her classmates' and even her teacher's face that her History presentation was a big hit. It seemed almost a sure thing that she was going to get an 'A'. Not that it came as that big of a surprise to her. She didn't like to brag about it, but the fact was that Janet was the smartest kid in the class. Since Janet was one of the few Jews in the class, for her presentation she decided to focus on Jewish history. The topic of her presentation was the special golden vessels that were in the Holy Temple in ancient Jerusalem. Every night for two weeks, she worked hard not only to research what they looked like but actually to build and paint models of the amazingly beautiful holy vessels. The only model vessel she didn't have to build from scratch was the menorah (candelabra). Even though the one in the Holy Temple was huge and made of solid gold, Janet figured her own family's small one they used for Chanukah, carefully wrapped with gold-colored foil, would do the trick.

It came out even nicer than she thought and looked so realistic that she put it aside to save as the grand finale of her whole presentation. The kids and even the teacher looked on with amazement as Janet brought out each fascinating model and explained its significance. "And this is what the golden altar looked like on which they would burn the mixture of special incense spices," she said as she held up the gleaming model for all to see to a chorus of "oohs and aahs."

"And now, last but not least," she said with a flourish as she took it out, "here is a model of the special solid gold menorah which would be lit every day of the whole year!" The whole class gave Janet a standing ovation for her great knowledge and super presentation, when a hand went up in the back of the classroom. It was Lori. Lori was also Jewish, but that was about all she and Janet seemed to have in common. While Janet was the class brain, Lori, if anything, could be called the class clown. Everyone liked Lori, but when it came to studying, Lori wasn't, let's say, so involved. "Excuse me, Janet, but I think you made a mistake," Lori said, as a few giggles burst forth from around the classroom at the absurdity of the class clown telling the class brain she got something wrong. "Yes?" Janet said, feeling a little bit annoyed. "Well, if I remember right, the menorah in the Temple was made for only seven candles, and your menorah has eight!" The room burst into laughter. All the kids were sure that Lori had no idea what she was talking about and was just making a joke.

But Janet wasn't paying any attention to the ruckus around her. She was searching with her photographic memory the diagrams she had copied from the museum book to make her models. It didn't take her long to discover - to her horror - that Lori was right! Somehow she had been so excited about using the real menorah that she had missed that detail. Janet felt herself in a real dilemma. If she admitted she was wrong she'd look really bad, especially if she didn't even know something that Lori *did*. It would be so easy just to deny it and that would be the end of the story. She was certain that none of the other kids or even the teacher knew the truth and it was clear they would all believe her, whatever she said. But was it okay to just lie like that - especially about something so holy? "Well Janet, tell me. Am I right or wrong?" "Lori, please sit down." said the teacher, "If Janet says this is how it was, then I'm sure..." Janet cleared her throat. "Um, excuse me, Mrs. Smith," she said, "But Lori is absolutely right. I made a mistake; there really should be only seven branches on the menorah." The class went silent, with more than one mouth dropping open. Just then, the dismissal bell rang and the kids ran out of class. No one laughed at Janet like she had feared and one or two - including Lori - even stopped to tell her how they really respected her for her honesty. She was glad she told the truth, but it certainly wasn't going to help her get her 'A,' which she was sure she had blown with her mistake.

As she gathered up the models, Mrs. Smith walked over to her. "Super presentation, Deb!" the teacher said with a smile. "Thanks," Janet shrugged, "But I guess after the big mistake I made at the end I don't get an A, right?" The teacher nodded. Janet sighed - she knew it. "No, you don't get an 'A,' but you do get an *A plus!* An A for your usual excellent work, and the extra plus because of the other important lesson you taught the class: the importance of valuing the truth and admitting when you're wrong."

**Question:** What life lesson do you think Janet learned that day? Janet was considered the class brain and it was very important to her to seem like she knew what she was talking about. When Lori challenged her it would have been easy for her to bluff her way out of it, but she chose to admit to the truth and saw that being honest with herself and others was the way to go.

**Question:** Do you think if she had bluffed and fooled everybody Janet would have felt good? Even when a person gets away with a lie and nobody ever finds out, it leaves the person feeling really bad inside. יהוה made us to love and live for truth, and if we don't, there is no way to ever really feel happy about ourselves.

**Question:** A way for a person to live a life of truth is to ponder what he would be willing to die for, and then dedicate his life to *living* for those things. How do you understand this concept? In the course of life it is easy to get distracted from our true values and get our priorities mixed up. When we ponder what is truly so important to us that we would be honestly willing to give up our lives for it - be it family, wisdom and meaning, what-have-you - we get a clear picture of our true deepest priorities. When we devote our precious time and life energy to these true priorities and not to lesser things, we experience the tremendous and unparalleled high of living a life of truth. If you chose family, spend more time with your family. If you chose wisdom, spend more time studying the Torah.

**Spiritual Exercise:** Spend a few minutes right now pondering what you would be willing to give up your life for if necessary. Make a list of your priorities and commit to devoting more of your time and energy, not to die for, but to live for these things.

#### **Resources:**

*The Stone Edition of The Chumash*

*The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS* [www.AlephTavScriptures.com](http://www.AlephTavScriptures.com)

“Weekly Torah Portion” from [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com)

*Book of Jasher or Book of the Just Man* (Hebrew: סֵפֶר הַיַּשָּׁר; transliteration: sēfer hayyāšār)

**Josh 10:13** And the Sun stood still and the Moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. *Is not this written in the book of Jasher? And the Sun stayed in the midst of heaven and delayed not going down about a whole day.*

**2 Sam 1:18** And he bade them teach the Children of Judah *the song of the bow*: surely, it is written in the book of Jasher.

(The Septuagint translation renders *sefer hayashar* in both cases as 'Book of the Just'. The reference to the bow is here missing, so that the text reads: And he gave orders to teach it the sons of louda: behold it is written in the Book of the Just.)