

Va'etchanan (I pleaded)



יְהוָה
Moses pleads with

Deuteronomy 3:23 And I pleaded with יְהוָה at that time saying, 24 “O Master יְהוָה, you have begun to show תִּתְּנַחֲמֵד your servant תִּתְּנַחֲמֵד your greatness and your mighty hand: What other god is there in heaven or in earth that can do your works and mighty deeds? 25 Please, let me cross over and see תְּנַחֲמֵד land that is good beyond Jordan, the wonderful mountains and Lebanon.” 26 But יְהוָה was angry with me for your sakes and would not hear me: and יְהוָה said to me, “Speak no more to Me about this matter. C-MATS

Question: What does “I pleaded” mean in verse 23? Prayer is called by thirteen names: cry, howl, groan, stricture, song, prostration, encounter, judgment, entreaty, standing, appeal, and beseeching. Moses was beseeching יְהוָה. It is used when one seeks an undeserved favor, for truly righteous and humble people never feel that they have a claim on יְהוָה's mercy. Moses never despaired, and continued to pray even though יְהוָה had told him the Land was closed to him, so we should never give up on יְהוָה's mercy. The gates of tears are always open. יְהוָה assured Moses that an enormously abundant reward -- greater even than the Land -- awaited him in the World to Come. Chumash

Question: Did Moses really expect to change יְהוָה's mind? And if we believe that יְהוָה always does what's best for us, is it even a good idea to try to change His mind? יְהוָה does always have our best in mind, and gives us what we need. There are times when יְהוָה could withhold from us certain things at the outset in order to teach us a lesson. Perhaps we need to examine the underlying motivations behind what we want or try harder to achieve worthwhile goals. Therefore when we are convinced, as Moses was, that it would have been good for the Hebrew people for him to enter the land with them, he had the right to assume that perhaps יְהוָה simply wanted him to try a little harder.

Question: There are times when things really do appear hopeless and it seems totally irrational to believe that things will improve. Why then does the Torah tell us to maintain hope even then? For several reasons. First of all, we really can't know when a situation is hopeless. יהוה can do anything, even when it seems impossible. History is full of examples. During the Gulf War, for instance, Saddam Hussein fired 39 deadly missiles at Israel. Many of them exploded in the middle of busy cities, yet amazingly there was only one casualty. Secondly, it's important to maintain hope and do whatever we can. We should never give up, even when the sword is at our neck, meaning that even when things look hopeless, we should still try to do what we can. A negative attitude prevents us from doing that, because we don't really believe we can succeed and we lessen our trust in יהוה.

Spiritual Exercise: Trust in יהוה always. Do not give up hope in any situation. Wait and see what יהוה will do for you.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust יהוה with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares יהוה, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Psalm 146:5 Happy (blessed, fortunate, enviable) is he who has the Elohim of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in יהוה his Elohim.

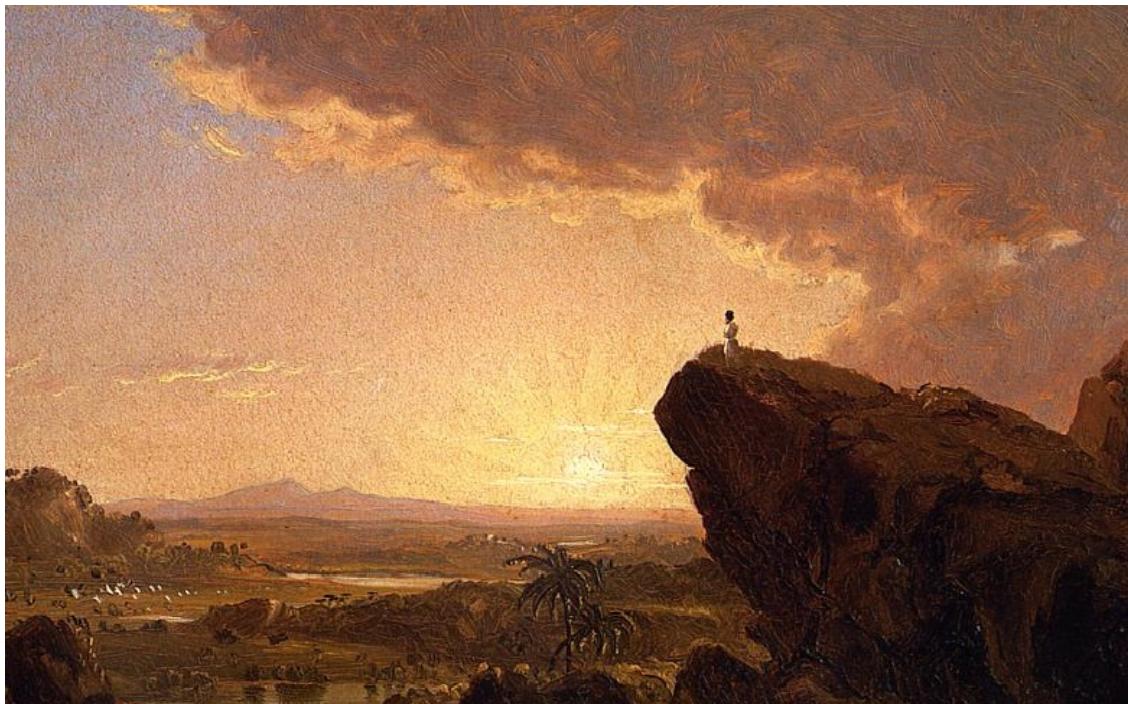
Psalm 27:14 Wait and hope for and expect יהוה; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be solid and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect יהוה.

Isaiah 26:3 You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind [both its inclination and its character] is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You.

Lamentations 3:24 יהוה is my portion or share, says my living being; therefore will I hope in Him and wait expectantly for Him.

Micah 7:7 But as for me, I will look to יהוה and confident in Him I will keep watch; I will wait with hope and expectancy for the Elohim of my salvation; my Elohim will hear me.

27 Go up onto the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward and see *it* with your eyes: because you will not cross over **־תְּנֵשׁ** Jordan. **28** But commission **־תְּנֵשׁ** Y'hoshua and encourage him and strengthen him: because he will cross over before this people and he will cause them to inherit **־תְּנֵשׁ** the land which you will see." **29** So we remained in the valley across from Beth-peor. C-MATS



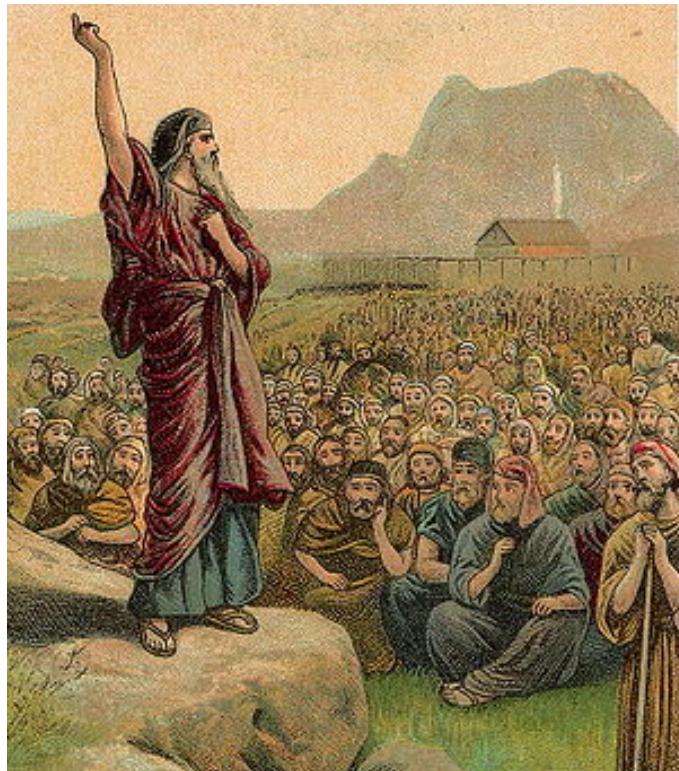
Moses views the Promised Land



From Mt. Nebo, Jordan

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Question: What happens in Chapter 4? Moses was about to exhort his people to obey the entire Torah, and he would review some of the commandments, and teach others that had not been set down in the Torah previously.



Moses Teaches the Israelites

Deuteronomy 4:1 Now therefore listen, O Israel, to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you to observe, so that you may live and go in and possess **תְּהִלָּתָה יְהוָה** Elohim of your fathers gives you. **2** You will not add to the word which I command you, neither will you take away from it, that you may keep **תְּהִלָּתָה יְהוָה** the commandments of **יְהוָה** your Elohim which I command you. C-MATS

Question: Why does Moses say not to add a word to **יְהוָה**'s commandments? By definition, perfection cannot be improved upon, so that for one to add to or subtract from the commandments of the Torah is an unacceptable implication that **יְהוָה**'s Torah is lacking. Chumash

Question: Why do you think **יְהוָה**'s instructions in the Torah are so specific and detailed, rather than just general guidelines for living? **יְהוָה** wants to give us the greatest gift possible and that is the eternal pleasure of closeness to Him. Each instruction and guideline in the Torah is a specific way to connect to Him spiritually toward achieving this goal.

Question: Can a person 'overdo it' spiritually? Real spirituality is striking a harmonious balance between our bodies and souls. If we ignore our basic physical needs in the name of 'spirituality,' we will go out of balance and miss the mark.

3 Your eyes have seen **תְּהִלָּתָה** what **יְהוָה** did because of Baal-peor: **יְהוָה** your Elohim has destroyed all the men that followed Baal-peor from among you. **4** But you that held fast to **יְהוָה** your Elohim *are* alive, every one of you this day. C-MATS

Question: What is the definition of being “alive”? The wicked, even in their lifetimes, are considered dead. The righteous, even in death, are considered alive. יהוה is the exclusive source of life; hence life, by definition, is connection with יהוה. A "life" of disconnection from יהוה is a pretend-life -- life devoid of all but its most superficial illusory shell. Chumash



Moses taught the Israelites

5 I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as יהוה my Elohim commanded me that you should do in the land that you go to possess. 6 Keep and do *them*; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which will hear **תְּ** all these statutes and say, “this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.” 7 For what nation *is there so great*, who has Elohim *so near* to them, as **נוּן** our Elohim *is in all things when we call upon him?* 8 And what nation *is there* so great that has statutes and judgments *as righteous as this Torah*, which I set before you this day? C-MATS

Question: Why must we study **this Torah**? The Torah's infinite wisdom is recognized only when it is seen, studied, and understood in its entirety. Taking one commandment out of the Torah to examine its meaning will not allow you to see with the wisdom that knowing all the Torah will give you. You will be shortsighted and lacking in your studies. All the Torah must be examined and studied to obtain the proper perspective. The Torah is not a grab bag from which one may pick and choose. It is like the blueprint of a complex structure; unless every part is followed, the building may collapse. Chumash

9 Only take caution and keep your soul diligently, so you won't forget **תְּהִלָּתָךְ** the things which your eyes have seen and they won't depart from your heart all the days of your life: but teach them to your sons and your sons' sons; 10 The day that you stood before **יְהוָה** your Elohim in Horeb, when **יְהוָה** said to me, "gather to Me **תְּהִלָּתָךְ** the people together and I will make them hear **תְּהִלָּתָךְ** My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live upon the earth and *that* they may teach their children."11 And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain; and the mountain burned *with* fire to the heart of heavens with darkness, clouds and thick darkness (mist).12 And **יְהוָה** spoke to you out of the midst of the fire: you heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude (*form*); you only *heard* a voice. C-MATS



יְהוָה spoke to you out of the midst of the fire

13 And He declared to you **תְּהִלָּתָךְ** His covenant, Ten Commandments, which He commanded you to obey; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And **יְהוָה** commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments that you might do them in the land *that* you are going to possess. C-MATS

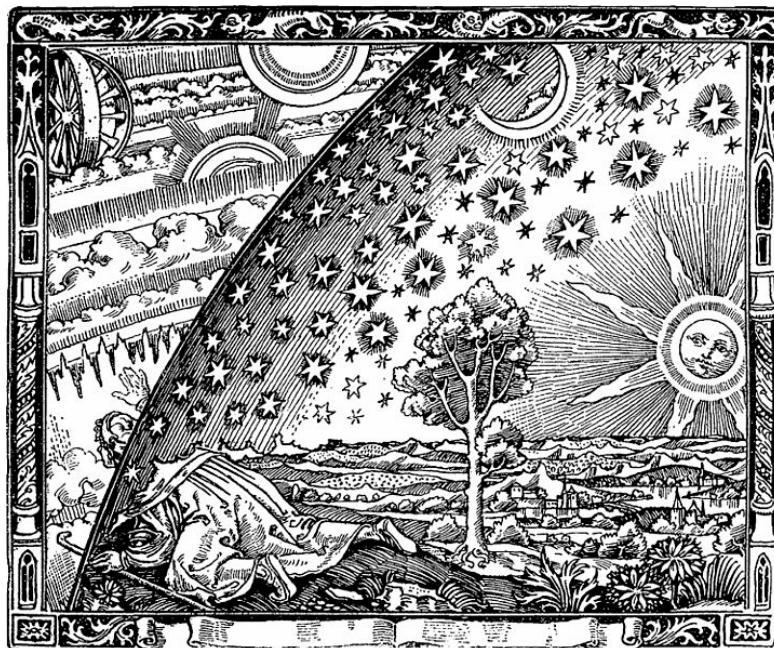


Moses Receiving the Tablets of the Law (painting by João Zeferino da Costa)

15 Watch out for yourselves! You saw no manner of similitude (*form*) on the day *that* יְהוָה spoke to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: **16** Do not corrupt yourselves and make a graven image, the similitude (*form*) of any figure, the likeness of male or female, **17** The likeness of any beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, **18** The likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters below the earth: **19** And when you lift up your eyes to *the* heavens and when you see הַנֶּה the sun and the moon and the stars, *and* all the host of heavens, do not be driven to worship them and serve them. יְהוָה your Elohim has divided all the nations under the whole heavens. C-MATS



Question: Why are the celestial hosts given to man to admire and meditate on? Abraham came to realize that there is a Creator by means of such meditation. At first he thought that the sun must be a god, then he thought the moon, which replaced the sun, must be a god, and finally, he realized that there must be One Elohim Who created and controls both. But lesser human beings could easily err and think that the celestial hosts have independent powers.



Do not investigate what was before
(illustration from Camille Flammarion's 1888 *L'atmosphère: météorologie populaire*)

20 But יְהוָה has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace of Egypt, to be a people of inheritance to Him, as you are this day. C-MATS

Question: Why was Israel subjected to harsh and cruel years in Egyptian exile? The reason הָיָה subjected Israel to the harsh and cruel years of the Egyptian exile were to purge them of their baser characteristics and even of their unworthy people. Had יְהוָה permitted Israel to multiply and grow into a large nation without the rigors of the exile, they would not have been willing to accept a Torah that would place many limitations on their natural and habitual desires. Chumash

Question: Do you think that hardships tend to make a person feel closer to יהוה? Although we always have free choice whether to come closer to יהוה or the opposite, in general hardships are a great chance to come closer. Firstly they tend to make us more humble and aware of the truth that we depend on יהוה for everything. Additionally, difficulties tend to bring us to prayer, which is one of life's great paths to awareness.

Question: Is it possible to have an easy life and still be great? It is possible but highly unlikely. Spiritual and character strength, just like physical strength is built up through exercise. That spiritual exercise is life's challenges and difficulties. A life without challenges tends to turn us into spiritual couch-potatoes. יהוה will send us whatever lessons we need to learn. The key is to remember that if and when hardships come, we should accept them and know they haven't come to knock us down, but rather to build us up.

21 Furthermore יְהוָה was angry with me for your sakes and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan and that I should not go into that good land, which יהוה your Elohim gives you for an inheritance: 22 But I must die in this land. I must not cross over the Jordan: but you will cross over and possess the land that is good. 23 Be cautious not to forget the covenant of יהוה your Elohim, which He made with you and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, which יהוה your Elohim has forbidden. 24 For יהוה your Elohim is a consuming fire, a jealous Elohim. 25 When you give birth to children and children's children and you have remained a long time in the land and corrupt yourselves and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything and do evil in the sight of יהוה your Elohim to provoke him to anger:

C-MATS

Question: Why was Moses warning the people about a future generation? There was no danger that the generation entering the Land would be enticed by the Canaanite idols; they had seen too much of יהוה's greatness to be so misled. But the children and grandchildren, for whom the miracles would be history rather than experience, would be susceptible (Chizkuni). Moses warned that this could easily happen when they had been a long time in the Land and lost their freshness and sense of spiritual adventure -- and then they would tend to find new stimuli in the life-styles of their neighbors. In ancient times, this meant idolatry; in more recent centuries it meant the various philosophies that have had such dangerous attractions for believers in many countries. The chapter ends with the reassurance that eventually the Hebrews will come back to their origins.

Question: How long did the Israelites keep the commandments and stay in the Land? The First Temple was built 440 years after they entered the Land, and it stood for 410 years until it was destroyed. The Israelites remained in the Land 850 years until they went into the Babylonian Exile.



I call to witness the heavens and earth

26 I call to witness תְּנַשֵּׁךְ heavens and earth against you this day that you will quickly perish from off the land, which you cross over תְּנַשֵּׁךְ Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days there, but you will be destroyed. 27 And יְהוָה will scatter you among the nations and you will be few in number among the heathen, where יְהוָה will send you. 28 And there you will serve wood and stone gods, the work of men's hands, which neither see or hear or eat or smell. 29 But if you will seek תְּנַשֵּׁךְ your Elohim, you will find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. C-MATS

Question: Do you think יְהוָה only wants us to talk to Him when we're in trouble? יְהוָה loves us more than we can imagine and wants us to come closer to Him by sharing and talking with Him about all parts of our lives, both the happy and the challenging.

Question: יְהוָה is a 'personal יהוה.' What do you think this means? יהוה is much more than a force that created everything and left it to run on its own. יהוה is also much more than a universal spiritual life force. יהוה is actively involved with every detail of each of our lives. He loves us and has an intimate personal interest in each of us and wants us to realize this and develop this amazing relationship to its full potential.

Question: If יהוה is already with us and cares about us all the time, why should a person pray? Even though יהוה is always connecting to us and ready to help, we are not always open to Him. Prayer and even just speaking to Him, helps us to stay focused on יהוה and opens us up to receive all the incredible goodness He is waiting to give us.

Question: Will יהוה hear you while in exile? The Torah stresses that when you seek *from there*, from your place of exile "among the nations," you will find Him. Because יהוה is to be found everywhere and every corner of His creation can serve as the vehicle to reach Him. If divine providence has dispatched you to a certain place and life, your surest path to Him is from there.

Spiritual exercise: Take time to talk to יהוה about how you're feeling. Spend time with Him in the morning and at night.

Question: When should you pray? Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. Luke 21:36

Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to Elohim. Philippians 4:6

Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer, being both alert and intent in your praying with thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2

All of you must keep awake and watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41

Be unceasing in prayer (praying perseveringly). 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Evening and morning and at noon will I utter my complaint and moan and sigh, and He will hear my voice. Psalm 55:17

He (*Yahshua*) told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not to turn coward (*faint, lose heart, and give up*). Luke 18:1

Question: Does יהוה hear your prayers?

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, hateful and exceedingly offensive to יהוה, but the prayer of the upright is His delight! Proverbs 15:8

יהוה is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous. Proverbs 15:29

But certainly Elohim has heard me; He has paid attention to the voice of my prayer. Psalm 66:19

Blessed be Elohim, Who has not rejected my prayer nor removed His mercy and loving-kindness from being with me. Psalm 66:20

And it shall be that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear Isaiah 65:24

Question: Who should you pray for? Confess to one another therefore your faults, *your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins and pray also for one another*, that you may be healed and restored to a spiritual tone of mind and heart. The earnest heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available dynamic in its working. James 5:16

But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Pray at all times *on every occasion, in every season* in the Spirit, with all manner of prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (*Elohim's consecrated people*). Ephesians 6:18

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper who love you (the Holy City)! Psalm 122:6

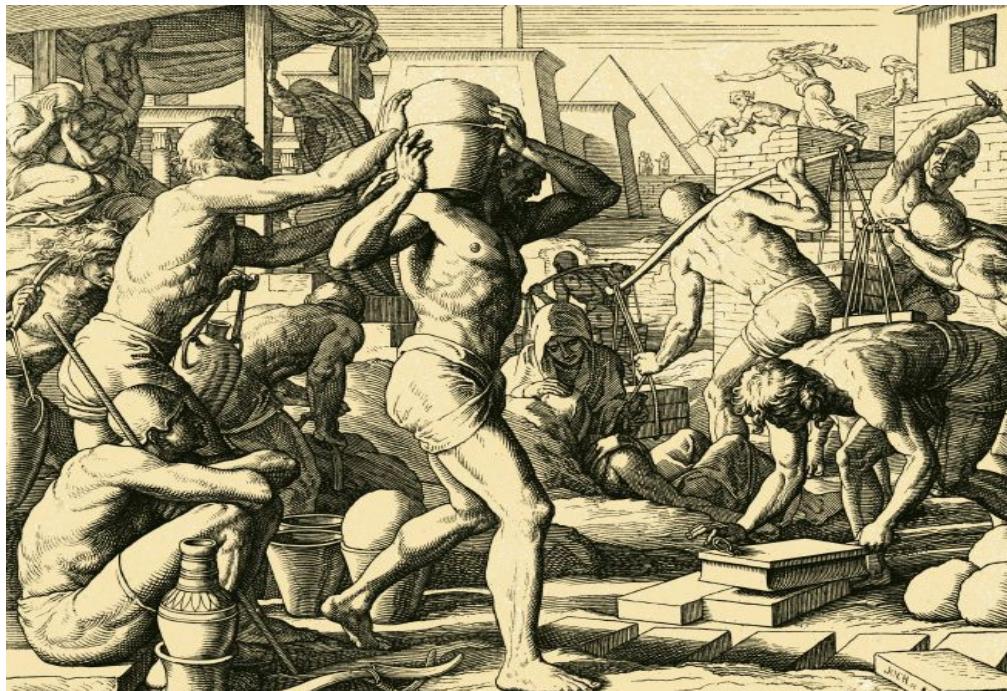
Question: What should you do if you do not know how to pray? So too the *Holy Spirit* comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance. Romans 8:26

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. Matthew 18: 19-20

30 When you are in tribulation and all these things have come upon you, even in the latter days, if you turn to יהוה your Elohim and will be obedient to His voice; 31(For יהוה your Elohim is a merciful Elohim) He will not forsake you or destroy you, or forget תְּנַשֵּׁא the covenant of your fathers, which He swore to them. 32 Ask about the past before you were born, since the day that Elohim created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of heaven to the other, whether there has been any such thing as great as this or has anyone heard of anything like this? C-MATS

Question: Why was Israel punished so harshly by יהוה? Moses explained why יהוה would punish Israel so harshly when it abandoned Him. Look to the past, Moses said, and see how generous יהוה has been with you. A nation that enjoyed such unprecedented benevolence deserves to be punished severely for ingratitude.

33 Did any other people hear the voice of Elohim speaking out of the midst of the fire as you heard and still lived? 34 Or has Elohim ever gone and taken for Himself a nation from out of the midst of another nation by tests, signs, wonders, war, and by a mighty hand and a stretched out arm and great terrors- like all that יהוה your Elohim did for you in Egypt before your eyes?
C-MATS

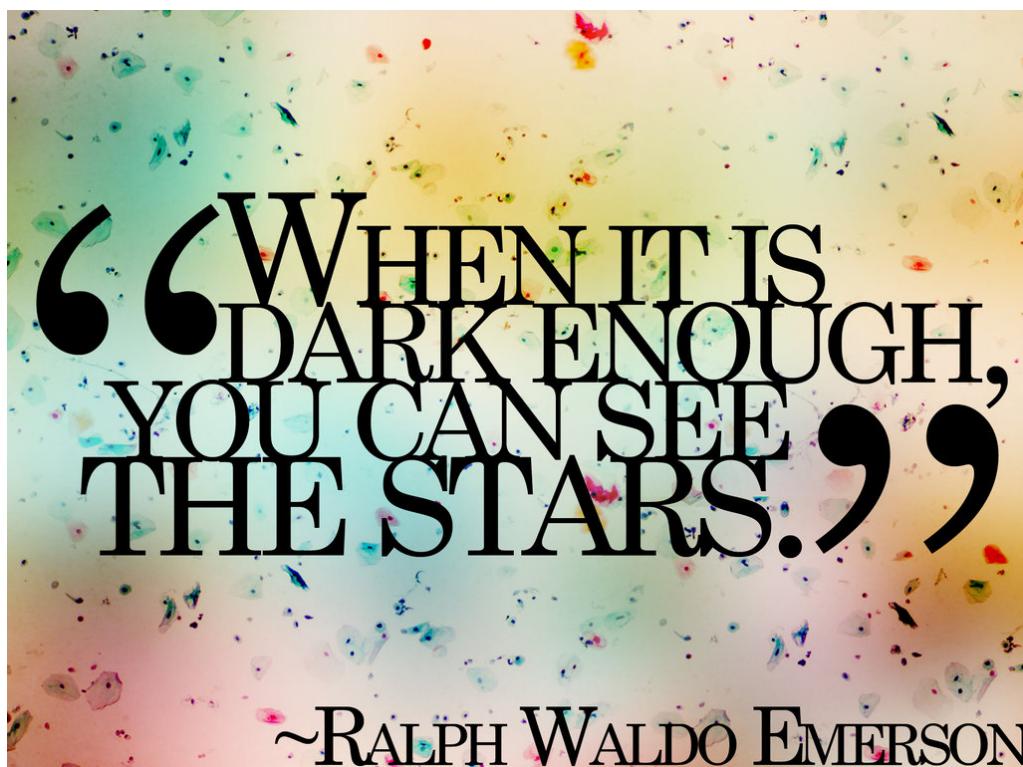


Israelites in Egypt

These verses refer to the slavery and hardships the Israelite people experienced in Egypt as an iron smelting furnace. Just as a smelting furnace heats up and removes the impurities from precious metals, so too the experience in Egypt purified our people for their mission of teaching righteous values to the world. The challenges we face in life are the lessons we need to make us great.



Question: Should a person try to give himself hardships so he can grow from them? No. We should try to live as normal and pleasant a life as we can. יהוה will send us whatever lessons we need to learn. The key is to remember that if and when hardships come, we should accept them and know they haven't come to knock us down, but rather to build us up.

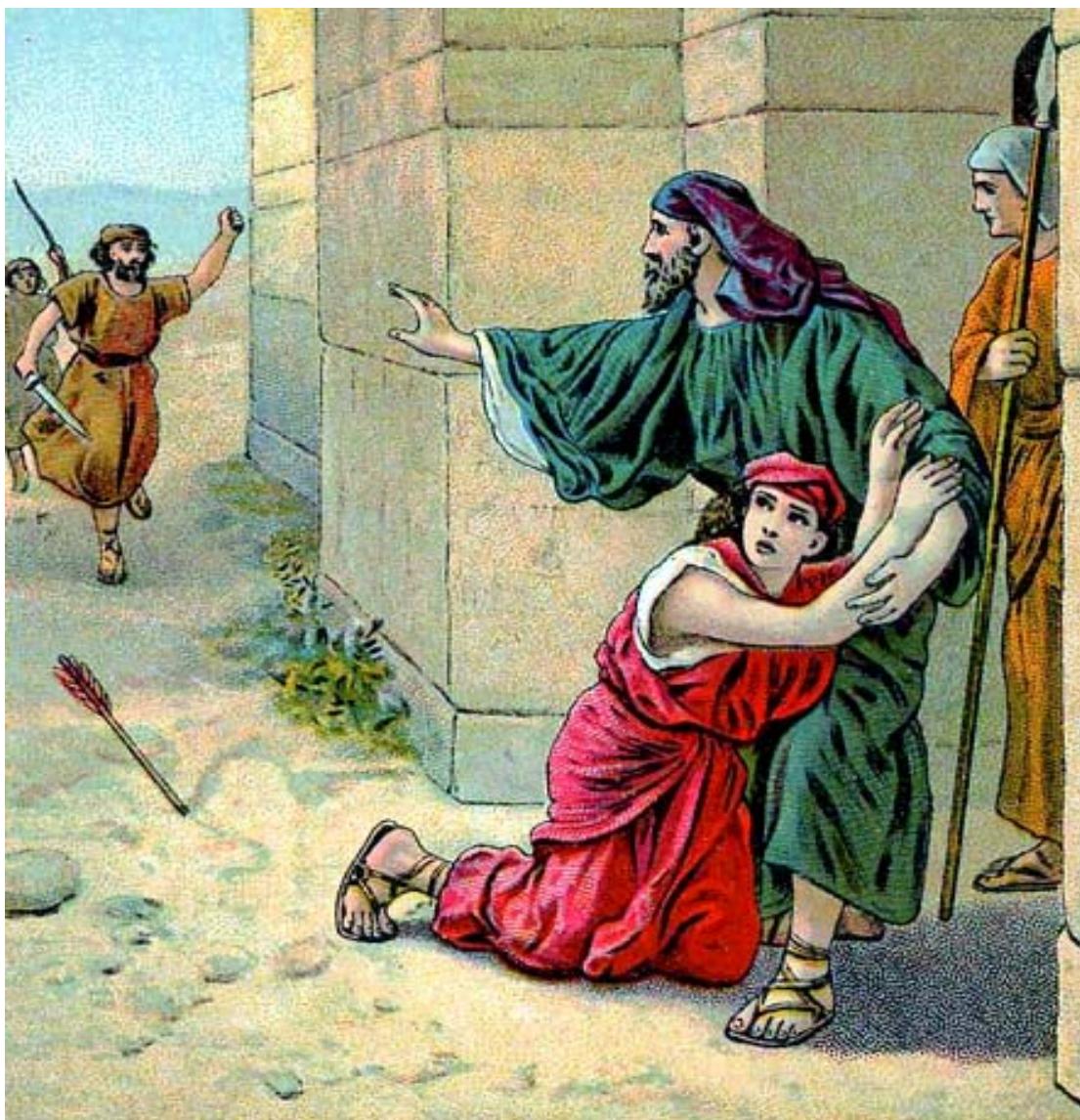


Question: How did יהוה remove Israel from Egypt? No "god" was ever able to remove one nation from the bowels of another, as יהוה had removed Israel from Egypt (Rashi). This is further proof of יהה's absolute power and His love for Israel. יהוה did so with challenges, as He defied Pharaoh to test Him (Exodus 8:5); with signs, by means of which Moses proved that יהוה had sent him (ibid. 4:2-3); with wonders, the plagues; and with war, the miracles at the Sea, which the Egyptians characterized as יהוה waging war against Egypt (Rashi). How much more will יהוה be able to take us from the midst of the nations and gather us back to Israel in the Greater Exodus?

35 It was shown *to* you, that you might know that יהוה He is Elohim; *there is no other* besides Him. 36 He made you to hear **‐תְּנַשֵּׁךְ** His voice out of heaven, that He might instruct you: and upon earth He showed you **‐תְּנַשֵּׁךְ** His great fire; and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because He loved **‐תְּנַשֵּׁךְ** your fathers, He chose their descendants and brought you out in His sight with His mighty power out of Egypt; 38 To drive out nations before you *who are greater and mightier than you are*, to bring you in and give you **‐תְּנַשֵּׁךְ** their land *for an inheritance, as it is this day.* 39 Know this day and consider *it* in your heart that יהוה He is Elohim in heaven above and on the earth beneath: *there is no other.* C-MATS

Question: What does **consider it in your heart** mean? This means meditate intensely upon it (R' Bachya). There are many things that people know intellectually, but do not "take to heart," in the sense that this knowledge controls their behavior. This is perhaps most pronounced in health habits, where people persist in doing things that they enjoy even though they know them to be harmful, such as smoking and drinking. The same holds true for many people of faith who are careless in their performance of some commandments, because they lack sufficient emotional commitment. Thus Moses urged the people that even though they know that there is only one יהוה, they must find ways to take it to heart, uncompromisingly.

40 You will keep therefore תְּנַשֵּׁךְ His statutes and His commandments, which I command you this day that it may go well with you and with your children after you and that you may prolong your days upon the earth, which יהוה יְהוָה your Elohim gives you forever.” C-MATS



Cities of Refuge

41 Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of Jordan toward the sunrise; 42 That the manslayer (*person who killed a man*) might flee there, who killed **־תְּנָשֵׁא** his neighbor unintentionally and *did not hate him in the past*; so by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: 43 *Namely* **־תְּנָשֵׁא** Bezer in the wilderness, on the plateau country for the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites. 44 And this is the Torah which Moses set before the sons of Israel: 45 These are the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments, which Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, after they came out of Egypt, 46 On this side of the Jordan, in the valley across from Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the sons of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt: 47 And they possessed **־תְּנָשֵׁא** his land and the land of Og, king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side of Jordan toward the sunrise; 48 From Aroer, which is by the bank of the Arnon River, to Mount Sion, (which is Hermon), 49 And all the plain on this side of the Jordan eastward, to the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pisgah. Deuteronomy 5:1 And Moses called all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, **־תְּנָשֵׁא** the statutes and judgments that I speak in your ears this day, so that you may learn them and keep *them* and do them. C-MATS

Question: Why does Moses review the commandments with **all Israel**? Most of the people standing before him had not been at Mount Sinai forty years before, and Moses wanted every member of the nation, including the new generation, to hear the Ten Commandments (R' Bachya).



2 **יְהוָה** our Elohim made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 **יְהוָה** made **־תְּנָשֵׁא** this covenant not **־תְּנָשֵׁא** with our fathers, but with us who are here alive this day. 4 **יְהוָה** talked with you face to face on the mountain out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between **יְהוָה** and you at that time to show you **־תְּנָשֵׁא** the work of **יְהוָה**: because you were afraid of the fire and would not go up onto the mount) saying, C-MATS

Question: What are verses 6-21 repeating? Moses repeats the Ten Commandments; see Exodus 20:1-14. Although the general content of this version is identical to that in Exodus, there are some differences. The reason for these differences flows from the nature of Deuteronomy being spoken in Moses words not יהוה's. The text of the Ten Commandments given here should be understood as the way Moses perceived and understood the covenant and framed it in his own words, according to the people's capacity to best comprehend it.



6 'I am יהוה your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage.



7 You will have no other gods before Me. 8 You will not make *any* graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth: 9 You will not bow down to them or serve them: because I יהוה your Elohim am a jealous Elohim, punishing the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to *the* third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 And showing mercy to thousands of those that love Me and keep My commandments. C-MATS

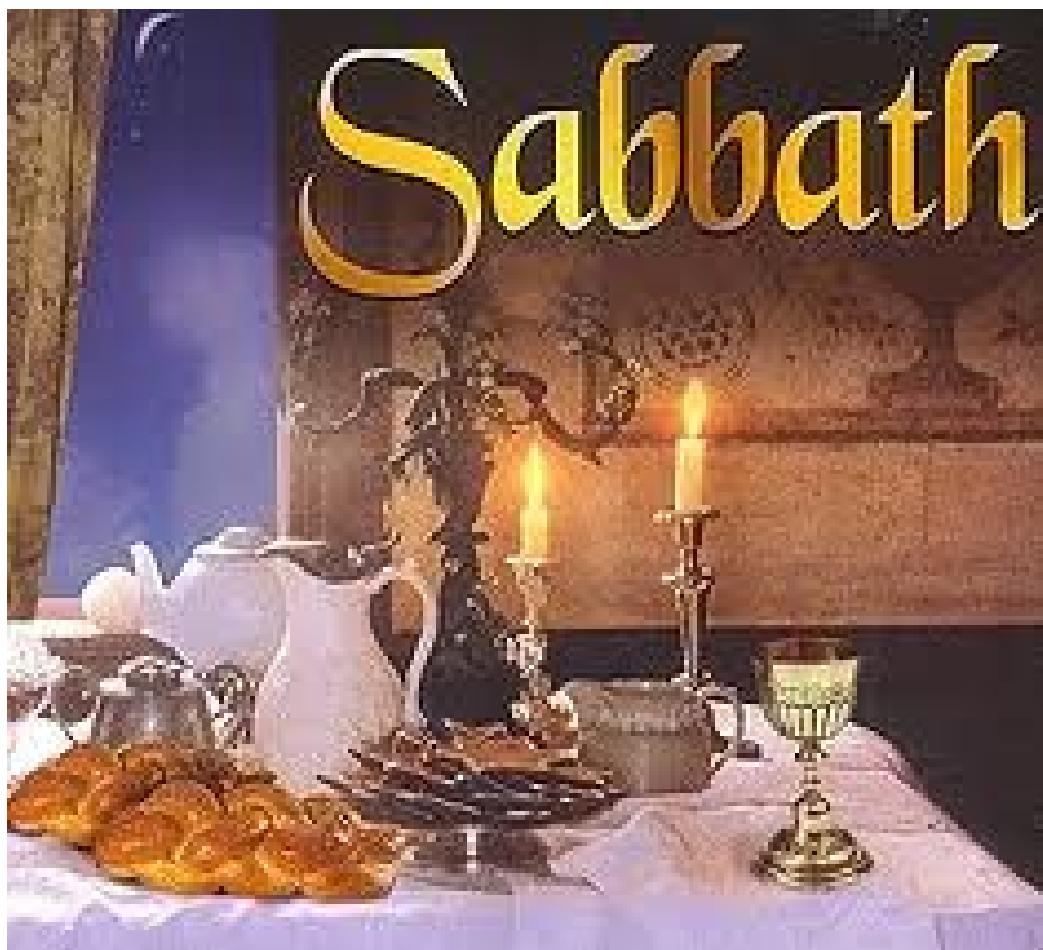


11 You will not take (*misuse*) שְׁנָא the name of יהוה your Elohim in vain: neither will hold him guiltless שְׁנָא that takes שְׁנָא His name in vain. C-MATS



Watch out for road rage!

12 Keep the Sabbath **שַׁבָּת day to sanctify it (*keep it sacred*) as **יְהוָה** your Elohim has commanded you.**



Question: What does “Keep the Sabbath **שַׁבָּת** day” mean? In this verse it means safeguard the Sabbath. In the first version of the Ten Commandments, Israel was commanded to remember the Sabbath. **יהוָה** said both safeguard and remember in a single utterance, meaning that both are equal parts of the Sabbath commandment. The word “remember” was inscribed on both the First and Second Tablets, and that here Moses explained that the negative commandment safeguard was included in **יהוָה**'s utterance. At the highest spiritual level -- the one occupied by Moses -- the awesome holiness of the Sabbath is such a totally positive phenomenon that one who understands its significance could not desecrate it. Thus, the positive remembrance of the Sabbath contains within itself the impossibility of violating it, just as one who loves another person need not be warned not to harm that person. Some people do not grasp this exalted nature of the Sabbath. They have to be told that it is forbidden to desecrate the sacred day; which primarily is the negative commandment safeguard (R' Gedaliah Schorr).

13 Six days you will labor and do all your work:



Question: Is this verse also a commandment? 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.

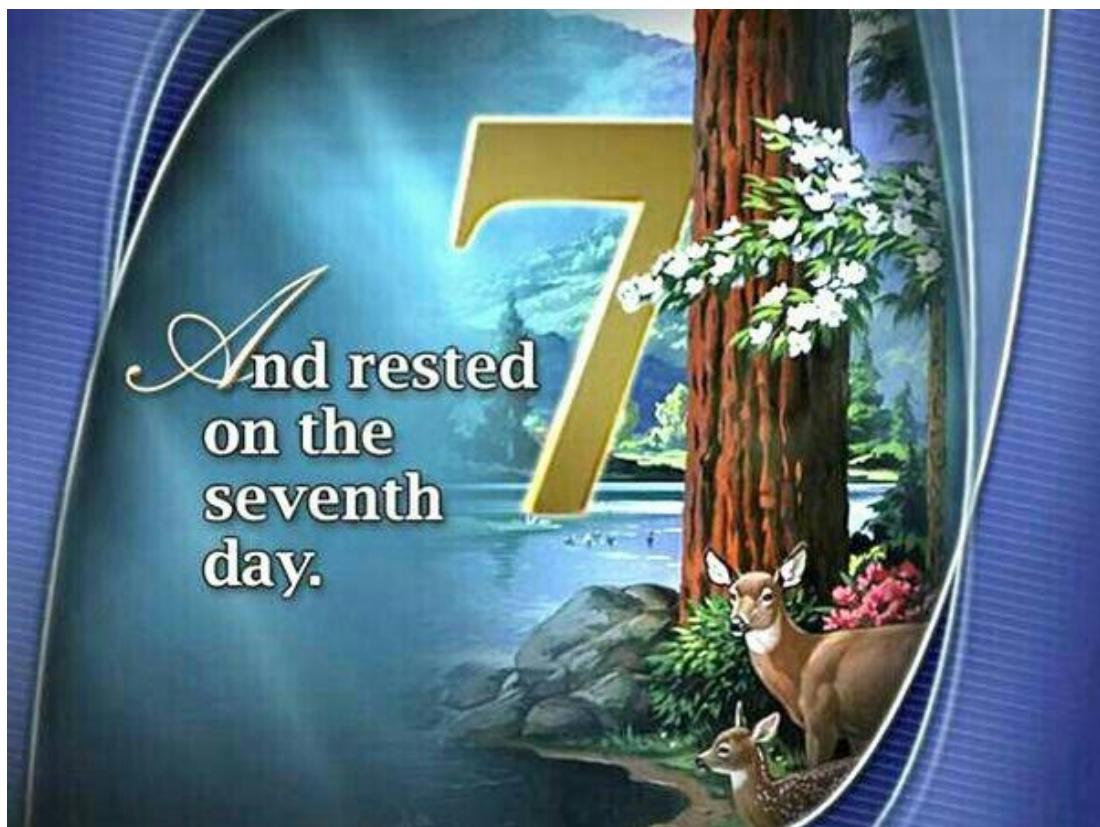
Question: If you are not willing to work and you waste your time in idleness, are you in sin?
2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of Yahushua, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in Yahushua to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

Discuss: Would יהוה be pleased with you if you were living on welfare and food stamps, if you were healthy and capable of working?

Question: Is it then possible for a person to do "all his work" in six days? But rest on Shabbat as if all your work is done. Do not think about the work you have to do until the Sabbath is over. Your body and mind needs to rest from your labors.

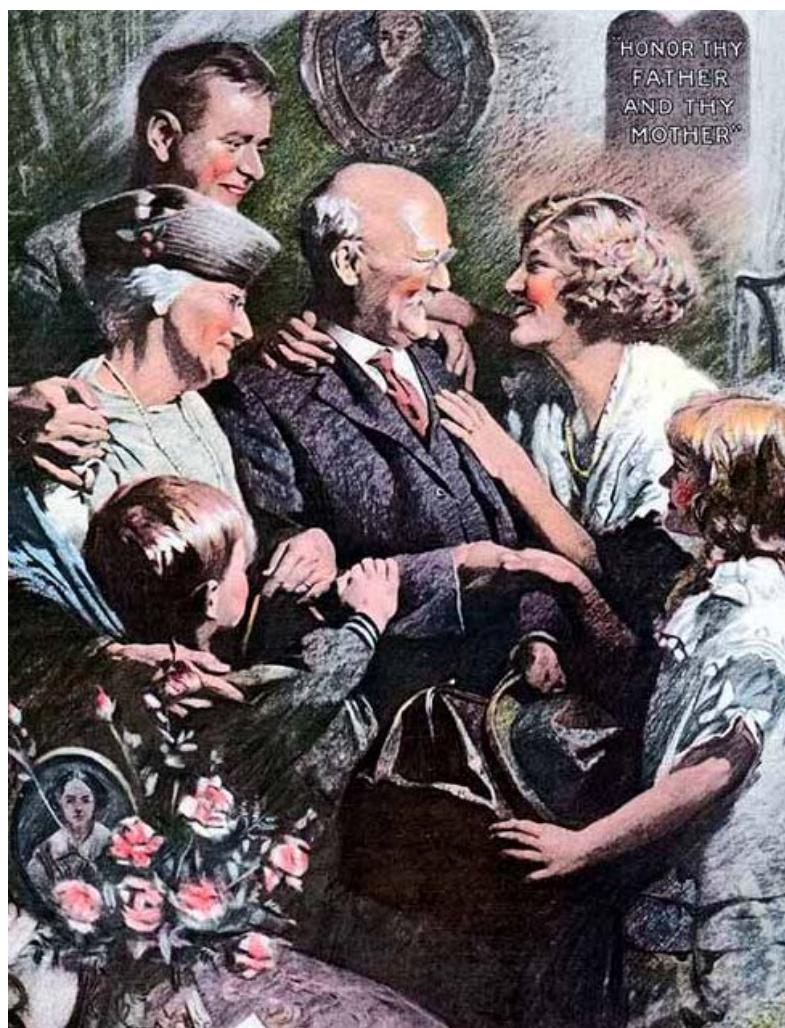
Question: What is the best way then for the people of יְהוָה to protect themselves from being content? How can we as believers avoid forgetting יְהוָה when times are good? The Sabbath is יְהוָה's answer – Set aside time to remember what you once were and how יְהוָה has saved you. That's why יְהוָה commanded us to keep the Sabbath. So that when life gets hectic, or we become comfortable in what we have and we start to feel independent from יְהוָה, or we have no problems we need יְהוָה to fix, then we take time out to remember that once we were dead in our sins, but now we have been made alive with Yahshua through His death and resurrection. We still need to take time out to remember that we have not made ourselves, we have not saved ourselves, we are not the center of the world... We are יְהוָה's people. All we have is given to us by Him. When we stop working we are exercising our faith in יְהוָה and we are trusting Him to look after us.

Spiritual Exercise: When was the last time that you took some time out and were thankful for what יְהוָה has done for you and spent some time with Him?



14 But the seventh day is the Sabbath of יְהוָה your Elohim: *in it you will not do any work, you, your son, your daughter, your male or female servant, your ox or donkey or any of your cattle, or your stranger that is within your gates; that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.* **15** And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and *that יְהוָה your Elohim brought you out of there through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore יְהוָה your Elohim commanded you to keep the Sabbath שַׁבָּת day.* C-MATS

Question: Why does יהוה want us to remember that our ancestors were once slaves? When the Israelites were slaves, they had no freedom to make choices. Therefore, if we keep Sabbath properly, we can remain free. If properly used, the Sabbath compels us to remember the past as well as to look forward to where our lives are headed. Sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4), but the Ten Commandments are the law of liberty (James 1:25). By keeping them, we remain free of enslavement by Satan, this world, and death. On the Sabbath, יהוה instructs His people through His Word on how to keep His commandments and thus remain free. The first commandment יהוה specifically revealed after He freed Israel from slavery was the one intended to keep them free, the Sabbath. יהוה gave them this witness of a double portion of manna on the sixth day and none on the seventh for forty years! Contrary to those who assert the Sabbath has been done away or replaced, the Sabbath is a wonderful gift of יהוה.



16 Honor **תָּהֲנוּ your father and your mother, as יהוה your Elohim has commanded you; so that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you in the land which יהוה your Elohim gives you. C-MATS**

Question: Who are the three partners who help us in our journey on this earth? 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 though I had dwelt among them and they had honored Me."

The Midrash points out that the Ten Commandments were engraved on two tablets -- five on the first and five on the second. The first tablet contains commandments that are "between man and יהוה," while the commandments on the second tablet govern the relationship "between man and man." This means that as the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother," belongs to the category of "between יהוה and man"!

In Leviticus 19:3 it says, "**Every man should fear his mother and father.**" For it is revealed and known to יהוה that a person adores his mother more than his father, and that he fears his father more than his mother. יהוה therefore set the honor of one's father first, and the fear of one's mother first, to emphasize that one must honor and fear them both equally.

Question: What are some ways that you can show your appreciation to your parents for their love and caring? The simplest thing is to just tell them. It makes your parents feel so good to hear that we appreciate them. Besides this, we can try to treat them with respect by speaking politely to them, and trying to do what they ask of us or giving extra help around the house. Any little way we can think of to let them know that they are special to us -- for example with little notes or gifts.

Question: Do you think a person would have to show respect for a parent even if the parent hadn't taken care of him or given him much? Although it would be harder to do, or feel inside, it would still be the right thing. יהוה wants us to be grateful to our parents for the gift of life. Also, by honoring our parents we learn how to properly appreciate, honor and connect to יהוה - our ultimate Parent.

Question: Besides parents, do you think there are any other categories of people to whom we should show particular honor or respect? Special respect is due to the elderly (especially our grandparents) as well as to those who have taught us wisdom or are even especially wise themselves. Also we should treat older siblings with greater than average respect.

Spiritual Exercise: Do or say at least one thing today to show a parent respect or appreciation.

Question: How were the Ten Commandments given? Five on one tablet and five on the second tablet. This means that "Do not murder" (on the second tablet) corresponds to "I am יהוה your Elohim" (on the first tablet). The Torah is telling us that one who sheds blood, it is as if he has reduced the image of the King, as it is written (Genesis 9:6): "One who spills a man's blood... for in the images of יהוה He made man."

6th Commandment: 17 You will not murder.



7th Commandment: 18 Neither will you commit adultery.



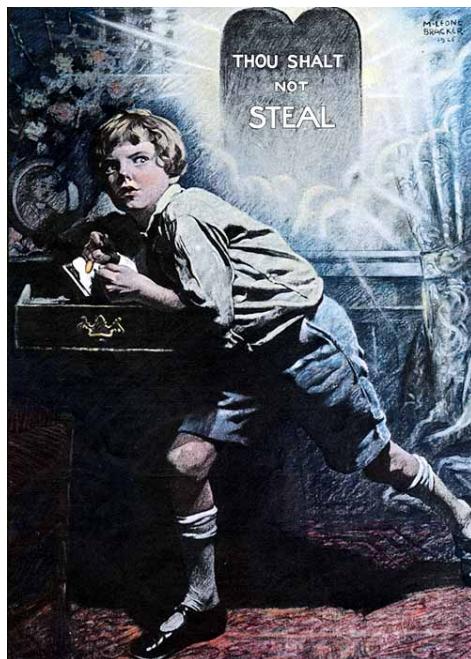
Matthew 5:27 Yahshua said, “**You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’**²⁸ **But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**”

King David was at the height of his powers. The shepherd boy who felled Goliath, the popular war-hero and hymn writer was in full control of his kingdom. But, like some modern rulers, he failed to control his eyes, with disastrous results! One evening, from the roof of his palace, he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. His choice was to keep looking or to look away. His decision led to his affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. There followed an unplanned pregnancy, a failed cover-up attempt, an arranged death -in-battle, and the death of a child.

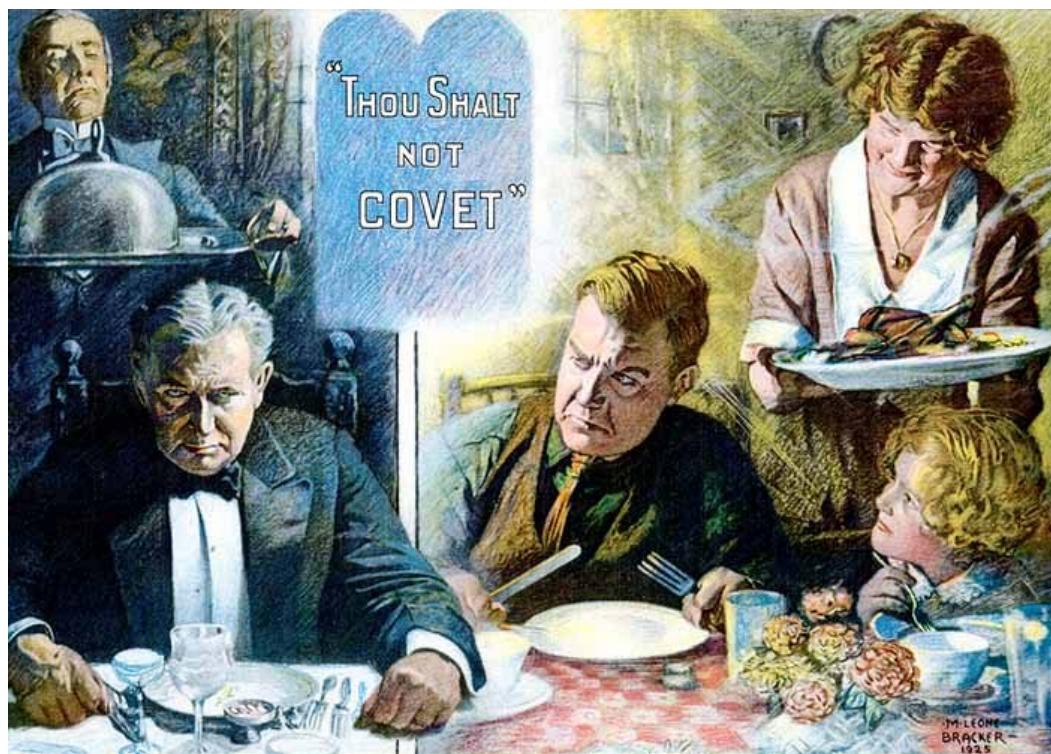
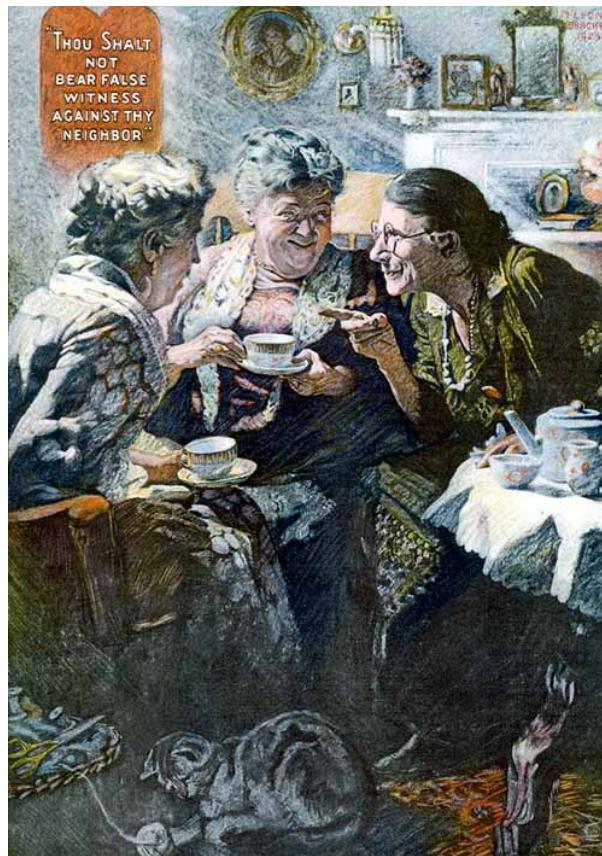
Yahshua says it is not enough to be technically faithful. Infidelity starts in the heart, and is fed by the eyes. The habits of daily life set up the default patterns for the critical turning points of life. We must take drastic action – “whatever it takes” – to control what we watch. In this age of pervasive sexual imagery, and instant access to seductive visual content, Yahshua’s message is more relevant than ever! Today, the story of David is played out over and over again as men in every walk of life make ship-wreck of their personal and public lives, their families and careers, by failing to control their eyes. Job is the model of a good man who suffered tragedy on tragedy, and wrestled with the meaning of suffering. He took an audit of his life. First on his check list was how he looked at women! **“I made a solemn pact with myself never to undress a girl with my eyes.”** Job 31

Spiritual Exercise: Guard carefully over what you see. Take major steps this week to protect yourself from temptations.

8th Commandment: 19 Neither will you steal.



9th Commandment: 20 Neither will you bear false witness against your neighbor.



10th Commandment: 21 Neither will you desire your neighbor's wife; neither will you covet your neighbor's house, his field, his male or female servant, his ox, donkey or anything that is your neighbor's. C-MATS

Question: What is the difference between the Exodus version and this verse? In Exodus, property is mentioned first, but here Moses mentioned sensual desire first because average human beings have stronger lusts for sensual gratification than for additional property. The prohibition to covet forbids one to take action, such as seeking to coax or pressure the owner of the house to sell it. By extending the prohibition to desire, the Torah teaches that it is wrong even to fantasize a plot against another person, even though one knows he will not be able to carry out his plan (Ramban).

22 יהוה spoke ~~בְּ~~ these words to all your assembly on the mount out of the midst of the fire, cloud, and thick darkness (*mist*) in a loud voice: then it ceased. And He wrote them on two tables of stone and delivered them to me. C-MATS



Mount Sinai

Question: How did יהוה speak to His people at Mount Sinai? He spoke with an extremely powerful voice that spoke without interruption (unlike a human voice, which must pause for breath) and that it did not cease, in the sense that all subsequent prophets prophesied from that voice, or in the sense that it did not confine itself to the Sacred Hebrew Tongue but reverberated in mankind's seventy languages and it had no echo.

One may feel challenged by something in our lives or in our world that seems to keep us from the mission entrusted to us at Sinai. It may appear that one or another of Torah's commandments do not "fit in" with the common daily situations. So the Torah tells us that the voice which sounded יהוה's message to man had no echo.

An echo is created when a sound meets with a substance, which resists it: instead of absorbing its waves, the substance repels them, bouncing them back to the void. But the voice of the Ten Commandments permeated every object in the universe. So any "resistance" we may possibly meet in putting into practice the Torah is false and temporary. Ultimately, the essence of every created being is fully capable of being consistent with the goodness and perfection that its Creator desires of it.

23 And it came to pass, when you heard **תְּנִשְׁאָר** the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (because the mountain burned with fire,) that you came near to me *with* all the heads of your tribes and your elders; **24** And you said, “**יְהוָה** our Elohim has shown us **תְּנִשְׁאָר** His glory and His greatness and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that Elohim **תְּנִשְׁאָר** does speak *with* man and he lives. **25** Now therefore why should we die? This great fire will consume us: if we hear **תְּנִשְׁאָר** the voice of **יְהוָה** our Elohim any more, then we will die. **26** Who is *there* of all flesh that has heard the voice of *the* living Elohim speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we *have* and lived? **27** Go and hear **תְּנִשְׁאָר** all that **יְהוָה** our Elohim says: and speak to us **תְּנִשְׁאָר** all that **יְהוָה** our Elohim speaks to you; and we will hear *it* and do *it*.” **28** And **יְהוָה** heard **תְּנִשְׁאָר** the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and **יְהוָה** said to me, “I have heard **תְּנִשְׁאָר** the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you: what they spoke is good. **29** O that there was such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep **תְּנִשְׁאָר** all My commandments always, so that it might go well with them and with their children forever! **30** Go say to them, ‘return to your tents again.’ **31** But as for you, stand here by Me and I will speak to you **תְּנִשְׁאָר** all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments, which you will teach them, so that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess. **32** You will be careful to do as **יְהוָה** your Elohim has commanded you: you will not turn aside to *the* right hand or to the left. **33** You will walk in all the ways which **יְהוָה** your Elohim has commanded you, so that you may live and that it may go well with you and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which you will possess.” Deuteronomy 6:1 Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes and the judgments, which **יְהוָה**, your Elohim commanded you, so that you might do *them* in the land that you go to possess: **2** That you might fear **תְּנִשְׁאָר** **יְהוָה** your Elohim to keep **תְּנִשְׁאָר** all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, your son, and your son's son all the days of your life; so that your days may be lengthened. **3** Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to obey, so that it may go well with you and that you may increase mightily, as **יְהוָה** Elohim of your fathers has promised you in the land that flows with milk and honey.

שָׁמָע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

[בָּרוּךְ שְׁם כָּבוֹד מִלְכֹותָו לְשָׁלוֹם וְשָׁעַר]
(response in an undertone)

וְאָהָבָת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךְ וּבְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ
וּבְכָל-מִאֲדָךְ: וְהִיו תָּרְבִּירִים הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוָה
הַיּוֹם עַל-לְבָבְךְ: וְשָׁנַתְּמָכָלְבָבְךְ לְבָנִיךְ וְדָבְרָתָךְ בְּמִשְׁבַּתְּךָ
בְּבִיחָךְ וּבְלִכְתָּךְ בְּדַרְךְ וּבְשִׁכְבָּךְ וּבְקָוָנָךְ:
וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יְדֵיכְ וְהִיו לְטַפְּתָה בֵּין עֵינֵיכְ:
וְכַתְּבָתָם עַל-נִזּוֹזָת בִּיהְיוֹת וּבְשִׁעְרִיָּה:

The Shema

4 Hear, O Israel: יהוה our Elohim is one: 5 And you will love יהוה את your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. C-MATS

Question: What does “all your heart” mean? The heart is a metaphor for the seat of craving and aspiration. Love with both your good and evil inclinations (Rashi). This means that one should love יהוה by following one's good inclination to perform commandments and by rejecting the bad inclination to sin (Talmidei R' Yonah). Alternatively, the “evil inclination” refers to man's earthly cravings, such as the desire for food, drink, and physical gratification, and the like. By channeling even these drives to the service of יהוה, one serves Him with both inclinations (Rambam).

Question: What does “all your soul” mean? Love with all your soul, even if your devotion to יהוה costs you your life (Rashi). This refers to the rare situations -- idolatry, adultery, and murder -- in which the situation requires one to die rather than sin. “You must love יהוה even if it takes your life” (Berachos 54a), implying that if a believer must accept martyrdom, he should do so with the attitude that he is not the victim of a human murderer, but that he has scaled the spiritual height of giving up his soul to יהוה (Alshich).

Question: Is יהוה one Elohim? We perceive יהוה in many ways -- He is kind, angry, merciful, wise, judgmental -- and these apparently contradictory manifestations convinced some ancient and medieval philosophers that there must be many gods, one of mercy, one of judgment, and so on. But the Torah says that יהוה is the One and Only -- there is an inner harmony for all that He does, though human intelligence cannot comprehend what it is. This, too, will be understood at the End of Days, when יהוה's ways are illuminated. This concept is like a ray of light seen through a prism. Though the viewer sees a myriad of different colors, it is a single ray of light. So, too, יהוה's many manifestations are truly one.

Question: How does someone express love for יהוה? One expresses love for יהוה by performing His commandments lovingly. There is no comparison between one who serves a master out of love and one who does so out of fear. One who is motivated by fear may go his own way if the tasks become too difficult (Rashi), but one who serves out of love is ready to make great sacrifices for the object of his affection.

Question: Since love is an emotion, how can one be commanded to love? The Torah answers this question in the next few verses by saying that believers should think about the Torah, study it, and teach it. When one meditates on יהוה's great and wondrous deeds and creations, and sees in them His incomparable and infinite wisdom, one will immediately come to love and praise Him, and be filled with longing to know Him.

Question: What is the most important commandment? Yahshua quotes the Shema. **Mark 12:28** One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Yahshua had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" **29** "**The most important one,**" answered Yahshua, "**is this: 'Hear, O Israel, יהוה our Elohim, יהוה is one. 30 Love יהוה ייְהוָה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'**" **31** The second is this: '**Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.**' **32** "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that Elohim is one and there is no other but him. **33** To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." **34** When Yahshua saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "**You are not far from the kingdom of Elohim.**" And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

6 And these words, which I command you this day, will be in your heart: **7** And you will teach them diligently to your children and will talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up. C-MATS

Question: Should you teach your children the Torah? A person demonstrates his devotion to the Torah by what priority he gives it in the education of his children.

Question: At what times should you meditate on the Torah? In your home your main topic of conversation should be the Torah and service of יהוה (Rashi). While you sit in your home occupy yourself with Torah study whenever possible, you will reach your goal of loving יהוה (Bechor Shor). At night and in the morning, the times when people normally go to sleep and wake up, one should give time to Torah study and prayer. For those who seek perfection, it is a call to study the Torah unceasingly, at all times and in every possible situation. But those who are not capable of this goal are commanded at the very minimum to pray in the morning and night.

Joshua 1:7 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Psalm 119:97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. **98** Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.



8 And you will tie them as a sign on your hand and they will be in front of your eyes. C-MATS

Question: Should we tie physical objects to our heads and hands? While there are no scriptures to verify that Yahshua wore tefillin, it would **not** be correct to say that no form of these items was worn in Yahshua's time, either by Him or his followers. Tefillin are traditional prayer objects that were an invention of the Pharisees, which was later picked up by the Rabbis. The Gospels reveal they were worn all day long by the Pharisees to give the impression that they were pious men, constantly praying. **Matthew 23: 5. And they do all their deeds that they might be seen by the sons of men. For they widen their Tefillin and lengthen the Tekhelet of their robes. (Aramaic English New Testament)**

Question: What is the deeper significance of this law? The head (**in front of your eyes**) represents the mind; the hand represents action. Both mind and deed are to be enlisted in man's service of his Creator. Doing, however, must come first, as the people of Israel proclaimed at Sinai, "**We will do and we will hear (comprehend).**" Furthermore, while it is possible to conceive of a temporary state in which doing exists without understanding, understanding without deed is utterly worthless. Chumash

9 And you will write them on the *door* posts of your house and on your gates.



Mezuzah

Question: Why is the mezuzah affixed to the doorpost in a slanted position? For a home to have the proper atmosphere, harmony and peace must prevail among all those who dwell in it, and this is achieved by promoting a spirit of cooperation. Putting the mezuzah on an angle instead of upright is thus a message that all those who enter the home must be willing to bend in conflicts with other people. Chumash

10 And it will be when יהוה your Elohim has brought you into the land, which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and prosperous cities, which you did not build, **11** And houses full of good *things*, which you did not fill, and wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant; so you can eat and be full; **12** Then beware that you do not forget יהוה, who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. C-MATS

Question: The Israelites were about to be given cities, houses, wells, vineyards, and olive trees that they did not labor to obtain. Unearned gifts are the 'bread of shame.' What does this mean? It feels good to get the things we want, and you might think that it will feel even better to get it for nothing. But the opposite is actually true. Getting something we haven't earned or don't really deserve can make us feel uneasy because we are becoming dependent on the giver. יהוה wants us to become independent and actively use our free will to earn the physical and spiritual gifts we attain in life. This way we become like יהוה who is totally independent.

Question: How does this 'bread of shame' concept pertain to our relationship with יהוה? יהוה is the ultimate giver of unearned gifts. Everything is His already, and He doesn't need anything. Everything any of us has is ultimately a free gift from יהוה. Yet when we make a gesture to 'pay back' for everything He's given us by living the kind of life that He asks of us, and being righteous people, our relationship with Him grows stronger. It is almost as if we've earned what we have which is a much better feeling.

Question: Moses warns the people not to let all the wealth and good things they are about to get spoil them and make them forget about how יהוה wants them to act. We, too, can fully enjoy the good things in our lives without getting spoiled, by keeping the right attitude. What does it mean to be 'spoiled'? It means having a conceited, demanding attitude and lack of appreciation - in short, it's definitely not the way we want to be.

Question: Do you think a 'privileged' person who has a lot can avoid becoming spoiled? One way is to learn to see all we have as a gift, both from those people who have given it to us and, ultimately, from יהוה. This will naturally incline us toward appreciation and humility.

Question: Do you think a spoiled person will have a happy life? Very unlikely. The nature of life is that sometimes things go the way we'd like them to and sometimes they don't. A spoiled person lives with the fantasy that he deserves whatever he wants all of the time. When things don't work out that way, he is in for a big letdown.

Question: Can a person have a lot of things and not be spoiled? Absolutely. Being spoiled isn't a function of what we do or don't have. It's an attitude that we deserve things ... just because. A person can have a lot, but as long as he appreciates it and those who gave it to him - he isn't spoiled.

Question: Should we prefer that our parents never tell us 'no'? While it might sound like fun, it's actually the key to an unhappy life. If our parents never said 'no,' not only would we grow intolerably spoiled, but we'd never develop any tools to cope positively in a world that sooner or later says 'no' to everyone. Next time Mom or Dad says 'no' - say 'thanks!'

Spiritual Exercise: Can you think of something you worked hard to get and really appreciate because of the effort you put into it? Do not complain about working hard this week knowing that this is the challenge יהוה has given us this week to help us grow stronger spiritually.

13 You will fear יהוה your Elohim and serve Him and will swear by His name. C-MATS

Question: What does "You will fear יהוה your Elohim" mean? After the commandment to love יהוה, Moses added the complementary commandment to fear Him. Love motivates people to serve; fear prevents them from sinning (Ramban). There are two categories of fear. The lesser of the two is the primal fear of punishment or pain. The higher and more desirable fear, more aptly called reverence or awe, is overpowering respect, which in itself will prevent sin. One does not defy a gun-wielding mobster, and one does not defy a very great person whom one reveres -- but the reasons are far different.

Question: Should you swear by יהוה's name? It is preferable not to take oaths, but in case one must swear, it is forbidden to do so in the name of anything but יהוה's Name (Ramban).

14 You will not go after other gods from the gods of the people around you; 15 (Because יהוה your Elohim is a jealous Elohim among you) otherwise the anger of יהוה your Elohim will be aroused against you and destroy you from off the face of the earth. **16 You will not tempt (test) יהוה נאָתֶן your Elohim, as you tempted (tested) Him in Massah.** C-MATS

Question: What does "You will not tempt (test) יהוה נאָתֶן your Elohim" mean? At Massah (see Exodus 17:7), Israel needed water and put יהוה to the test, saying, in effect, "If You give us water, we will follow You; and if not, we are free to leave You." At that time and in the years since, יהוה proved His power and love for Israel over and over again. As a result, Israel has no right to doubt יהוה or to test His ability. By extension, this means that believers may not doubt the promises of the Torah or the prophets, or to serve יהוה only on condition of a reward (Ramban).

Discuss: If you doubt that יהוה will help you or question what He is doing in a certain situation, are you testing יהוה? Are you testing his faithfulness to you? When you complain about your life, are you testing יהוה?



17 You will diligently keep נאָתֶן the commandments of יהוה your Elohim and His testimonies and His statutes, which He has commanded you. 18 And you will do what is right and good in the sight of יהוה: so that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess נאָתֶן good land, which יהוה swore to your fathers, 19 To cast out נאָתֶן all your enemies before you as יהוה has spoken. C-MATS

Question: What is "right and good in the sight of יהוה"? A person who has total faith in יהוה will not hesitate to deal generously with opponents, for he knows that יהוה will see to it that he gets what he is entitled to, in one way or another. In lawsuits, you should agree to mediation and compromise, and be willing to be generous to your opponent by not asserting the full extent of your rights (Rashi).

Thus, after encouraging Israel to keep the commandments carefully, he told them that the rest of their actions, specifically their dealings with people, should be guided by a sense of what is fair and good in יהוה's eyes. How to do so in any given situation depends on the sensitivity and stature of the individual, for it is impossible to spell out all alternatives and situations in the Torah. General guidelines must be gleaned from the Torah's requirements to show compassion and forbearance to others, such as not taking revenge or cursing, showing respect to the learned and aged, and not being apathetic to the danger or financial losses threatening others (Ramban).

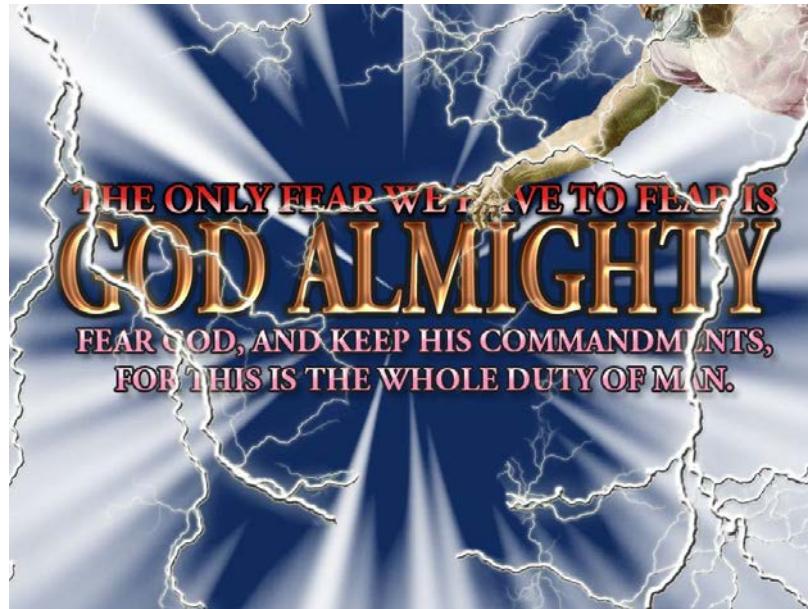
Question: Why does it sometimes appear that wicked people get ahead, and the good people finish last? This question is as old as mankind itself and there are no simple answers. However, one important thing to remember is that we humans view events from a very limited perspective. From a spiritual perspective, a worldly success that comes at the expense of one's higher values is a net loss. Conversely, we spiritually 'succeed' by choosing to act according to proper values whatever situation we find ourselves.

Question: Is it ever justified to not 'play fair'? No, but we must be sure we understand what fair really is, because sometimes it is different than we might imagine. That's why we have the Torah. It is יהוה's unbiased definitions of fairness, and instructions how to apply them in every conceivable situation. It is comforting and empowering to know that when we act according to the Torah's instructions, we are acting in the fairest and most ethical manner possible.

20 When your son asks you in days to come saying, “what is *the meaning of* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments, which יהוה our Elohim has commanded you?” **21** Then you will say to your son, “we were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and יהוה brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: **22** And יהוה worked great and terrible signs and wonders upon Egypt and upon Pharaoh and his entire household before our eyes: **23** And He brought us out of there, so that He might bring us in and give us **תְּהִלָּה** the land, which He swore to our fathers. **24** And יהוה commanded us to do **תְּהִלָּה** all these statutes, to fear **תְּהִלָּה** our Elohim always for our own good, so that He might preserve us, as *it is* this day. **25** And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to obey **תְּהִלָּה** all these commandments before יהוה our Elohim, as He has commanded us.
C-MATS

Question: Why does יהוה say that these commandments are “*for our own good*”? No undesirable consequences can result from the performance of יהוה's commandments. The decrees may be incomprehensible to human intelligence, but they are for our good. And the ordinances that regulate civic and social life give us life, by promoting a tranquil, supportive society (Ramban).

Psalm 19:7 The law of יהוה is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of יהוה are trustworthy, making wise the simple. **8** The precepts of יהוה are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of יהוה are radiant, giving light to the eyes. **9** The fear of יהוה is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of יהוה are sure and altogether righteous. **10** They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. **11** By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.



Question: What will happen if we keep His commandments? Keeping the commandments will be a source of righteousness in the sense that the nations who observe our conduct will regard us as good people (Ibn Ezra). יְהוָה will reward us amply, and since we are obligated to serve Him regardless of whether or not He chooses to reward us, whatever He does for us will be an act of Divine charity on His part (Ramban). Today -- in this life -- is the time to obey the commandments, but the full extent of their reward can come only in the World to Come (Rashi).

Question: Why do you think יְהוָה's instructions in Torah are so specific and detailed, rather than just general guidelines for living? יְהוָה wants to give us the greatest gift possible and that is the eternal pleasure of closeness to Him. Each instruction and guideline in the Torah is a specific way to connect to Him spiritually toward achieving this goal.

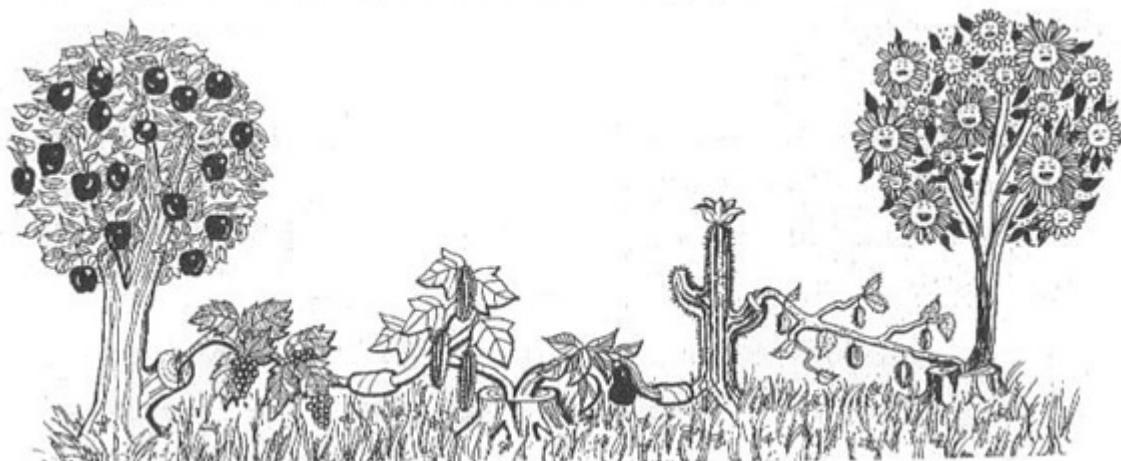
Deuteronomy 7:1 When יְהוָה your Elohim brings you into the land that you go to possess and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you; **2** And when יְהוָה your Elohim delivers them before you; you will fight them and utterly destroy them; you will not make any covenant with them or show mercy to them: C-MATS

Question: Does this law apply to all the Canaanites? If a Canaanite agrees to stop his idolatry and accept the seven Noahide laws, Israel was permitted to make peace treaties with them and show them favor.

3 Neither will you make marriages with them; you will not give your daughter to his son, or his daughter you will not take for your son. **4** Because they will turn **תָּנוּן** your sons away from Me, so that they may serve other gods: and the anger of יְהוָה will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. C-MATS

Question: How can this commandment help us today? You should never marry a person who does not believe in keeping all יהוה's commandments. Your mate will raise your child to turn away from יהוה's commandments and cause you much pain.

Torah's prohibitions against interbreeding species. . .



BAD BREEDING

The deeper meaning here is that no believer is permitted to marry a non-believer. It would be bad breeding of the utmost.

5 But *this is how you will deal with them; you will destroy their altars and break down their images and cut down their groves and burn their graven images with fire.* **6** Because you *are* a consecrated people unto יהוה your Elohim: יהוה your Elohim has chosen you to be a special people *for* Him- above all peoples who *are* upon the face of the earth. **7** יהוה did not set His love upon you or choose you, because you *were* more numerous than any people; but you were the fewest of all peoples: **8** But because יהוה loved you and because He will keep ~~the~~ the oath, which He had sworn to your fathers, יהוה brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of slavery from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Question: Why did יהוה choose Israel? Moses gives two reasons for יהוה's choice of Israel: (a) He found them worthy of His love; and (b) because of His oath to their Patriarchs. The reason for His love is not given, but it may be because He knew that Israel's faithfulness would be unswerving. It is natural for someone to choose a friend who will remain loyal no matter how great the difficulty (Ramban).

9 Know therefore that יהוה your Elohim, He *is* Elohim, the faithful Elohim, *who keeps His covenant and extends mercy to them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations;* **10** And repays them that hate Him and destroys them: He will not be slow to deal with him that hates Him; He will repay him to his face. **11** You will therefore keep ~~the~~ the commandments and the statutes and the judgments, which I command you this day and do them. C-MATS

Question: What reward does יְהוָה give to those who serve יְהוָה out of love? **For those who serve יְהוָה out of love, יְהוָה extends His reward for as long as two thousand generations (Deuteronomy 5:10).** But for those who serve Him only out of fear, as this verse says, the reward is still enormous, but it extends for only one thousand generations (Rashi).

Question: Will יְהוָה reward the good deeds of the wicked? Even the wicked deserve reward for their good deeds, and יְהוָה does not deprive anyone of what is rightly his. So the wicked are rewarded, but they will not share the bliss of the World to Come; instead, יְהוָה rewards them quickly, in this world, so that they will not survive to enjoy the great rewards that await the righteous (Rashi).



Question: What are some rewards we can receive from יְהוָה?

Proverbs 13:21 Misfortune pursues the sinner, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous. **22 A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.**

Psalms 84:11 For יְהוָה Elohim is a sun and shield; יְהוָה bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Psalms 34:10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek יְהוָה lack nothing.

Proverbs 10:24 What the wicked dreads will overtake him; what the righteous desire will be granted.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things (promises) will be given to you as well.

Psalms 5:12 For surely, O יְהוָה, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

Isaiah 3:10 Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.

Psalms 34:17 The righteous cry and יהוה hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his descendants begging bread.

Psalms 37:29 The righteous will inherit the land, and dwell in it forever.

Psalms 37:39 But the salvation of the righteous is from יהוה; He is their strength in time of trouble.

Psalms 55:22 And because you live a righteous life he can. If you didn't live a righteous Elohim can not help you. Cast your burden upon יהוה, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

Proverbs 10:3 יהוה will not allow the righteous to hunger, But He will thrust aside the craving of the wicked.

Proverbs 11:28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf.

Proverbs 24:16 For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.

Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Question: What should we do to receive a reward from יהוה?

Proverbs 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to יהוה, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Proverbs 25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and יהוה will reward you.

Matthew 5:43 You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 **But I tell you:** Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 6:1 Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 16 When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 10:40 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

Question: How does יהוה decide what rewards we should receive? **Jeremiah 17:10 "I, יהוה, search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."**

Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign יהוה, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. 18 You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful Elohim, whose name is יהוה Almighty, 19 great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.

1 Corinthians 3:10 By the grace Elohim has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Yahshua. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Matthew 16:26 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.



Revelations 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Do you know?

1. Moses pleaded with יְהוָה to allow him to go to the _____.
2. יְהוָה says that we should not ___ to His commandments.
3. “**Hear, O Israel: our Elohim is one יְהוָה**” is called The _____.
4. **And you should love יְהוָה your Elohim with all your __, __, and __.**
5. **Honor your father and your mother, as יְהוָה your Elohim has commanded you; so that your days may be ____.**
6. **Six days you should ____.**
7. **On the seventh day you should ____.**
8. **You should not ____ יְהוָה your Elohim**
9. **You should not give your sons and daughters in marriage to ____.**
10. **You should teach יְהוָה’s commandments to your ____ and talk about them when you sit in your ____ and when you walk *on the* ____ and when you go to sleep and when you get up in the morning.**

Bonus: Recite the Shema

Answers:

1. Promised Land
2. add
3. Shema
4. heart, soul, might
5. prolonged on the earth
6. labor
7. rest
8. test
9. gentiles (unbelievers)
10. children, house, road

Bonus: Hear, O Israel: יְהוָה our Elohim *is* one יְהוָה: And you will love יְהוָה your Elohim with all your heart, and all your soul and all your might.

Haftorah



The prophet Isaiah

Eighth century BC Old Testament prophet. Killed at the order of King Manasses of Judah. He was sawed into and buried under an oak tree.

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort you, comfort you My people, said your Elohim.

2 Speak you comfortably *to* Jerusalem and cry to her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she has received of יהוה hand double for all her sins.

3 The voice of him that cried in the wilderness, prepare you the way of יהוה, make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim.

4 Every valley will be exalted and every mountain and hill will be made low: and the crooked will be made straight and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of יהוה will be revealed and all flesh will see it together: for the mouth of יהוה has spoken it.

6 The voice said cry. And he said what will I cry? All flesh *is* grass and all the goodliness of it *is* as the flower of the field:

7 The grass withers, the flower fades: because the spirit of יהוה blows upon it: certainly the people *are as* grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of our Elohim will stand for ever.

9 O Zion, that brings good tidings, get you up into *the* high mountain; O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, see your Elohim!

10 See, Adonay יהוה will come with a strong *hand* and His arm will rule for Him: His reward *is* with Him and His work before Him.

11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd: He will gather the lambs with His arm and carry *them* in His bosom and will gently lead those that are young.

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and meted out heavens with the span and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

13 Who has directed נָשָׁא the Spirit of יהוה, or *being* His counselor has taught Him?

14 נָשָׁא with who took He counsel and who instructed Him and taught Him in the path of judgment and taught Him knowledge and showed to Him the way of understanding?

15 See, the nations *are as* a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance: He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.

16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts of it sufficient for a burnt offering.

17 All nations before Him are as nothing; *and* they are counted to Him less than nothing and vanity.

18 To whom then will you liken Elohim? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?

19 The workman melts a graven image and the goldsmith spreads it over with gold and casts silver chains.

20 He that is so impoverished *that he has no* oblation chooses a tree *that* will not rot; he seeks to him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image *that* will not be moved.

21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told *to* you from the beginning? Have you not understood *from* the foundations of the earth?

22 It is He that sits upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants of it *are as* grasshoppers; that stretched out the heavens as a curtain and spread them out as a tent to live in:

23 That brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth as vanity.

24 Scarcely will they be planted; scarcely, they will be sown: Scarcely their stock will take root in the earth: and He will also blow upon them and they will wither and the whirlwind will take them away as stubble.

25 To who then will you liken Me, or will I be equal? Said the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these *things* that brings out their host by number: He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for He is strong in power; not one fails.

Brit Chadasha

Matt 23:31 So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! 33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. 35 And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiyah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of יהוה.'"

Don't Give Up

Question: Should we ever give up? Sometimes we feel like we want to give up. When things seem to be going against us we can feel sunk. But the Torah teaches us otherwise. In this week's Torah portion, Moses asks יהוה to let him come into the land of Israel with the rest of the Hebrew people. יהוה had already told him that he wouldn't be allowed into the land. But Moses doesn't give up. He just keeps on praying and praying to be able to come in. Moses knows that יהוה is very merciful and might still let him in. We should ask יהוה for help, and we should never give up hope.

"IT'S NOT OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER"

"Batter up!" called out the umpire impatiently. It was the ninth inning. The Jets were all in the field waiting for the Hawks' first batter to come up. But nobody was coming out.

Meanwhile in the Hawks' dug-out a heated conversation was going on between Donny, the team captain, and Alex, the second baseman. "Alex, you're up," said Donny. "Get out there, you're holding up the game."

Alex looked up from the end of the bench where he had been sitting, flipping a ball up and down to himself. "Why bother?" he said. "The Jets scored eight runs in the last inning. They're up by 10. We don't have a chance. So tell me, why should I bother?"

"Why should you bother?" repeated Donny incredulously. "Because the game's not over yet. OK, they are way ahead. But that doesn't mean we can't catch up," he added. "One thing's for sure, though. If we don't try, then we will definitely lose."

Alex shrugged his shoulders, stood up to grab a bat, and said, "Look, you're the captain. If you tell me to go up to bat I will. But I still think we're wasting our time."

Alex walked out to the batter's box. "Thought you got lost on the way," teased the Jets pitcher.

"Just pitch!" Alex called back to him.

The pitch came in and Alex surprised everyone, especially himself, by getting a hit. After two more hits and a run in, the Hawks started to get excited.

Two hits, two walks, a wild pitch and a home-run later, the score was tied! The game was going to go into extra innings.

As the Hawks ran out to take the field, Donny noticed the second baseman who now was all charged up with energy. "Well do you feel like it was worth going up to bat after all?" he asked, with a wink.

Alex smiled, pounded his fist into his glove and said, "Donny, whether we win or lose this game, I feel like you gave me a big victory in learning how to play the game."

Question: How did Alex feel when it was his turn to go to bat? He felt like quitting. He didn't want to go up, because he thought his team had no chance to win.

Question: Is it right to just give up and quit when things aren't going the way we want? No, we should always keep trying and hope that things will get better.

Question: If, in the end, Alex's team lost the game, do you think he should feel that he wasted his time by going up to bat in the ninth inning? Why or why not? Alex had thought that the team's situation was hopeless. After the big effort to catch up which tied the game, he saw that there was hope. Even if the end they lost anyway, Alex would have gained a personal victory. He would be recharged with the belief that there's always hope, and therefore be glad that at least he tried.

Question: Sometimes when we ask for something, we are refused. When do you think we should keep trying to "get our way" and when is it better to just take "no" for an answer? A lot depends on what we're asking for. If it's something really important that we honestly feel would be good for ourselves or for others, it's usually worthwhile to keep on trying. But if deep down we know it's just something we "feel like" having but we don't really need, it's probably better to "let it go."

SPOIL-RESISTANT

"C'mon Mom, hurry up. Didn't you finish packing my suitcase yet? I have to catch my train in 15 minutes," Megan stated, annoyed. "And what about snacks - are you sure you made my sandwiches *exactly* like I told you to?"

Megan was looking forward to her upcoming weeklong visit to her out-of-town cousins. It would be her first time visiting. She just wished her mom would move a little faster.

After driving her to the train platform, Megan's mother lifted the heavy suitcase out of the trunk and gave it to her.

"Okay, Mom - bye." The girl grabbed the suitcase and started rolling it toward the waiting train.

"Megan, didn't you forget something?" her mother asked with a tired smile.

"What do you mean?" The girl turned and shrugged. "I've got the all the stuff you packed me - the food you made me, the money and the train tickets you gave me and I'm wearing the new outfit you bought me. What could I have possibly forgotten?"

"To say thank you?"

"Oh, yeah ... thanks," she mumbled and scrambled toward the train.

After a long train ride, she got to her cousins' house.

"I'm so glad you came!" said her cousin, Jenny, with a friendly hug. "Come with me, I'll show you where you're sleeping."

"This is where me and my sisters sleep," Jenny said, stopping in front of a small room, lined with bunk beds and about half the size of Megan's spacious private bedroom at home. "Isn't it cozy?"

"I suppose so," Megan sniffed. "And where's *my* room?"

Jenny laughed as if Megan had made a hilarious joke. "Right here, silly," she said, pointing to a bed in the corner. "We gave you the *best* one - it hardly wobbles at all."

The next morning, Meagan woke up tired. It wasn't a surprise since she'd hardly been able to sleep in a room full of so many people breathing and her 'wobble-free' bed had rocked as if it was a ship at sea. Still, she must have slept some, because when she opened her eyes, Jenny and her other cousins were all already up and dressed.

Meagan looked up at her cousin, Jenny, who was just finishing neatly tucking in the corners of her bed sheets. Megan couldn't remember the last time she'd made her own bed. It was always the house cleaner or her Mom.

"Jenny," she said, "I'm really hungry. Are we going to have breakfast now?"

"Sure!" the girl smiled brightly. "Come with me."

Meagan followed her to the kitchen, sat down at the big, round table and folded her arms to wait for breakfast, vaguely wondering why all her cousins were scurrying about.

"Hey, I thought you said you were hungry?" Jenny asked.

"I am." Megan said. "Do you think it will be long?"

"What will be long?"

"Before we eat," she said.

"Well that depends how long it will be before you stand up and start making yourself something," Jenny smiled "It's, you know, self-serve around here. You want me to show you how to use the toaster-oven?"

Megan spent a week unlike any she'd ever experienced before in her whole life. She not only learned how to make toast, but also scramble eggs, wash dishes by hand and even mop a floor. It wasn't easy and she would never have dreamed of doing any of these things at home, but somehow here, where everyone was doing it, it seemed normal and almost ... fun. She wasn't sure she wanted to be more like that when she got home - but, surprisingly, she wasn't sure she didn't, either.

"Next stop, city station!" the conductor's voice crackled over the loudspeaker. Megan grabbed her suitcase - which she'd packed herself, and hurried down the platform to meet her waving mother.

"Thank you SO much for coming to get me, Mom!" were her first words.

Her mom looked happily surprised, but Meagan knew that those words, and feelings of appreciation for all her parents did for her, would not be the last ones to leave her lips that day - or from now on.

Question: What life-lesson do you think Megan learned from her trip? She'd had an attitude that things were coming to her and if anything she expected more. But spending a week around people who weren't spoiled made her consider that nobody had to do things for her - and if they did, she should appreciate it.

Question: How should a person feel if his parents don't do everything for him or give him everything he wants? He should be grateful. That means they aren't spoiling him and are giving him the tools to live a happy, independent life.

Resources:

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS
www.AlephTavScriptures.com

“Weekly Torah Portion” from www.aish.com (stories)