

Dvarim (Words)



Question: Why was Deuteronomy written? Deuteronomy is referred to as Mishneh Torah, which is commonly translated as "Repetition (or Review) of the Torah," or as "Explanation of the Torah". These are the final words of Moses emerging from his face to face friendship with יהוה. Moses could not have given this message on the day of their exodus. His knowledge of יהוה had grown with forty years of revelation and dialogue in the desert. Moses is speaking to a new generation and is giving them necessary understanding of their history and how they are to meet the challenges of the future. Once they crossed the Jordan, the people would no longer see יהוה's constant Presence and daily miracles, as they had in the Wilderness. They would plow, plant, and harvest. They would establish courts and a government. They would build social relationships and means to provide for and protect the needy and helpless. They would need strong faith and self-discipline to avoid the snares and temptations of their pagan neighbors and false prophets. "Go up and take possession" was the command of יהוה forsaken by their fathers. They slandered יהוה's character, saying, "Why is יהוה bringing us into this land to fall by the sword?" They are not to do the same. They are to trust יהוה who goes before them. If they do so, their victory is assured. Moses repeats the history of their journey in the wilderness to insure that the lessons stay fresh in their minds as they face new challenges in the conquest of Canaan.

Question: When does the Book of Deuteronomy take place? The events in the book of Deuteronomy take place within the last two weeks of the 11th month of the 40th year of desert wandering. The 12th month is spent mourning Moses (**Deuteronomy 34:8 And wept the Children of Israel for אֶת־ מֹשֶׁה in the plains of Moab for thirty days: after this the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.**) They will enter the Promised Land on the first day of the 41st year after the Exodus which took place on the tenth of Nisan (**Joshua 4:19 And the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho.**). Chumash



Moses speaks to the Israelites

Deuteronomy 1:1 These *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side *of* the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain across from *the* Red Sea, between Paran and Tophel and Laban and Hazeroth and Dizahab. C-MATS

Question: Why did Moses mention the numerous place names in this first verse of Deuteronomy? The numerous place names listed here are not landmarks indicating where Moses spoke these words -- indeed, some of these places do not even exist as geographical locations. Rather, these are words of rebuke by Moses to the people of Israel. Instead of mentioning their sins outright, he alluded to them with these place names:

1. "In the desert" -- the time they complained, **Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to kill אֱתִי me וְאֶת־ and our children וְאֶת־ and our cattle with thirst? Exodus 17:3 C-MATS**
2. "In the Arava (Plain)" -- their worship of Baal Peor in the Plains of Moab. **Israel remained in Shittim and the people began whoring with the daughters of Moab. Numbers 25:1 C-MATS**
3. "Opposite Suf" – **So brought Moses אֶת־ Israel from the Red sea and they went out into the wilderness of Shur. Exodus 15:22. When they were hemmed in between the Egyptians and the Sea, the Israelites complained, Have you taken us away to die in the wilderness because there were no graves in Egypt? Exodus 14:11. And when they emerged from the Sea after it had split, they complained that the Egyptians had probably escaped on the other side.**

4. "Paran" -- the sin of the Spies, who were dispatched from Paran. **And they brought an evil report of the land, which they had searched אֶתָּהּ (her), to the Children of Israel. Numbers 13:32**

5. "Tofel" and "Lavan" (meaning "libel" and "white") -- In all of Scriptures there is no place named Tophel or Laban. He rebuked them because of the foolish things they had said about the manna, which was white, saying **we are sick of this light (worthless) bread. Num. 21:5**

6. "Hazerot" -- where Korah's mutiny against Moses took place. **And they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron and said to them, You take too much on yourself, after the entire congregation is sacred, every one of them and יהוה is among them: why then do you lift yourself up above the congregation of יהוה? Numbers 16:3 C-MATS**

7. "Di Zahav" (literally "too much gold") -- יהוה blessed the Israelites with an abundance of gold when they left Egypt, but they used His gift to make the Golden Calf. **And when the people saw that Moses delayed from coming down the mountain, the people gathered themselves together and said to Aaron, Get up and make us gods, which will go before us. Exodus 32:1 Chumash**



From an oil painting by Jean-Léon Gerome (1824-1904)

Mount Horeb

Deuteronomy 1:2 There are eleven days journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kodsh-barnea. 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the Children of Israel according to all that commanded אֵתָּו יהוה him for them. C-MATS

Question: Moses rebuked the people shortly right before he died. From whom did he learn [to do] this? From Jacob, who rebuked his sons only a short while before his death. Joshua rebuked Israel only shortly before his death, and Samuel, as it is said, **“Here I am: witness against me before יהוה” I Samuel 12:3** and also, David rebuked his son Solomon only shortly before his death. **Now the days of David drew near that he should die; and he warned אֶתָּהּ Solomon his son. I Kings 2:1. Chumash**

Question: Moses rebuked them only when he was close to death in order to avoid rebuking them again and again. How does this agree with the statement that the Torah commandment, (**You should rebuke אֶת your neighbor. Leviticus 19:17**) which means even one hundred times? There are two kinds of rebuke: Direct confrontation: specifying the wrongdoing and admonishing the perpetrator for committing the act. A more subtle method: not mentioning the iniquity directly, but encouraging the person to improve his conduct. The advantage of the latter is that the erring individual is spared embarrassment. However, since Moses' current rebuke consisted of specifying through veiled references, the sins committed, he waited until immediately before his death, so that his words would be accepted and they would not have to face him constantly and be embarrassed. Chumash Yahusha said, **“Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the assembly: but if he neglects to hear the assembly, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:15-17**



Saul on his way to Damascus

Question: What did Yahusha do when someone was humiliating those who loved Him? Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Yahusha, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecute you me?** 5 And he said, Who are you Master? And the *Master said, I am Yahusha whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the pricks.* 6 And he trembling and astonished said, *Master, what will you have me to do?* And Yahusha said unto him, **Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.** 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

Acts 9:8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said Adonai in a vision, **Ananias**. And he said, Behold, I am here, Master. 11 And Adonai said unto him, **Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prays, 12 And has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.** 13 Then Ananias answered, Master, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on your name. 15 But Adonai said unto him, **Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the nations, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.** 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, Adonai, even Yahusha, that appeared unto you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Ruach haKodesh. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Mashiach in the synagogues, that he is the Son of Elohim. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Mashiach. C-MATS

Spiritual Exercise: This week try to be careful not to hurt others or embarrass them. Be careful what you say and how you say it.

Deuteronomy 1:4 After he had killed אֶת Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon אֶת and Og, the king of Bashan, who lived at Astaroth in Edrei: 5 On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to declare אֶת this אֶת Torah saying. C-MATS

Question: What does Moses do at the beginning of Deuteronomy? Deuteronomy 1:5 states “Moses began to declare אֶת Torah.” What a great way to start Deuteronomy! According to John 1:14 “Yahusha was the WORD made FLESH and tabernacled among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth.” C-MATS

Question: Why did Moses wait to deliver his rebuke until after the conquest of Sihon and Og? Moses, the first leader of the Israelites, was conveying a message to the leaders of future generations. It is human nature to reject rebuke. Therefore, if one who rebukes wants his words to be accepted, he should not only rebuke but also do positive things to benefit the erring community or individual. Once he is recognized as a good friend, his words of admonishment will be accepted favorably. Sihon and Og posed a serious threat to the Israelite people. After Moses risked his life to defeat the Israelites' enemies, he earned the Israelites respect and thus considered the time opportune to reprimand them.

Question: How can you get others to accept criticism? If some inappropriate behavior needs to be stopped, or if someone is failing to do something they should be doing, that's a good time for negative feedback. Positive feedback should always be given first before criticism can be accepted. John Gottman's analysis of wedded couples' likelihood of getting divorced or remaining married once again, the single biggest determinant is the ratio of positive to negative comments the partners make to one another. The ratio was five positive comments for every negative one. (For those who ended up divorced, the ratio was 0.77 to 1—or something like three positive comments for every four negative ones.)



Ancient Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Gilead are present-day Jordan



Jordan today

Deuteronomy 1:6 יהוה our Elohim spoke to us in Horeb saying, You have lived long enough *by this mountain*: 7 Turn and go to the mountains of the Amorites and to all *the places* near there on the plain, in the hills and in the lowland and in the south and by the seashore, the land of the Canaanites and Lebanon, to the great river Euphrates. C-MATS

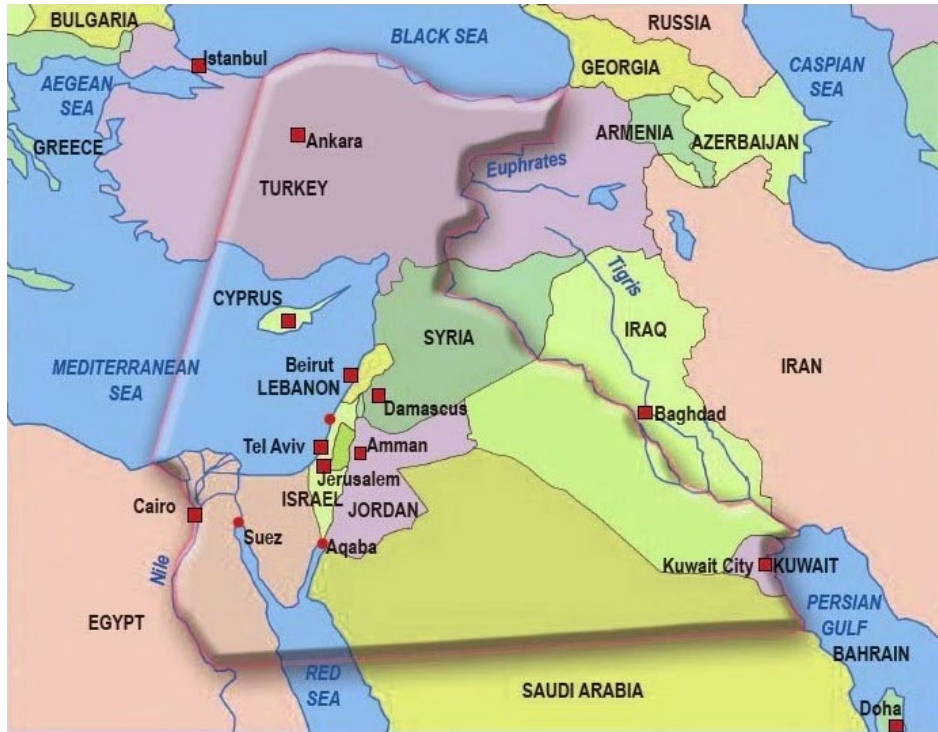
Question: What mountain was יהוה talking about in verse 6? The mountain יהוה is talking about is Mount Sinai, scene of the most monumental event in human history: יהוה's revelation of His wisdom and will to man. Still יהוה says: "You have lived long enough *by this mountain*". Move on!



Question: Why should we look at where we live as temporary? In our lives, we also have moments, days or years of revelation, times when we learn and grow and are enriched. But the purpose most always is to move on, move away, and carry the enlightenment and enrichment to someplace else -- some corner of creation that waits to receive the message of redemption.

Spiritual Exercise: Have you been hanging around the mountain too long? Is it time to move on to other things that יהוה wants you to do? Take a step forward today in the direction that יהוה is guiding you. He will help you every step of the way.

Question: Why didn't the Israelites conquer all the land promised to Abraham by יהוה? After almost a year at Mount Sinai, יהוה gave the order to begin the journey to the Land. Among the regions listed in this passage are the lands of Ammon, Moab, and Seir, and territory as far north as the Euphrates River, but none of them are within the boundaries delineated in Numbers 34:1-12. These regions were among those promised to Abraham (**Genesis 15:18** On that same day made יהוה אֶת-יהוה with Abram a covenant saying, To your seed have I given **הַזֶּאת** this אֶת-land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.), and they would have been part of Israel if the Israelites had gone directly to the Land at this point, as יהוה commanded them. Because they sinned in the affair of the spies, however, these parts of the oath to Abraham were withheld from them. These additional lands will become part of Israel only with the coming of Messiah.



Boundaries of Israel delineated in Numbers 34:1-12.

Deuteronomy 1:8 I have set before you **את** the land: go in and possess **את** the land which יהוה swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants after them. **9** And I spoke to you at that time saying, I am not able to **לָאֵת** lift up (carry) the burden of **אתְכֶם** you myself: **10** יהוה your Elohim has multiplied **אתְכֶם** you and you are this day like the stars of heavens in number. C-MATS

Question: Is it possible that Moses could not judge Israel? The man who brought them out of Egypt, split the sea for them, brought down the manna, and caused the quails to fly, could not judge them? Rather, he said to them: “**יהוה your Elohim has multiplied אתְכֶם you.**” He has made you superior and elevated you higher than your judges. He took the punishment away from you and imposed it upon the judges in cases where they could have prevented your wrongdoing and did not. Solomon made a similar statement: “**Who is able to judge את your people as great as this?**” I Kings 3:9. Is it possible that Solomon of whom it is said, “**He was wiser than all men,**” I Kings 4:31 could say, “**Who is able to judge?**” But this is what Solomon meant: The judges of this people are not like the judges of other peoples, for if one of the judges of other nations gives judgment and sentences a person to death, to lashes, or to strangulation, or perverts judgment and robs him, it means nothing; if, however, I cause a person to pay unjustly, I am liable with my life, as it is said, “**For יהוה will plead their cause and spoil of life את those that spoil them.**” Proverbs 22:23. All judges would be held responsible for a false verdict. The judges would receive the punishment that was supposed to go to the criminal. Chumash

Question: Moses asked for help when leading and organizing the nation had become too much for him to do alone. A wise person has said that 'the only dumb question is the one not asked.' What do you think that means? When a person doesn't know something, it is a way of acquiring wisdom to ask. If we don't ask, we are giving up a chance of gaining wisdom - and *that's* dumb.

Question: Do you think someone can reach a point where he never needs help? While we can (and should) try to grow in independence, there is no one who doesn't, in some way, need help from others - and certainly from יהוה.



Deuteronomy 1:11 May יהוה Elohim of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you *are today* and bless אתכם you as He has promised you! **12** How can I bear your problems and your burdens and your strife by myself? **13** Take wise men *with* understanding and knowledgeable *men from* among your tribes and I will make them rulers over you. C-MATS



Jethro helped Moses set up the system of judges.

Question: Are the leaders responsible for the sins of the people? The word *va'asimaim* ("and I will make them") is written in the Torah lacking the letter Yud, so that the word can also be read as *va'ashamam*, "and their guilt". This comes to teach us that the faults of a generation rest with its heads and leaders. They should have prevented them from sinning, and directed them along the right path. (If parents do not keep a child from sinning, then the fault rests on their heads.)
Chumash

Deuteronomy 1:14 And you answered **אתי** *me* and said, The thing which you have spoken *is* good to do. **15** So I took **אתם** chief of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men **ואתן** *and I gave* **אתם** *them* heads over you, captains over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens and officers among your tribes. C-MATS

Question: Why were so many judges needed for Israel? There were a total of 131 judges per thousand people. The Vilna Gaon explains that each category of leaders had a unique function. The leaders of thousands were commanders of a thousand soldiers; the leaders of hundreds were judges; those over fifty taught the Torah; and those over ten carried out police duties. The officers were assigned to enforce decisions of the courts. They would patrol the streets and markets and bring wrongdoers to the courts. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 1:16 And I warned **אתם** your judges at that time saying, Hear *the causes* between your brothers and judge righteously between *every* man and his brother and the stranger that is with him. **17** You will not show favoritism in judgment; *but* you will hear the small as well as the great; you will not be afraid of a man; *because* the judgment *is* Elohim's: and the decision that *is* too hard for you, bring *it* to me and I will hear it. C-MATS



Question: What were the requirements of the judges?

- They must make decisions and ignore the personalities. Show no favoritism.
- They must treat small and great alike, referring to both small and great amounts of money, and people of small and great stature or power.
- They must not be swayed in favor of an influential party.
- They must recognize that they are agents of **יהוה** in administering justice, and nothing but fear of **יהוה** may enter their deliberations.
- A judge should rule even if a litigant (the person engaged in a lawsuit) threatens him with bodily or financial harm. The reason this matter is treated so seriously is that it borders on desecration of **יהוה**'s Name for a judge to let it seem as if the Torah's laws can be bent or ignored for personal considerations. *Chumash*

Leviticus 19:15 You will not be unjust in judgment: you will not show partiality to the poor or honor the mighty: *but* in righteousness you will judge your neighbor. C-MATS

Proverbs 20:10 Diverse weights and diverse measures, both of them alike are an abomination to יהוה. C-MATS

Proverbs 17:15 He that justifies the wicked and he that condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to יהוה. C-MATS

Proverbs 29:27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous; and he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked. C-MATS

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. C-MATS

Leviticus 19:15 You will not be unjust in judgment: you will not show partiality to the poor or honor the mighty: *but* in righteousness you will judge your neighbor. C-MATS

Exodus 23:2 You will not follow *the crowd* to do evil; neither will you *allow the crowd* to cause you to speak to pervert *justice*: 3 Neither will you show partiality *to* a poor man in his lawsuit. C-MATS

Proverbs 22:16 He that oppresses the poor to increase his *gain* and he that gives to the rich *shall come* only to want. C-MATS

1 Thessalonians 4:6 No man wrong or defraud his brother in any matter: because Adonai is the avenger of all such sins, as we have warned you and testified to you. 7 For Elohim has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness. C-MATS

Proverbs 28:8 He that increases his substance by interest and extortion gathers it for him that has pity on the poor. C-MATS

Spiritual Exercise: Treat everyone fairly - not favoring your friends before others.



Kadesh-barnea is where the Israelites camped for 19 out of the 40 years in the Wilderness.

Deuteronomy 1:18 And I commanded אתכם *you* at *that time* את *all the things concerning* which you should do. 19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through את *all that great and fearful wilderness, which ראייתם* *you saw* on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as יהוה *our Elohim* commanded אתנו *us*; and we came to Kodesh-barnea. C-MATS

Question: Why was the wilderness called **great and fearful**? The Wilderness is described as great and fearful, because the Israelites saw huge and frightening snakes and scorpions as they traveled through the wasteland. They were not in danger, because the pillar of cloud killed all the harmful creatures in its path, but when the people saw the carcasses that littered the desert, they realized how thoroughly יהוה was safeguarding them. *Chumash*

Question: How does the Torah teach us to become fearless? As the Israelite People were coming to dwell in the Land of Israel they had to face some fearsome enemies along the way. It would be natural to feel afraid, yet the Torah gave them - and gives us - an amazing tool how to overcome fear: Realize that we are never alone; יהוה is always right by our side to help and strengthen us in whatever situation we're in. When we know that יהוה is near, our fear will disappear.



Psalm 27:1 יהוה is my light and my salvation; who shall I fear? יהוה is the strength of my life; of who shall I be afraid? C-MATS

Psalm 27:14 Wait for יהוה: be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait you for יהוה. C-MATS

Isaiah 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: surely, your Elohim will come *with vengeance, with the recompense of Elohim*; He will come and save you. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Isaiah 35:4 He will come and save you-Matthew 1:21.* C-MATS

Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear; for I *am* with you: be not dismayed; for I *am* your Elohim: I will strengthen you; indeed, I will help you; indeed, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness. 13 For יהוה your Elohim will hold your right hand, saying to you, Fear not; I will help you. C-MATS

2 Timothy 1:7 For Elohim has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. C-MATS

Hebrews 13:6 So that we may boldly say, Adonai is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me. C-MATS

Genesis 50:19 And Joseph said to them, Do not be afraid: *am* I in the place of Elohim? C-MATS

Exodus 20:20 And Moses said to the people, Do not fear, because Elohim has come to test אתכם *you*, that יראתו *His fear* may be before your faces *and you will* not sin. C-MATS

Numbers 14:9 Only do not rebel in בַּיהוָה וְאַתֶּם *and you* neither fear אֶת- *the* people of the land; we will eat them up! Their defense has been taken from them and וַיִּהְיוּ is אִתְּנוּ *with us: do not fear them.*

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and be bold, do not fear, or be afraid of them: because יהוה your Elohim goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you. 7 And Moses called to Y'hoshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and be bold: because אַתָּה *you* must go with אֶת- *people* to the land which יהוה has sworn to their fathers to give them וְאַתָּה *and you* will cause אֹתָם *them* to inherit it. 8 And וַיִּהְיוּ goes before you; He will be with you, He will not fail you, neither *will He* forsake you: do not fear or be dismayed. C-MATS

Joshua 10:25 And Y'hoshua said to them, Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage: for so shall יהוה do to all your enemies *against* whom אַתֶּם *you* fight אֹתָם *them*. C-MATS

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear involves torment. He that fears has not been made perfect in love. C-MATS

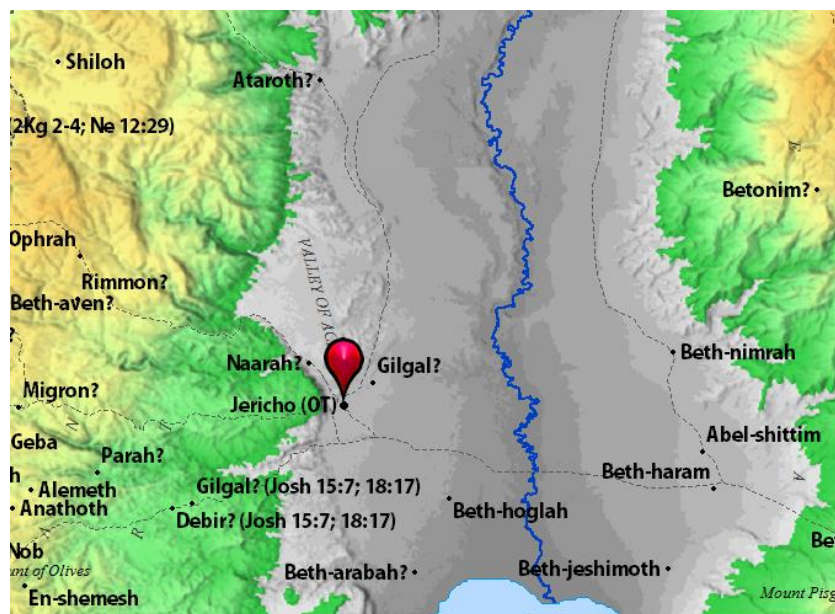
Question: Is there anything we can do to help us feel more the reality of יהוה being with us? Absolutely. Like most things worthwhile, the ability to feel יהוה in our lives takes practice. One good way is to observe and think about the amazing complexity and harmony of nature. Anyone who opens his eyes can't fail to see יהוה's supreme intelligence behind every detail. Also, we can look back over our own lives and think back about all those 'coincidences' that really weren't coincidences at all, but rather יהוה's help and guidance. And, like any relationship, the more we put into it the more we will get out. That means keeping up our end of the relationship by making a consistent effort to speak to and communicate with יהוה. This doesn't mean only formal prayer, but also setting aside time to speak with him like we would with a wise and trusted friend, telling Him what is in our hearts and asking for guidance. After a while of doing these things, don't be surprised if you find yourself feeling closer to יהוה than you ever imagined you could.

Question: Why doesn't יהוה simply reveal Himself to us in a way we can feel His presence without trying? יהוה created the human being with the unique and awesome ability of free ethical choice - that is, the ability to act in a way that either strengthens and adds to the goodness of the world, or the opposite. The good we choose to do is so much more powerful and valuable that way than if we did it out of force. But free choice can only exist if we always have to struggle to feel and believe in יהוה's presence, yet still choose to do the ethical and righteous thing. If He were to make Himself too obvious, we would get blown away by His power and awesomeness and become almost robot-like, and feel compelled to do His will

Question: The universe isn't the place of יהוה; rather, יהוה is the 'place' of the universe. What do you think this means? A popular misconception is that like everything else, יהוה is just one of the beings, even though the most powerful one, within the universe, who dwells in the heavens, perhaps somewhere deep in space, or alternatively He is thought of as a 'force' that permeates the universe which exists independent of Him. Both of these false pictures paint יהוה as being a part of a larger universe of things. The reality, however, is that the entire universe and all its forces exist only 'within' יהוה. He created the universe, gives it and everything in it life at every moment. He is thus, so to speak, the 'setting' or 'place' of the universe, both filling and surrounding it at all times. While these are deep concepts which require years of serious study to properly understand, the practical implication for us right now is to know that it is impossible to be far or separate from יהוה and if we feel that way it is only because we have somehow closed our eyes to Him, and need only to reach out to Him to discover that He is and has always been right there with us.



Deuteronomy 1:20 And I said to you, בָּאתֶם *You came* to the mountains of the Amorites, which יְהוָה our Elohim is giving to us. 21 Behold has set יְהוָה your Elohim before you אֶת־ the land: go up *and* possess it, as יְהוָה Elohim of your fathers said to you, Fear not, neither be discouraged. 22 And you came to me everyone of you and said, We will send men before אֲתֵנּוּ *us* and they will search out אֶת־ the land and they will bring word to us אֶת־ the way that we must go אֶת־ *and* what cities we are to enter. C-MATS



Jericho is at the base of the Amorites mountains

Deuteronomy 1:23 And what you said pleased me: and I took twelve men from you, one from each tribe: **24** And they went up into the mountains and came to the valley of Eshcol and searched **אתה** *it (her)* out. **25** And they took *some* of the fruit from the land and brought it to **אתנו** *us* and brought us news and said, *It is* a good land, which **יהוה** our Elohim is giving us. **26** However, you would not go *there*, but *they* rebelled against **את-** commandment of **יהוה** your Elohim: **27** And you murmured (*complained*) in your tents and said, Because **יהוה** hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver **אתנו** *us* into the hand of the Amorites to destroy **אתנו** *us*. C-MATS



The messengers from Canaan

Question: Why did the Israelites think “**Because יהוה hates us**”? This totally false charge is a classic illustration of how someone with ill will toward someone else assumes that that person has the same feelings toward him. The people lacked the proper love for **יהוה**, so they assumed that **יהוה** hated them. They went so far as to claim that the Exodus itself was proof of their contention, because if **יהוה** had truly loved them, He would have given them the richly irrigated Nile delta, and driven the Egyptians through the desert to Canaan, where the Land was watered only by rain. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 1:28 Where will we go? Our brothers have discouraged **את-** our heart saying, The people *are* greater and taller than we *are*; the cities *are* great and walled up to heavens; and we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. C-MATS

Question: Who are the sons of the Anakims? They were the descendents of Shamchazi and Azael, who fell from heaven in the generation of Enosh. In the years before the Flood, when violence and promiscuity pervaded the earth, two angels, Shamchazi and Azael, pleaded before the Almighty: Allow us to dwell among the humans, and we shall sanctify your name! But no sooner had the two heavenly beings come in contact with the material world, and then they, too, were corrupted.

Deuteronomy 1:29 Then I said to you, *Do not fear or be afraid of them.* 30 יהוה your Elohim, who goes before you, He will fight for you *just as* He did for you in Egypt *right* before your eyes; 31 In the wilderness, where you have seen how יהוה your Elohim carried you, as carries a man את his son, in every way that you went until you came to this place. 32 Yet you did not believe in ביהוה your Elohim, 33 Who went before you to search for a place to pitch your tents providing fire by night to show you the way you should go and in a cloud by day. 34 And heard יהוה את voice of your words and He was angry and swore to you saying, 35 Not one of these men from this evil generation will see this את the good land, which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 Except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh; he will see it and to him אתן I will give את the land that he has walked upon and to his children, because he has completely followed יהוה. 37 Also יהוה was angry with me because of you saying, אתה You also will not go to the Land. 38 But Y'hoshua, the son of Nun, your assistant who stands before you, will go to the Land: encourage אתו him, for he shall cause them to inherit את Israel. 39 Also your little ones, who you said would be taken as booty and your children, who in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they will go in the Land and to them I will give it and they will possess it. 40 ואתם and you, turn and go into the wilderness by the road to the Red Sea. 41 Then you answered and said to me, We have sinned to ליהוה, we will go up and fight, according to all that יהוה our Elohim commanded us. And when had armed every man את his weapons for war, you were ready to go up into the hill. 42 And יהוה said to me, Say to them do not go and fight; because I am not with you; otherwise you will be defeated by your enemies. 43 So I spoke to you; and you would not listen, but rebelled against את commandment of יהוה and took matters in your own hands and went up the hill. 44 And the Amorites, who lived on that mountain, came out against you and chased אתכם you as bees do and destroyed אתכם you in Seir all the way to Hormah. C-MATS

Question: Why were the Amorites compared to bees? Just as a bee, as soon as it stings a person, it dies, so, too, these Amorites -- no sooner did they touch you, then they died. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 1:45 And you returned and wept before יהוה; but יהוה would not listen to your voice or pay attention to you. 46 So you remained in Kodesh many days, because of what you did there. C-MATS



Kodesh

Question: Why didn't יהוה listen to the Israelites once they had repented? Moses praises Israel, saying that they acknowledged their sin and repented openly. Even so, their sin could not be forgiven, because יהוה had taken an oath to punish them. A decree accompanied by an oath cannot be annulled. Numbers 14:21 But as sure as I live and as surely as I have filled with the glory of יהוה את־ all the earth, 22 Because all those men have seen את־ My glory וְאֶת־ and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness and have tempted אֶת־ Me these ten times and have not obeyed My voice, 23 They will not see את־ the land which I swore to their fathers, nor will any of those who provoked Me see it. C-MATS

Deuteronomy 2:1 Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness along the road to *the* Red Sea as יהוה spoke to me: and we went around את־ Mount Seir many days. C-MATS

Question: What happened after the incident of the spies? Had that sin of the spies not taken place, יהוה would have caused the king of Seir to let them cross through his country, or they would have been permitted to conquer Seir and annex it to Israel. But because the nation let its faith be weakened by the spies, it was condemned to wait in the Wilderness for a generation. Then, thirty-eight years later, after the events described in the Book of Numbers, they were back at the border of Seir again. Now, however, יהוה forbade them to antagonize Edom Seir in any way, so that when the king of Edom refused to allow them a rite of passage, Israel withdrew and skirted his country. Edom said to him, *You will not pass through my land or I come out against you with the sword.* Numbers 20:18 *Chumash*



Mount Seir home of Esau in Southern Jordan, now called Jebel Madhbah

Deuteronomy 2:2 And יהוה spoke to me saying, 3 You have traveled around את־ mountain long enough: Head north. 4 וְאֶת־ And command the people saying, אַתֶּם *You are* to pass through the coast of your brothers, *the* Children of Esau, which live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you: so be cautious: 5 Do not get into disputes with them; because אֶתֶן *I will give* not, you their land, *not* as much as a footstep; because I gave את־ Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. C-MATS

Question: How did יהוה divide up the nations among his people? יהוה gave ten nations to Abraham, On that same day made יהוה את־ with Abram a covenant saying, To your seed have I given את־ this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: את־ The Kenites את־ and the Kenizzites את־ and the Kadmonites את־ And the Hittites את־ and the Perizzites את־ and the Rephaims את־ and the Amorites את־ and the Canaanites את־ and the Girgashites את־ and the Jebusites. Gen. 15:18-21 Seven of them were for Israel [the seven of Canaan], and the other three were the nations of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites (Ammon, Moab, and Seir). One of them יהוה gave to Esau (Seir), and the other two were given to the children of Lot (Moab and Ammon). Abraham treated Lot as his son and he inherited part of the land promised given to Abraham. *I will give not, you the land of the Children of Ammon for a possession; because I have given it to the children of Lot as a possession. Deuteronomy 2:20.* יהוה forbade the Israelites to provoke a war with the Moabite branch of Lot's family. Lot's two daughters lived with him incestuously, and both bore sons So both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. And the firstborn gave birth to a son and called his name Moab (*son of my father*): he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger gave birth to a son and called his name Benammi (*son of my people*): he is the father of the Children of Ammon to this day. Genesis 19:36-38. One brazenly named her child Moab, literally, from Father, implying his disgraceful origin, while the other modestly named her son Ben-ammi, literally, son of my people, which was altered to Ammon, making no direct reference to her father's parentage of the child. Here, with Moab, the Torah forbade Israel only from provoking war, but they were not forbidden to harass them in ways short of war. As for Ammon, however, יהוה forbade Israel from any form of aggravation. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 2:6 You will buy meat from them for money, so you may eat; and you will also buy water from them for money, so you may drink. 7 Because יהוה your Elohim has blessed you in all the works of your hands: He knows your walking through את־ wilderness is great: these forty years יהוה your Elohim has been with you; you have lacked nothing. 8 And when we passed by את־ from our brothers from the Children of Esau, who lived in Seir, left the road through the way of the plain from Elath and from Ezion-gaber and turned to pass by the way of the wilderness of Moab. C-MATS



Ezion-gaber or Arabah

Deuteronomy 2:9 And יהוה said to me, Do not harass את־ the Moabites, nor contend with them in battle: for את־ I will give not, you their land as a possession; because I have given את־ Ar to the Children of Lot for a possession. 10 The Emims used to live there, a great many people as tall as the Anakims; 11 Who also were regarded as giants just like the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims. 12 The Horims formerly lived in Seir; but the Children of Esau destroyed them settling in their place; just as Israel conquered the land which יהוה gave to them to possess. 13 I said, Now get going and cross over את־ Brook Zered. And we went over the Brook Zered. C-MATS



Moses crossed over at Brook Zered in the Zered Valley

Deuteronomy 2:14 From the time we came from Kodesh-barnea until we came over את־ Brook Zered was 38 years. All the generation of the men of war had perished from the camp as יהוה swore to them. 15 Because the hand of יהוה was against them to destroy them from the camp until the last of them were gone. 16 So it came to pass when all the men of war were dead from among the people, 17 That יהוה spoke to me saying, 18 את־ You are to cross over this day את־ the coast of Moab through את־ Ar. C-MATS



Ar, Coast of Moab

Deuteronomy 2:19 And when you come close to *the* Children of Ammon, do not harass them or cause disputes among them: because אֶתֶן *I will give* not, you the land of *the* Children of Ammon *for a* possession; because I have given it to *the* children of Lot *as a* possession. **20** That also was regarded as a land of giants: giants used to live there; and the Ammonites called them Zamzummims; **21** They are a large numerous people and tall like the Anakims; but יהוה *destroyed* them *as the* Children of Ammon *advanced*; and *the* Children of Ammon lived in their land: **22** As He did to *the* Children of Esau, who lived in Seir, when He destroyed אֶתֶן *the* Horims *as the* Children of Esau *advanced*; and *the* Children of Esau live in their land even to this day: **23** And *it was the same with* the Avims who lived in Hazerim *all the way to* Azzah, the Caphtorims, *coming from* Caphtor; *they* destroyed them and lived in their place. C-MATS

Question: Who were the Avims? The Avims were a Philistine clan. Joshua 13:3 The five lords of the Philistines; the Gazites and the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites and the Ekronites; also the Avvim. Abraham had made a covenant of friendship with King Abimelech of Philistia. Genesis 21:22 And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, spoke to Abraham saying, Elohim *is with* you in all that אֶתֶן *you* do: **23** Now swear to me here by Elohim *that* you will not deal falsely with me, or with my son, or with my grandson: *but* according to the kindness that I have treated you, you will do to me and to the land which you have lived *as a* *foreigner*. Israel would not have taken territory from the Philistines, but because יהוה *wanted* the Israelites to have the land of the Avvim, Divine Providence caused the Caphtorim to drive out the Avvim, so that the Avvim lost title to their former land. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 2:24 Get up, get moving and pass over אֶתֶן *the* River Arnon: I have given into your hand אֶתֶן *Sihon* king of Heshbon the Amorite, אֶתֶן *and* his land: begin to possess *it* and engage with him in battle. C-MATS



River of Arnon

Deuteronomy 2:25 This day I will begin to put fear of you upon the nations *that are* under the whole heavens, who will hear reports of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you. C-MATS

Question: How did יהוה cause all the nations under the heavens to fear the Israelites? The implication is that fear gripped even distant nations that ordinarily would not have known about the war with Sihon. During the battle with Sihon a miracle happened and the sun stopped in the heaven, just as it did for Joshua during his war of conquest, so that Israel's reputation would become known far and wide. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 2:26 And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon, king of Heshbon, *with* words of peace saying, **27** Let me pass through your land: I will go along by the highway. I will not leave *the highway to the right* or to the left. **28** You will sell me meat for money וְאֵכְלָתִּי *and I [may] eat*; and give me water for money so that I may drink: I only want to pass through on foot; **29** *Just as the Children of Esau, who live in Seir and the Moabites, who live in Ar, did to me; until I cross over אֶת־ the Jordan into the land which יהוה our Elohim gives us.* C-MATS



Jordan River

Deuteronomy 2:30 But Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him: for hardened יהוה your Elohim אֶת his spirit and made stubborn אֶת his heart, so that He might deliver him into your hand, *as is the case this day.* C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה harden Sihon's heart? יהוה removed Sihon's freedom of choice, just as He did to Pharaoh. Sometimes evildoers accumulate so much sin that they forfeit the right to repent. Since Sihon's people were Amorites, they were subject to the commandment that no survivors were to be left if they refused to make peace. **But from the cities of these people, which יהוה your Elohim has given you for an inheritance, you will kill everything alive that breathes.** Deuteronomy 20:16 *Chumash*

Question: Why did Moses offer terms of peace to Sihon? When יהוה was about to give the Torah to Israel, He took it to Esau and Ishmael. Although it was clear to Him that they would not accept it, nevertheless, He began with them in peace. Moses said to יהוה, "I learned this from You, Who preceded the world. You could have sent one flash of lightning to consume the Egyptians, but instead, You sent me from the desert to Pharaoh. saying patiently, 'Let go אֶת־ My people that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.' Exodus 5:1." *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 2:31 And יהוה said to me, I have begun to hand over to you אֶת־ Sihon אֶת־ and his land: *begin to possess, that you may inherit אֶת־ his land.* C-MATS

Question: How did יהוה begin to deliver Sihon to the Israelites? יהוה forced down the guardian angel of the Amorites from above, beneath Moses' feet and made him tread upon his neck. *Chumash*



The Conquest of the Amorites (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Deuteronomy 2:32 Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. **33** And יהוה our Elohim handed him over to us; and we defeated אתו **את** *him* וְ**את** *and* his sons וְ**את** *and* all his people. **34** And we took **את** *all* his cities at that time and utterly destroyed **את** *every* city and all the men, women and children. We left none alive: **35** Only the cattle and the spoil of the cities we took. **36** From Aroer, which *is* by the brink of the river of Arnon and from the city that is by the river, *all the way* to Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: **את** *all cities were* delivered to us by יהוה our Elohim: **37** Only the land of *the* Children of Ammon you *did* not approach *at the* place around the Jabbok River and the cities in the mountains and wherever יהוה our Elohim forbid us *to go*. C-MATS



River of Jabbok

Deuteronomy 3:1 Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan: and Og, the king of Bashan and all his people came out against us to fight at Edrei. C-MATS



Bashan in Northern Jordan, Land of King Og

Deuteronomy 3:2 And יהוה said to me, Do not fear אתו *him*: because I will deliver אתו *him* **אתו** *and* all his people **אתו** *and* his land into your hand; and you will do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon. **3** So יהוה our Elohim delivered into our hands also אתו Og, the king of Bashan **אתו** *and* all his people: and we defeated him until none of them were remaining. **4** And we took אתו all his cities at that time. There was not a city which we *did* not take from them, 60 cities and all the region of Argob and the kingdom of Og in Bashan. **5** All these cities *were* fenced with high walls, gates and bars; beside a great many unwalled towns. **6** And we utterly destroyed אותם *them* as we did to Sihon, king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women and children *in* every city. **7** But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities, we took as booty for ourselves. C-MATS

Question: What does **booty** mean in this verse? From the fact that this verb is spelled with only one zayin instead of the customary two, there was a unique aspect to this plunder. As spelled here, the word can be rendered we disdained -- to shame -- because the Israelites had so much surplus from the trophies from the war against Sihon that they disdained the clothing and animals from Og's kingdom. Instead they took only the gold and silver. *Chumash*

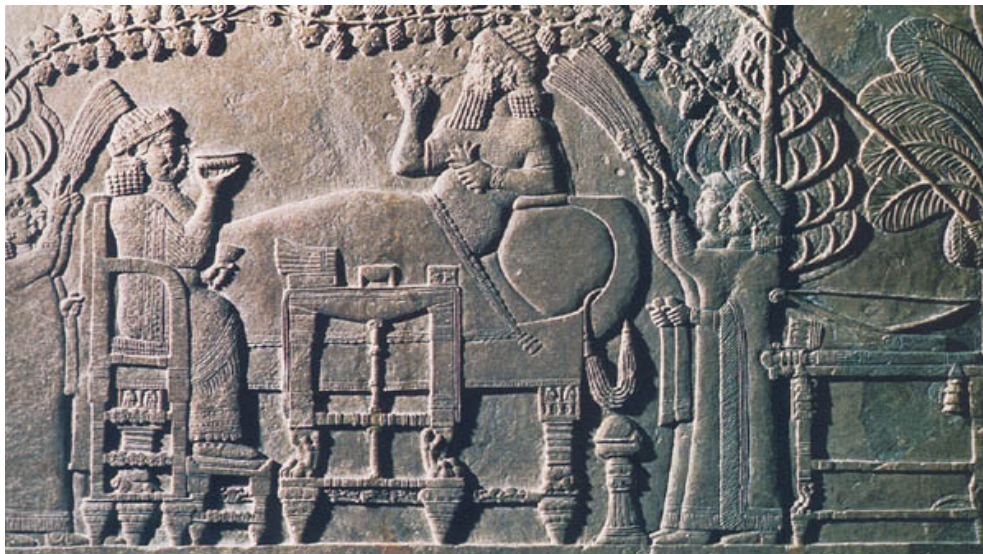
Deuteronomy 3:8 And at the time we took their אתו the land out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites that was on this side of the Jordan from the river of Arnon to Mount Hermon; **9** Hermon which the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir. C-MATS

Question: Why did Mount Hermon have so many names? From this verse and Deuteronomy 4:48, we see that four nations contended for control of the Hermon, each giving it a different name. This shows how coveted the Land was. And they possessed אתו his land אתו *and* the land of Og, king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise; From Aroer, which is by the bank of the Arnon River, to Mount Sion, which is Hermon. *Chumash*



Mount Hermon is the most northern point of Israel. Mount Hermon is the highest point in Israel, its highest peak gets up to about 9,230 feet above sea level. Mount Hermon is home to the only skiing site in Israel. Mount Hermon is important because of its strategic advantage, on a clear day Israel can see deep into the Syrian territory.

Deuteronomy 3:10 All the cities of the plain, all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. **11** For only Og, king of Bashan, remained from the remnant of giants; his bed *was made of iron; isn't it in Rabbath with the Children of Ammon?* It is nine אַמּוֹת cubits long and four אַמּוֹת cubits wide, using the normal אַמּוֹת cubit of a man (13½ by 6 feet). C-MATS



Og's Bed

Question: Who was Og, King of Bashan? When Amraphel and his allies defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth-karnaim (Genesis 14:5 **And when the fourteenth year came, Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him attacked the Rephaims.**), Og was the only one of the race of giants who was able to escape. Alternatively, when Ammon defeated the Rephaim, he was the only survivor. **Deuteronomy 2:20** **The Ammonites called them Zamzummims; They are a large numerous people and tall like the Anakims; but יהודה destroyed them as the Children of Ammon advanced; and the Children of Ammon lived in their land.** Because of Og's enormous size and weight, ordinary wooden furniture was not strong enough to support him. Alternatively, the word is rendered as cradle. Even as a baby, Og was so strong that he would break any wooden cradle. When the Ammonites routed the Rephaim, Og fled, and the victors used to display his bed in Rabbah as a symbol of their military skill. *Chumash*

Question: How was Og's bed measured? Was his bed measured by the cubit of a normal man (18 inches) or by Og's own cubit? A cubit is the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. Since Og's size was enormous, his bed may have been many times more than nine cubits as measured by ordinary human beings. The Torah gives this seemingly unimportant fact to give an idea of the great military power of the Ammonites who defeated him.

Deuteronomy 3:12 **And this land, which we possessed at that time from Aroer, which is by the Arnon River and half of mount Gilead including its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and to the Gadites. 13 And the rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Manasseh all the region of Argob together with Bashan, which was called the land of giants. 14 Jair, the son of Manasseh, took all the country of Argob to the coasts of Geshuri and Maachasi and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair to this day. 15 And I gave Gilead to Machir. 16 And to the Reubenites and Gadites I gave from Gilead to the Arnon River valley with the middle of the valley as the border as far as the Jabbok River, which is the border of the Children of Ammon; 17 The plain also and the Jordan being its border, from Chinnereth to the sea of the plain, to the salt sea under Ashdath-pisgah to the east. C-MATS**



Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh to the east of the River Jordan

Deuteronomy 3:18 As I commanded **אתכם** *you* at that time saying **יהוה** your Elohim has given you **האֶת** *this* **אֶת-** the land to possess: all who are fit to fight must cross over armed ahead of your brothers, *the Children of Israel*. 19 But your wives, your little ones and your cattle, *for* I know you have many cattle, will live in your cities which I have given you; 20 Until **יהוה** has given rest to your brothers, as well as to you and *until* possess they **אֶת-** the land which **יהוה** your Elohim has given them beyond the Jordan: then you will return every man to his possession, which I have given you. 21 **וְאֶת-** *And* I commanded Y'hoshua at that time saying, Your eyes have seen **אֶת** all that **יהוה** your Elohim has done to these two kings: so **יהוה** will do to all the kingdoms where **אתה** *you* pass. 22 You will not fear them for **יהוה** your Elohim will fight for you. C-MATS



Y'hoshua became leader of the Israelites

Question: Who gives authority over the countries to their kings? **יהוה** gave authority over the countries of the world to their respective kings, meaning that He has ultimate authority over the world, so that He was justified in giving the Land to Israel, when it pleased Him to do so. *Chumash*

Question: What should we do when life requires us to make transitions from something old and familiar to something new? It's not always easy to face these changes, but they are a necessary part of growth. The Israelite People had to make a transition from their familiar life of the last 40 years in the wilderness, to prepare for what would be the very different life they would be leading in the Land of Israel. Although Moses, their leader, knew life in Israel would be a good thing for the people, it still wouldn't be easy to face a change, so he spent quite a bit of time preparing and encouraging them, making sure the transition would be successful. The key to remember is that whenever **יהוה** expects us to make a transition, He will give us just the tools we need to succeed.

Question: Can we ever find ourselves in a situation for which we simply lack the tools to handle successfully? No. יהוה always gives us the tools we need to succeed. Now this doesn't mean that success will manifest itself in the way we would envision it. For instance, someone's success in the face of a loss might not be in recouping that loss, but rather in peacefully coming to grips with it. But we can rest assured that in whatever situation we find ourselves, יהוה is right there with us, planting within us all we need to *spiritually* succeed. All we have to do is turn to Him.

Do You Know?

1. Deuteronomy is a _____ of the Torah.
2. Moses rebuked the Israelites shortly before he _____.
3. Moses reviewed all the laws before they reached the _____. (Where?)
4. The land of Edom, Moab, and Ammon is present day _____. (What country?)
5. Jordan is the land of the ancestors of _____ and _____. (What men?)
6. יהוה gave Abraham _____ nations, but only 7 were given to Israel. (How many?)
7. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh were given land to the east of the _____ River.
8. _____ is the highest place in Israel. (What mountain?)
9. The Israelites spent most of their time in the Wilderness in what place?
10. The Israelites called the Wilderness fearful because they saw all the _____ and _____. (What animals?)
11. _____ led the Israelites into battle after Moses died. (Who?)
12. Two foreign kings that Israel defeated in battle.
13. _____ was not allowed to enter the Promise Land.
14. Two nations the Israelites were not allowed to conquer.
15. Two spies that Moses sent to explore the land of Canaan who entered the Promised Land.

Answers:

1. Review
2. died
3. Promised Land
4. Jordan
5. Esau and Lot
6. 10
7. Jordan
8. Mt. Hermon
9. Kadesh-barnea
10. snakes and scorpions
11. Y'hoshua
12. Og and Sihon
13. Moses
14. Esau (Seir) and Lot (Moab)
15. Caleb and Joshua

Haftorah



Question: Who was Isaiah? Isaiah was a prophet (740BC-680BC) who wrote the book Isaiah and also was mentioned in a number of other books. Isaiah prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was murdered by King Hezekiah's son, King Manasseh. Isaiah in Hebrew means “יהוה is savior.” He was of the Tribe of Judah and his wife was a prophetess.

Question: What is Isaiah saying to the Israelites in this Haftorah? Isaiah relays to the Israelites a vision from יהוה he experienced, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against יהוה, criticizing them for repeating their errors and not abandoning their sinful ways even after having been reprimanded and punished.

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. **2** Hear, O heavens and give ear, O earth; for יהוה has spoken: I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me. **3** The ox knows his owner and the donkey his master's crib; *but* Israel does not know, My people do not consider. **4** Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! They have forsaken יהוה אלהי, they have provoked to anger אלהי Holy One of Israel, and they are estranged *and gone* backward. **5** Why will you be still stricken, that you revolt more and more? The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. **6** From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it; *but* wounds and bruises and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil. **7** Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire; אדמתכם your land, strangers devour אתה it (her) in your presence and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. **8** And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. C-MATS

Isaiah 1:9 Except יהוה of צְבָאוֹת *Hosts* had left to us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like to Gomorrah. 10 Hear the word of יהוה, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the Torah of our Elohim, you people of Gomorrah. 11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? Says יהוה: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. 12 When you come to appear before Me, who has required זָאת *this* at your hand, to trample My courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; New Moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies, I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. 14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless and plead for the widow. 18 Come now and let us reason together says יהוה: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of יהוה has spoken it. 21 How has the faithful city become a harlot! She that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. 22 Your silver is become dross, your wine mixed with water. 23 Your princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes and follows after rewards: they judge not the fatherless; neither does the cause of the widow come to them. 24 Therefore, says Adonai, יהוה of צְבָאוֹת *Hosts*, the Mighty One of Israel, ah; I will ease Me of My adversaries and avenge Me of My enemies; 25 And I will turn My hand upon you and thoroughly purge away your dross and will take away all your impurities; 26 And I will restore your judges as at the first and your counselors as at the beginning: afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, a faithful town. 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice and her converts with righteousness. C-MATS

Brit Chadashah

Question: Who changes you into the person you need to be to complete your mission in this life?
John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6 If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. C-MATS

Question: How can we learn from our ancestors and not commit the same sins they did in the Wilderness? Hebrews 3:7 Wherefore as the Ruach haKodesh said, Today if you will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living Elohim. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Mashiach, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day in this way, and Elohim did rest the seventh day from all his works. C-MATS

Hebrews 4:5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limits a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest to the people of Elohim. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works as Elohim did from his. 11 Let us labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. C-MATS

Question: Moses said that he was not capable of judging all the Israelites. What are the qualities that a good leader should have? I Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of Elohim? 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Constructive Criticism

Question: Should we tell others that they are doing something wrong? There are times when we should speak up and tell others that they are doing something wrong. But there is a right way and a wrong way to do it. In this week's portion, Moses has to remind the Israelite people to behave better, and not repeat some of the mistakes they had made before. But instead of angrily rebuking them, Moses gently hints to the people what they had done wrong, and encourages them to do better in the future. We learn a big lesson from here, that if we criticize others, we should do it gently and sensitively, and get much better results.

"PEACE AND QUIET"

It had been a great hiking trip. The boys had given it all they had, and used every drop of energy climbing up and down Bear Mountain. Now they were happy to have finally made it back to the bus, where they could rest up during the long ride back to camp.

The guys had just gotten cozy, and were melting into their seats, when all of the sudden ... DOOM CHA-KA DOOM, DOOM CHA-KA DOOM-DOOM ... blaring loud music started pumping from the back of the bus that shocked the boys wide awake.

"What on earth...?" They turned around and saw to their dismay that a group of rowdy, older kids had gathered back there, and between the music and their loud and raucous laughter, it looked like no one was going to sleep a wink on this bus ride.

"What should we do?" asked Larry, desperately.

Rick, the biggest and toughest kid in their crowd, was quick to answer. "I'll tell you what we're gonna do. I'm going right back there and telling those inconsiderate jerks to pipe down!"

With that, the husky boy got up and stormed to the back of the bus. But when he got there, things didn't work out exactly as the guys had hoped. Not only didn't the boys in the back pay any attention to Rick's angry complaint, but they just laughed at him, and turned up the music even louder!

Defeated, Rick returned to his seat. It seemed like all hopes of having a quiet, restful bus ride had gone up in smoke. The boys tried to make the best of it, and rest anyway, but it was going to be really hard.

A few minutes later Harold, the youngest kid in their group, stood up.

"Hey, what are you doing?" asked Larry, his seatmate. "We're not back yet, there's a long way to go."

The short, skinny kid answered matter-of-factly, "I'm going to ask those guys in the back if they could be quieter."

"What?!" exclaimed his friend, "Big Rick already tried, and got nowhere, and now *you're* going to face them? That's suicide! They'll eat a little kid like you for breakfast!"

But Harold just smiled, and went about his plan. Meanwhile the rest of the guys had caught on to what was happening, and turned around to watch their brave but foolish friend walk into the lion's den. They all knew he didn't stand a chance.

As Harold stepped closer to the kids in the back, his friends held their breath. It wasn't going to be pretty.

Then the impossible happened. As Harold spoke to them, the big, rowdy guys seemed to actually calm down. They turned down their music, and started smiling and chatting with Harold as if he were their long lost friend!

"What in the world...?" uttered an amazed Rick.

After a couple of minutes, the little kid headed back to his seat and calmly sat down among his astonished friends.

"Well don't just leave us in suspense," begged Larry. "How did you ever tame those guys?"

"It was really no big deal." Harold said. "I just told them that they looked like nice guys to me, and even though their music was really great, some of us up front were just a little too tired to appreciate it. And you know what? They really *were* nice guys. They volunteered to turn the music down, and even invited me to sit next to them."

"But I still don't get it!" said Rick. "Those same guys nearly threw me out the window! How did you get them to just melt like butter in the palm of your little hand?"

Harold shrugged. "What can I say? My mom always taught me that if you speak to people nicely, they'll usually listen to you. And that's all I did."

The boys enjoyed the rest of the ride home in peace and thought about the big lesson they all learned from their little friend: that a gentle word can sometimes be stronger than an angry shout.

Question: Why did his friends feel that Harold's attempt was doomed to failure? They saw the situation as a power struggle. Whoever was stronger was going to get his way. Once Rick, the biggest and strongest among them, wasn't able to force the kids to quiet down, they figured there was no way that a little kid like Harold could do it.

Question: Why do you think Harold succeeded where Rick failed? When Rick approached the boys, he criticized them sharply with anger. The natural reaction is get defensive and fight back, which is just what the kids did by turning up the music. Harold's approach was different. He didn't see it as a power struggle, so he didn't feel like he had to fight against the other kids. He didn't criticize openly, and even made the boys feel good about themselves. This allowed them to let down their defenses, and respond to his reasonable request.

Don't Embarrass Me

Question: How should we express our feelings to others? It is fine to express our thoughts and feelings about things. But it is very important to think before speaking and make sure that our words won't embarrass or offend anyone else. The Torah relates that when Moses knew that his life was drawing to an end, he realized that it was his duty to speak to the Nation of Israel. He wanted to inspire the people he had led for forty years to face what the future would bring as well as to remind them of their past mistakes so that they wouldn't repeat them. Yet Moses was very careful not to mention any of these mistakes straight out in a way that could embarrass anyone. Rather he tactfully hinted in a way that would get his point across as painlessly as possible. The Torah is teaching us here how important it is to be sensitive to the feelings of others and do whatever we can never to embarrass anyone.

"THE FIRST VOLLEY"

It was a special "beach day" in summer camp.

Tammy's group and girls from three other bunks had all come together at a nearby beach for a day of swimming and socializing. It was sunny, but breezy-perfect beach weather too. The water was warm but refreshing.

After a fun picnic lunch and a rest under the shady palm trees the kids all got up to play a game of volleyball. Tammy and another girl, Jan, were chosen as team captains and asked to pick out two teams. Naturally each captain tried to pick out the most talented girls to ensure that her team would come out the winner.

Jan picked first and chose Cindy, whom she knew to be a good volleyball player. Next it was Tammy's turn to pick. She noticed a tall athletic-looking girl from another bunk who looked like she would make a perfect volleyball star. "I'll take you," she said, pointing to the girl whose name she didn't know. But instead, Gail, the short, slightly overweight girl, who had been standing next to the tall girl, started coming forward. Immediately, Tammy realized there had been a terrible mistake.

Tammy was about to speak up and send the girl back into the line-up. Then she noticed the shine in Gail's eyes as she approached. "She probably never gets picked first for these games," Tammy thought.

Tammy realized how embarrassed the poor girl would be to have to go back in line. "I can't hurt her like that," thought Tammy, deciding to say nothing and let Gail stay on the team.

The rest of the teams were chosen and the game began. Everyone was really getting into it and having a great time. At one point Jan jumped up and spiked the ball in Tammy's direction. Tammy dove for it and the two team captains collided, ending up sprawled out in the sand. They looked at each other and laughed.

As the girls got up and brushed off the sand, Jan bent over and said quietly to her friend, "Tell me the truth Tammy, there's no way you chose Gail first to be on your team. I thought I clearly saw you pointing to the tall girl next to her. Did you really choose Gail or didn't you?"

Tammy picked up the volleyball and tossed it over the net to the girl waiting to serve. She turned to Jan, smiled shyly and said, "The truth is I chose ... not to embarrass someone and hurt her feelings. For me that was clearly the first choice."

Question: How would Gail have felt had Tammy made her go back in line? She would have felt really embarrassed. She would have realized that she had made the mistake of thinking she was picked when she wasn't.

Question: Should we say something if we know it will hurt someone's feelings? Usually, if what we say is going to hurt or embarrass someone, it's better not to say it.

Question: What do we do if we have no choice but to say something that could potentially hurt someone's feelings, for example, if a certain friend invites us over and we just don't want to go? There are two parts to anything we say: what we say and how we say it. There can be times when we have no choice but to say something that will be unpleasant for someone to hear. Still, even then, we can choose to speak with tact, and in a positive and considerate way. Often people appreciate this and react much better than they might otherwise.

Question: Imagine someone who is extra sensitive and gets embarrassed by things that wouldn't bother most people. Must we go out of our way to treat them extra carefully, or can we just treat them like everybody else? In truth, everybody has their own level of sensitivity. There is no objective measure. What will cause one person to laugh could make another person cry. Since our goal is to be kind and not hurt people, we should strive to deal with everybody in a way that will be pleasant for them. If we can learn to be so tactful and sensitive to others that we don't even hurt the "easily hurt", we have accomplished a great thing.

Question: In your opinion, does one have the right to express himself however he wishes, regardless of the effect it will have on others? Freedom of speech and expression is a valuable right for which we should be grateful. We can show how much we value this right by using it wisely. Responsible and spiritually developed people will carefully consider their words and use the gift of speech to bring good feelings to the people around them. Freedom of speech should really be viewed as a freedom to choose words carefully and not as a license to harm or embarrass other people.

Question: Embarrassing someone is like killing him. Why do you think this is so? A sense of dignity is very important for most human beings. When we embarrass another person, it is as if we robbed that person of his or her humanity. For the moment, the person wishes he didn't exist. The Torah wants to teach us to take the feelings of others very, very seriously. If we are careful with this, we will be giving those around us a gift as precious as life itself.

Question: Moses spoke to the Israelites with love. Just as a pool of water reflects that which approaches it, so too do two hearts reflect one another. יהוה has made human nature such that people automatically tend to feel about us the way we feel toward them. If we're loving, they will be too. If we feel hostile, we are likely to get the same reaction. We can save ourselves from dangerous people by working up such love for them in our hearts that the other just couldn't hurt us.

Question: Should we treat all people equally? We should treat all people fairly and not give more respect to one person over the other. **Malachi 2:10 Have we not all one father? Has not one Elohim created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers? 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. C-MATS**

Question: Do you believe that all humankind was made in the likeness of יהוה? Human dignity is based on the belief that we were all created in the image of יהוה. Prejudice, racism, and sexism are totally inconsistent with Torah ideals. **Genesis 5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. On the day that Elohim created man, in the likeness of Elohim, He made אתו him.** One who accepts the view that all of humankind was made in the likeness of יהוה must respect all people, regardless of how she/he feels about her/himself. If you insult another person you have insulted his Creator, because man was created in the image of יהוה.

From Ethics of the Fathers: "Let your fellow-man's honor be as dear to you as your own."

"Who is honored? One who honors his fellow human being."

"Whoever honors the Torah will be honored by people; whoever disgraces the Torah will be disgraced by people."

"The wrong you do by means of words is worse than monetary wrongs." An example of a verbal wrong is reminding a penitent person of his past misdeeds. Monetary wrongs are subject to restitution, verbal wrongs cannot be "returned."

Question: How will embarrassing someone affect your future? The Midrash relates an interesting story about a Roman whose ship sank and he was washed up naked and helpless on the beach. The Jews, victims of Roman tyranny and persecution (the Romans destroyed the Second Temple), refused to help him. He pleaded with the Rabbi in the name of human dignity to help him. The Rabbi provided him with clothing, food, money, accompanied him a distance of 14 miles to his home, and gave him much honor. Sometime later, this Roman became the emperor and issued an edict of destruction against the Jews. The Rabbi was sent to the emperor with a bribe of 4,000 *dinars*, hoping he would get the emperor to change his mind. When the emperor recognized the Rabbi, he jumped off his throne and bowed with his face to the ground before the Rabbi. In the end, the emperor rescinded the decree and gave many gifts to the Rabbi. A similar story is told about Diocletian. He tended to pigs and was ill-treated by the students of the Rabbi. When he became Emperor of Rome, he tried to retaliate against the Jews. If not for divine intervention, there would have been a great tragedy.

Question: Should we embarrass the poor who have less than us? The Mishna describes the great days of joy on the fifteenth of Av when the single girls of Jerusalem would dance in the vineyards in front of the single men in order to attract a spouse. The Mishna notes that the girls went out in “white garments which they borrowed in order not to shame those that did not have the means”, and could not afford nice clothing. The girls recognized the importance of protecting the dignity of girls of limited financial means.

Abba was a physician who was held in great esteem by the Rabbis for his exemplary business practices. His patients paid as much of his fee as they could afford, leaving the money in a box in an outside room so that he could not see who had paid and who had not. He did this so as not to embarrass the poor. In addition to this, when it was clear that a patient was impoverished, not only would Abba refuse payment but he would give the patient money for food.

Comforters use to bring bottles of wine for the mourners. An individual could easily bring a bottle that was nearly empty and strategically place it among the other bottles in a way so that the mourners would assume that the reason the bottle was empty was that people had drunk from it. If there is a big assembly of people at the mourner’s house and the comforter wants to show respect for the mourner (but cannot afford to bring a full bottle of wine), he is permitted the above deception so he will not suffer embarrassment.

Providing a job to a pauper or giving him money in secret are the two best ways to preserve his dignity.

Question: It is known that some great judges who sat on courts of Torah law would blindfold themselves before listening to a case. Why do you think they did that? Because they didn't want to be influenced even by what the two litigants looked like. They realized how easy it is to be influenced and to make an unfair decision, so they went to great lengths to be as unbiased as possible.

Question: If someone had suffered from unfair treatment in the past, do you think it is right to go out of one's way to favor him now even if by doing so it will be unfair to other people? Why? While it's unfortunate that the person has unfairly suffered, and we should definitely make sure that he no longer does, if we show him preferential treatment now at the expense of causing a second person unfair suffering, we are only adding injustice to injustice. Be fair to everyone regardless of race, sex, religion, or political stand.

Question: Do you think that it is possible for a judge to accept a gift or favor from one of the two parties he is judging, and still remain objective? On the surface it might seem as if the two things are unrelated. However, the Torah teaches us that it is human nature for a person to be swayed, if only subconsciously by even the smallest ‘bribe.’ A fair judge has to keep his hands totally clean and just focus on the facts.

Question: The Israelites traveled through a “**great and fearful Wilderness**”. Can knowing that things are likely to get better do anything to help us feel better when things are still bad? A lot of our discomfort in a hard situation is the feeling like 'things will always be this way.' When we remember that things often change for the better, we can even feel better, *before* they do.

Question: Do you think there is any way to 'make' things get better instantly without having to wait for them to change? While patience is generally essential, there is one trick we can use for instantaneous, miraculous results. That is, if we can change our attitude toward our current situation for the better, we'll find that we will feel much better too. This takes practice, but it's a powerful technique for life.

Question: All beginnings are difficult. What do you think this means and how does this idea apply to our lives? When we start something new, not only are we fighting against our previous resistance to change, but we're often in an unfamiliar situation. This can all add to a feeling of difficulty. But when we remember that while beginnings are difficult, and that as things go on they are likely to be less difficult, we can gain momentum and motivation to see things through.

Spiritual Exercise: Change your attitude about a difficult situation and trust יהוה to give you the ability to see your situation in a positive way.

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)

Ethics of Our Fathers Pirkei Avot