

SHOFTIM (*Judges*)

Before he dies Moses reviews for the Israelites their system of justice, the rules of kingship, their relationship to idolatrous nations, and the rules of doing battle.



Judgment seat at the city gate

Deuteronomy 16:18 Appoint judges and officers for all your gates in your cities, which יהיה your Elohim gives you, tribe by tribe: and they will judge את־ the people *with* righteous judgment. C-MATS

Question: What kind of judges must be appointed? The mere appointment of persons to staff the courts is not sufficient; they must be qualified and righteous, so that they will judge honestly and correctly (Rashi). The court must treat everyone equally. If a judge shows more respect to one litigant (the person engaged in a lawsuit), the other feels at a disadvantage (Rashi). *Chumash*



Question: What life lesson can we learn from this law? The Torah says to appoint judges and officers at the gates of our cities to protect them and maintain justice. We can also learn from this to carefully guard what we allow to pass through the 'gates' of our bodies - our eyes, ears, etc. - and start to take control of what we allow to influence our precious hearts and minds. Whatever we allow ourselves to see, hear or otherwise let into our bodies and minds is going to have an effect on us and we should value ourselves enough to set up guards, our good judgment, to make sure whatever we don't want in - stays out.



Do not accept a bribe

Deuteronomy 16:19 Do not pervert justice; you will not show favoritism or take a bribe (*gift*): for a gift blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. 20 Justice you will only follow, so that you may live and inherit ארץ the land which יהוה your Elohim gives you. C-MATS

Question: What is the penalty for an unrighteous judge? יהוה is very harsh with a judge who knowingly tampers with justice because to deprive someone of his money unjustly can be a matter of life and death. The implication is that the judge who perverts justice will die. *Chumash*

Question: Can only one judge give a death sentence? It is written, "Do not judge alone, for no one can judge alone but the One". Under Torah law, a tribunal of 23 judges called a "Minor Sanhedrin" tries capital crimes. After hearing the testimony of the witnesses, the judges themselves would split into two groups: those inclined to argue for the acquittal of the accused would serve as his "defense team" and seek to convince their colleagues of his innocence; those inclined to convict would make the case for his guilt. Then the judges would vote. A majority of one was sufficient to exonerate, while a majority of two was necessary to convict. *Chumash*

Question: Should we judge other believers? 1 Corinthians 5:9 I wrote to you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators: 10 Yet not only with the fornicators of this world, but with the covetous, extortioners, or idolaters; in that case you would have to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to associate with any man who calls himself a brother who is a fornicator, covetous, idolater, slanderer, drunkard, or extortioner; do not eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging those who are outside in the world? Don't you judge only those who are our brothers? 13 Elohim, will judge those who are outside. Therefore put away from among yourselves any wicked person. C-MATS



Celtic countries thought trees had special powers or served as the abode of the fairies

Deuteronomy 16:21 Do not plant any sort of tree (*to worship*) next to the altar of יהוה your Elohim that you will make for yourselves. 22 Do not set up *any* image; which יהוה your Elohim hates.
C-MATS

Question: Why is this law “Do not plant any sort of tree (*to worship*) next to the altar of יהוה your Elohim” immediately following the law regarding the appointment of judges? The reason that the Torah places this law immediately following the law regarding the appointment of judges is to teach us "Whoever appoints an unqualified judge it is as if he planted an *asheira* near the altar." Often, we see people appointed to positions of authority because of their external appearance, charm, and oratorical prowess, instead of their knowledge, integrity, and fear of Heaven. *Chumash*

Question: How should we worship יהוה? It is forbidden to set up a pillar, a single stone for any sort of worship -- even for the worship of יהוה. For He hates such stones since they had become associated with idol worship; for His own service, יהוה has specified only an altar made of many stones or of earth. Exodus 20: 24 You will make for Me an altar of earth and will sacrifice on it **את** your burnt offerings **את** and your peace offerings, **את** your sheep **את** and your oxen: in all places where I record **את** Name of Mine I will come to you and I will bless you. 25 And if you make Me an altar of stone, you will not build it from carved stone: if you put your tool upon it, *then* you have profaned it. *Chumash*

Question: What are some common images that people worship? Many believers set up statues or images of saints and pagan gods not knowing that this is an abomination to יהוה. יהוה is spirit and you should worship Him only in spirit not with an image.



Catholic Pope-Catholic Deity



Sun Worship-Catholic Deity (Sunday)



Buddah-Indian deity



Krishna-Hindu deity



Jesus/Cross

No one knows how **Yahusha** looks. **Worship Him in Spirit and Truth**, not with an image.

Question: An idol is defined as

- an image used as an object of worship
- a false god
- one that is adored, often blindly or excessively

What are your idols?



What are some forms of modern idolatry? Paul lists various sins that serve as other "gods" in place of Yahusha. **Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence (desire), and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of Elohim comes on the children of disobedience: 7 In which you also walked some time when you lived in them. 8 But put off all anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. C-MATS**

Paul's list specifically includes 10 forms of idolatry,

1. sexual immorality/fornication
2. impurity/uncleanness-anything unclean
3. lust/inordinate affection
4. evil desires
5. greed/covetousness
6. anger
7. rage/wrath
8. meanness/malice
9. slander/blasphemy
10. obscene talk/filthy communication

Idolatry can include any way of life that places another object, person, or practice before Yahusha.

How can these modern forms of idolatry be stopped?

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of Elohim, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Mashiach forgave you, so also do you. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of Elohim rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body; and be thankful.

Paul gives us 10 ways to overcome these idols:

1. compassionate hearts/mercy
2. kindness
3. humility
4. meekness
5. patience/longsuffering
6. bearing with one another
7. forgiveness
8. love/charity
9. peace
10. thankfulness

When everything a person does is for Yahusha, then idolatry is no longer a controlling factor in a believer's life. **Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Adonai Yahusha, giving thanks to Elohim and the Father by him.** C-MATS

Deuteronomy 17:1 Do not sacrifice to ליהוה your Elohim *any* bullock or sheep, which is blemished or has a defect: because that *is* an abomination to יהוה your Elohim. **2** If there is found among you at any of your gates in your cities, which יהוה your Elohim gives you, a man or woman who has been אֵת wicked in the sight of יהוה your Elohim by transgressing His covenant, **3** And has gone and served other gods and worshipped them, either the sun, moon, or any of the host of heavens, which I have not commanded *for you to worship*. C-MATS



Do not worship the sun, moon, stars

Deuteronomy 17:4 And it is told to you and you have heard *about it* and inquired diligently to see *if this is אמת true that if such an abomination as הַזֵּאת this has been committed* in Israel: **5** Then you will bring אֵת the man or אֵת woman, who has committed אֵת this thing *which is wicked, at your gates אֵת that man or אֵת that woman you must stone with stones until they die*. C-MATS

Question: Why is idolatry such an evil crime? Idol worship is the ultimate violation of יהוה's covenant, for it constitutes a denial of His very existence. By referring to it so forcefully, the Torah implies that no obligation or threat can ever justify idolatry. The death penalty is carried out in the city where the idol worship took place, not at the court that rendered the verdict, so that the whole city may witness the death of the idol worshipper. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 17:6 He who is worthy of death will be put to death at the testimony of two or three witnesses; *but at the testimony of one witness he will not be put to death*. C-MATS

Question: Will the guilty person be punished even if the court does not find him guilty? The Torah implies that even if the court cannot act because the guilty party was not properly warned or his sin was not witnessed, he is still considered a dead man, because יהוה will punish him (Or HaChaim). This is a major principle in understanding the laws of the Torah. Often it seems unjust that an evildoer escapes punishment or that someone suffers a financial loss because of legal technicalities. But such limitations of the human court are neither absolute nor an abandonment of justice. יהוה can punish the guilty person in myriad ways. Even in monetary cases that involve insufficient evidence for the court to prosecute, יהוה can make the victorious party lose his award and the losing party recoup it elsewhere; or perhaps יהוה only used the agency of the court to deprive one of money that he was not entitled to, while granting it to someone who had been wronged on another occasion. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 17:7 The hands of the witnesses will be first to stone him and then all the people will stone him to death. In this way you will keep the evil away from you. C-MATS

Question: Who carries out the death sentence? It is proper that the witnesses take the initiative in carrying out the court's verdict because they were the ones who saw the sin being committed, whereas everyone else knows about it only secondhand (Rambam). In Torah there is no professional "executioner" to shield society from unpleasantness. The death penalty is not revenge against a criminal; it is needed to purge the nation of an evil that can infect others if it is left unchecked (R' Zalman Sorotzkin). *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 17:8 If a matter comes before you that is too hard for you to judge within the gates of your cities concerning bloodshed, civil suit, personal injury, or any other matters of controversy: then you should go up to the place which יהוה your Elohim will choose; 9 וּבָאתָ And you [will] come to the priests, the Levites and to the judge who is in office at that time and seek their opinion and they will show you אֵת sentence of judgment. C-MATS

Question: Who is the One who passes judgment? After someone is found worshipping other gods he is to be brought before the Levites who, will show you אֵת sentence of judgment...implying the judgment and sentence will come from אֵת. C-MATS



Judge's seat at the city gate

Deuteronomy 17:10 And you will do according to the sentence, which they pronounce upon you in that place which יהוה will choose to show you; and you will do according to all that they order you: 11 You will do according to the sentence of the Torah which they teach you and according to the judgment which they tell you: you will not alter the sentence which they show you to the right hand or to the left. C-MATS

Question: Should you always obey the decision of the court? Even if the judge is not equal to the judges of previous days, you must obey him. All you have is the judge of your own time (Rashi). You must obey the decision of the courts even if you are convinced they are wrong, even if they seem to be telling you that right is left and left is right -- and certainly you must obey if it is clear to you that their decision is correct (Rashi; Ramban). *Chumash*

Question: How can the human mind possibly determine what is יהוה's will? "But the Torah itself instructs that the 'Torah is not just in heaven' but has been given to man to study and comprehend; and that whenever a question or issue is raised, it is a human being, employing his finite knowledge and judgment, who must render a ruling. In other words, when a person puts aside all considerations of self and totally surrenders his mind to serve the Torah, יהוה *guarantees* that the result would be utterly consistent with His will. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 17:12 And that man will die who acts arrogantly and does not listen to the judge or the priest who stands to minister there *before* יהוה את- your Elohim: and you will exterminate *such* evil from Israel. 13 And all the people will hear *about it* and be afraid to act arrogantly. 14 When you come to the land which יהוה your Elohim gives you and possess it and live there וְאָמַרְתָּ and you say, I want a king over me like all the nations that *are* around me; 15 You must appoint as king over you whom יהוה your Elohim chooses: you will set as king over you *one* from among your brothers: you may not set a stranger over you, who *is* not your brother. C-MATS

Question: Why did Samuel respond in disappointment and anger when the people asked for a king? When the people asked the prophet Samuel "now make us a king to judge us like all the nations," (1 Samuel 8:5) Samuel responded with disappointment and anger. And called together Samuel את- the people to יהוה to Mizpah; 18 And he said to the Children of Israel, So says יהוה, the Elohim of Israel, I brought up את- Israel out of Egypt and I delivered אֶתְכֶם you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed אֶתְכֶם you: 19 וְאַתֶּם And you have this day rejected את- your Elohim, who Himself saves you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and you have said to Him, No, but set a king over us. Now therefore, present yourselves before יהוה by your tribes and by your thousands. (1 Samuel 10:17-19) They should have asked for a king who would lead them, inspire them, and set an example of selfless and wholehearted service of יהוה, but instead they said they wanted a king merely to imitate their neighbors. Was it יהוה's goal for Israel to be no different from any other nation, which aspires only for glory, wealth, and conquest? Because the desire of the people was wrong, their first king Saul, could not keep his throne permanently. In our passage, the Torah prophetically foreshadows the improper motive of the nation's request of Samuel, because here the Torah introduces the commandment to ask for a king with the very words that were improperly said to Samuel like all the nations that are around me. If you will fear יהוה את- and serve אתו Him and listen to His voice and not rebel against את- commandment of יהוה and both אֶתְכֶם you and also the king that reigns over you be followers of יהוה your Elohim, well. 1 Samuel 12:14 (Ramban; R' Hirsch) *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 17:16 The king should not acquire many horses for himself or cause to return את- the people to Egypt to acquire more horses for him: and וַיֹּאמֶר said to you, you will not return to Egypt again. 17 He should not to acquire many wives for himself otherwise his heart will turn away: He is not to acquire excessive amounts of silver and gold. C-MATS



THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA TO KING SOLOMON. Painted by Sir E. J. Poynter.

The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon

Question: Did King Solomon obey these verses? King Solomon, one of the greatest of all Israelites and the wisest of all men, violated these limitations on the king's prerogatives, confident that his superior wisdom would protect him from the pitfalls specified by these verses. But he was wrong. His large stables did bring the people back to Egypt, his many wives did affect him, and his large treasury was a corrupting influence, and the heavy taxes it necessitated caused the nation to be split after his death

Question: What type of king did יהוה want for Israel? Self-aggrandizement was typical of monarchs. They demonstrated their greatness by the number of their horses, the size of their harems, and the bulging of their treasuries. Not so for an Israelite king. True, because his glory was the glory of the nation, he was required to maintain the dignity of his office, but he had to curb his appetites and make himself an example of moderation and obedience to the Torah.

Question: Some people claim that we should try to grab as much physical pleasure in the world as we can. "Eat drink and be merry," they say, because that's all there is. Others claim all such material pleasures are "sinful" and we should totally deprive ourselves. Which if any of these philosophies is correct? Neither. יהוה wants us to enjoy this world and its pleasures. That's why He created them. But at the same time, He doesn't want us to live just for them. We should partake of the pleasures of the world, but in moderation. If we do that we open ourselves up to appreciate the even greater and more enjoyable spiritual pleasures that make the physical type seem pale in comparison. Such pleasures as love or learning something we're interested in, or understanding more and more about life are more enjoyable. Or the pleasure we feel in helping others and doing acts of kindness. These spiritual pleasures are deeper and more long lasting.

Question: Do you agree that moderation is a higher level of willpower and spirituality than either indulgence or total abstinence? When we abstain or fast, we merely "turn off" a part of ourselves and become less aware of the world around us. To indulge without limit also blinds us as we get "lost" in the object of our desires. But moderation means to be "turned on" fully with full awareness of life's pleasures, but still in control. This can be a very high and spiritual feeling.

Deuteronomy 17:18 When he sits upon the throne of his kingdom, he will write him *self* **את** a copy of **הַתּוֹרָה** *this* Torah in a scroll from what the Levite priests *use*: **19** And he will keep it with him and he will read from it all the days of his life: so that he may learn to fear **את** יהוה His Elohim to keep **את** all the words of **הַתּוֹרָה** *this* Torah **ואת** and statutes these to do them: **20** So he will not think he is better than his brothers and that he will not turn aside from the commandments *to the* right hand or to the left: In this way he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in Israel.
C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה ask every king to write *himself* **את** a copy of **הַתּוֹרָה** *this* Torah in a scroll? Why should you read the Torah everyday?

1. You will learn to fear **את** יהוה your Elohim
2. You will keep all the words of the Torah
3. You will not think you are better than others
4. You will not disobey the commandments and turn away from them



Deuteronomy 18:1 The Levite priests and all the tribe of Levi will have no part or inheritance with Israel: they will eat the offerings of יהוה made by fire as their inheritance. **2** Therefore, they will have no inheritance among their brothers: יהוה is their inheritance, as He has said to them. **3** And this will be the priest's portion **מֵאֵת** from the people **מֵאֵת** from them who offer a sacrifice, whether *it is* an ox or sheep: they will give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.

Deuteronomy 18:4 You will give Him the firstfruits of your grain, your wine, your oil and the first of the fleece of your sheep, **5** Because יהוה your Elohim has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of יהוה, both he and his sons forever. **6** And if a Levite from any of your cities where he is living in all of Israel comes with all אָנָה *desire to go to the place which יהוה will choose;* **7** Then he will minister in the name of יהוה his Elohim, as all his brothers the Levites *do, who stand before יהוה.* C-MATS

Question: What duties did the Levies have? Moses ordered that the Levis be divided into eight "watches" or groups, who would take turns performing the Tabernacle service, and David and Samuel later increased the number of watches to twenty-four, so that each Kohen would be "on duty" for a bit more than two weeks of the year. Although the regular service was the prerogative of the assigned watch, any Kohen had a right to come and perform the service of his own personal offerings at any time of the year, and to come during the Pilgrimage Festivals and share in the service and the division of the prescribed communal offerings. Even during the festivals, however, only the assigned watch had the right to perform and share in private, non-festival offerings (Rambam) In the Wilderness, the Levis were clustered near the Tabernacle and had minimal contact with the nation as a whole. In Israel, however, they would be scattered throughout the country, coming to Jerusalem only when their respective shifts performed the service. The rest of the year the Levi shared the duty to guide the rest of the nation on the way of the Torah by formal teaching and by personal example. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 18:8 They will have the same portions to eat, besides *that which comes from the sale of אבות the fathers (inheritance).* **9** When אָנָה you have come into the land, which יהוה your Elohim gives you, you will not learn to do the abominations of those nations. **10** There will not be found among you *anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or uses divination, or a soothsayer (an observer of times-foretells events), or an enchanter, or a witch (sorcerer),* **11** Or a charmer (*spell caster*), or a consulter with familiar spirits (*medium*), or a wizard, or a necromancer (*calls up the dead*). C-MATS

Question: What does it mean by "who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire"? Baal, Molech, and Ashtoreth were essentially worshipped in the same way. Two practices in particular are mentioned in Scripture. The First was sexual orgies "under every green tree," where promiscuity and perverted sex acts were the norm. Second was passing their babies through the fire. This was murdering the babies that resulted from the orgies by throwing them alive into a fire pit to be burned to death. These things were done in the name of the pagan idol-gods Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech.

Question: Is Baal still worshipped today? The gods have been renamed "Sexual Freedom" and "A Woman's Right to Choose." "Planned Parenthood" is an organization whose sole purpose is to make modern Baal worship acceptable to the people. When having an unborn child becomes inconvenient, the unborn baby is murdered. One method of abortion is a saline/chemical solution injected into the womb which literally burns the baby to death. Another is to go in with a knife and cut the baby up (torture and cutting also being a popular form of satanic worship). Then there is the partial birth abortion, where they crack open the skull of a partially born child and suck out the brains with a vacuum. We cannot fall into Baal worship and accept abortion or sexual freedom. These practices are an abomination in the eyes of יהוה. The Israelites were warned "not learn to do the abominations of those nations."

Question: How will the nation know יהוה's will for it? יהוה will communicate His will and whatever the nation must know of the future in order to fulfill its responsibilities to Him. But first, because it is human nature to want to know the future and to utilize whatever means to successfully pursue that end, the Torah forbids Israelites to copy the practices used by the nations to foretell events. To יהוה, these practices are abominable. They were not the way of life ordained for Israel. Israelites were to have faith that יהוה would give them whatever knowledge they needed, and then they were to act upon it, with faith and loyalty. *Chumash*

Question: What is rebellion? Rebellion is when you seek the hidden things even though יהוה has told you not to look into such things. When יהוה says to stay away from hidden knowledge, he says it for a reason. Just as you hide certain things from a little child until he is old enough to understand them, so יהוה hides things from you until you are released from the flesh and can see them clearly and how to use its powers. If you give a child a gun, the child may harm himself, but if you put a gun into a man's hand, he can provide food for his family. יהוה does not hold back good things from you, but יהוה holds back evil unacceptable things from you.

Question: When did witchcraft begin? Eve desired to be as wise as יהוה and the spirit of rebellion and witchcraft entered the world. Witchcraft normally begins with the sin of curiosity, which in turn is born out of pride (this was the sin of Eve). This comes about because pride tells us that we have a right to know something when the Bible tells us, "**Trust in יהוה with all your heart and lean not upon your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.**" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Remember, we have been bought with a price. So if we are no longer our own but belong to יהוה, what right do we have to try to find out about the forbidden knowledge? Where is our trust in יהוה to guide our future? We must trust Him with our whole heart.

Question: What are the 9 forms of witchcraft?

1. Who passes his son or daughter through fire- The literal commandment is that we should not give any of our offspring (children) to offer them to Baal, Molech, or Ashtoreth. Worship of Molech usually involved passing children through a fire built in the lap of a Molech idol.



2. Divination-the practice of attempting to foretell future events, probably by drawing lots, tossing arrows, casting bones, sticks or stones. This is sometimes called a fortune-teller. This also includes our modern palm reading, tarot cards reading, horoscopes, and Ouija boards or any other means to predict the future.



3. Soothsayer (an observer of times-foretells events) - An observer of times is called augury. This practice involved the belief that the activities of the gods could be predicted by observing events in nature (weather, animals, movement of stars, and flight of birds). Astrology is augury based on observation of the stars and planets. By observing such events, people attempted to predict the future. The ancient Roman religion practiced augury by interpreting omens from the observed flight of birds (*aves*).



4. Enchanter- snake charmer using the practice of hypnotizing a snake by playing an instrument. The earliest snake charmers were likely traditional healers by trade using drugs to entice their victims.

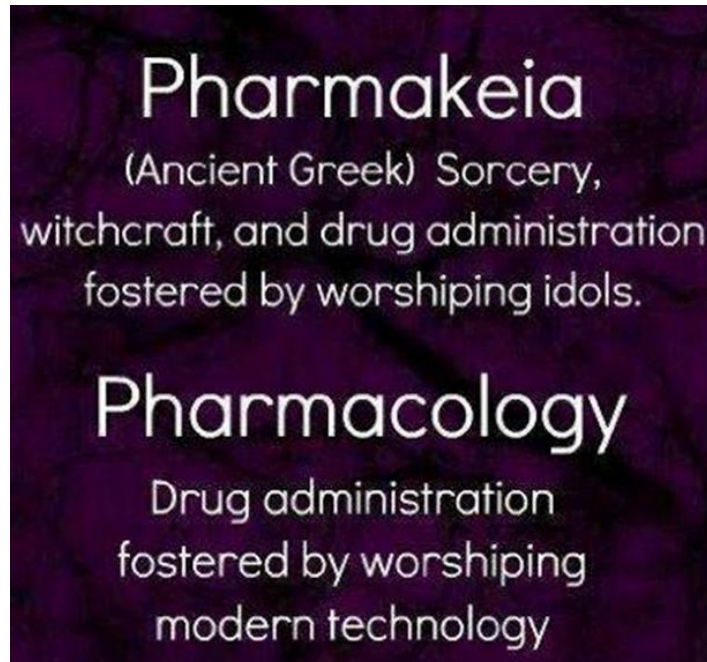


Snake charmer

5. **Witch**- "Witchcraft" also called **sorcery** is the attempt to exercise supernatural powers by means of magic rituals or techniques (incantations, spells, **drugs**, potions, curses, charms, etc) in order to inflict harm or damage upon members of a community or their property.



Witch



Question: Where does the word sorcery come from? The English word for drugs, pharmacy, comes from this same root as sorcery. Nearly everyone is being influenced by this sorcery, even if you aren't taking prescription medication or over-the-counter or other drugs. Many are using the daily "coping" varieties of drugs such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol. Drugs in the water supply, processed foods- genetically modified plants and animals used for food and the spread of spores, bacteria and virus - waveform "pollution" from the electrical grid and broadcast towers and every sort of energetic projection coming through the entertainment media - all these things work to tune us, to retune us from יהוה-like to Satan-like. Satan wants all men to worship him, and he will use any scheme or drug possible to have that happen.

...and the light of a lamp will not shine in you (the great city Babylon) any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations (ethnos) were deceived by your sorcery (pharmakeia). – Revelation 18:23 C-MATS

Nowhere in the Bible or in history have drugs been used to bring people closer to יהוה - they have always been used in relation to bringing people closer to evil powers and demonic influences. If you find yourself struggling with faith and peace, use fewer drugs and not more is usually the better choice. Entrust your health and well-being to יהוה, who is the Great Physician.

Spiritual Exercise: Seek יהוה to guide you as you are released from drugs, so you can draw closer to your Great Physician.

6. Charmer- binding or casting spells An incantation or incantations are the words spoken during a ritual, either a hymn or prayer invoking or praising a deity with the intention of casting a spell on an object or a person.



7. Consulter with familiar spirits- communication with spirits usually called a medium or channeling.



Séance conducted by John Beattie, Bristol, England, 1872

8. Wizard- knower of secrets of the unseen worlds; persons who make contact with spirits who are not of ייחוד, practitioners of magic, alchemy (chemistry).



9. Necromancer -one who raises the dead spirit upon his membrum (member), or one who consults a skull. It is the alleged power to communicate with the spirits of dead people (“ghosts”).



John Dee and Edward Kelley evoking a spirit: Elizabethans who claimed magical knowledge

Question: Do ghosts exist? The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there are spirit beings, both good and evil. But the Bible negates the idea that the spirits of deceased human beings can remain on earth and “haunt” the living. Hebrews 9:27 declares, **“Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”** That is what happens to a person’s soul-spirit after death—judgment. There is no in-between. There is no possibility of remaining on earth in spirit form as a “ghost”. If there are such things as ghosts, according to the Bible, they absolutely cannot be the disembodied spirits of deceased human beings. The Bible teaches very clearly that there are indeed spirit beings that can connect with and appear in our physical world. The Bible identifies these beings as angels and demons. Demons are evil, deceptive, and destructive. According to 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, demons masquerade as **“angels of light”** and as **“servants of righteousness”**. Appearing as a “ghost” and impersonating a deceased human being definitely seem to be within the power and abilities that demons possess. Demons only seek to **“kill, steal, and destroy”** (John 10:10). They will do anything within their power to deceive people, to lead people away from יהוה. This is very likely the explanation of “ghostly” activity today. Whether it is called a ghost, a ghoul, or a poltergeist, if there is genuine evil spiritual activity occurring, it is the work of demons.

Question: What about psychics who claim to summon the deceased and gain true and useful information from them? The goal of demons is to deceive. If the result is that people trust in a psychic instead of יהוה, a demon will be more than willing to reveal true information. Even good and true information, if from a source with evil motives, can be used to mislead, corrupt, and destroy.

Question: Should you believe in “magic charms”? Some people believe that they need some sort of ‘magic charm’ or “lucky charm’ to be successful in life, but they only need to do their best and ask for יהוה’s help. These charms also give you the false impression that you can rely on something other than יהוה. Acquiring something through magic or sorcery is the spiritual equivalent of stealing it with a gun. Any items or success which are truly coming to us and are for our ultimate benefit, יהוה will give us without resorting to charms, sorcery, or any similar ‘spiritual robbery.’

Question: Why is luck never mentioned in the bible? There’s no such thing as luck. The dictionary defines luck as “the things that happen to a person because of chance: the accidental way things happen without being planned, good fortune.” יהוה never operates by chance but by a divine plan. If there is something called chance that isn’t controlled by יהוה and it causes things to happen, then chance must be a god, too. No, there’s no such thing as chance or luck.



Deuteronomy 18:12 All who do these things *are* an abomination to יהוה and because of these abominations יהוה your Elohim will drive אותם them out from before you. 13 You must be perfect (*blameless*) with יהוה your Elohim. C-MATS

Question: What does it mean “You must be perfect (*blameless*) with יהוה your Elohim.”? Despite the means that are available to idolaters to inquire into the future, you should follow יהוה with perfect faith, without feeling a need to know what will happen (Rashi). If you have wholesome faith in יהוה, all the soothsaying of magicians and prophets will be meaningless to you, because יהוה will reverse any evil tidings against Israel. The proof is from Abraham and Sarah, who were doomed in the course of natural law not to have children together -- but יהוה reversed this with a miracle. And He brought אתו him outside and said, Look now toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to number אתם them, so will your seed (*descendants*) be. Genesis 15:5. If so, Israel needed no sorcery, only wholehearted obedience to יהוה (Or HaChaim). Lest Israelites fear that the previous prohibition against learning the future makes them inferior to their neighbors, יהוה reassured them that He would send to them prophets to tell them the future. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 18:14 For these nations, which אתה you will dispossess אותם them, listened to observers of times (*soothsayers*) and to diviners: ואתה And you, your יהוה your Elohim will not allow you to do so. 15 יהוה your Elohim will raise up a Prophet for you from among you, one of your brothers like me (*Moses*); you will listen to Him; *Prophecy Fulfilled-Deut. 18:15 This is of a truth that prophet.*” John 6:14. 16 According to what שאלת you asked of יהוה your Elohim in Horeb on the day of the assembly saying, Do not again let me hear את voice of יהוה my Elohim, ואת and [neither] הניא this great fire let me see anymore, that not, אמות I die. *Prophecy-Fulfilled-Deut. 18:15-16 “Had ye believed Moses, ye would believe me.”* John 5:45-47. C-MATS

Question: Who spoke from Mount Sinai? Moses recounts what the people said at Mount Sinai after hearing the 10 Commandments which states; do not let me hear את voice of יהוה my Elohim again...implying that it was את voice of who יהוה my Elohim who spoke to them from the fire on Mount Sinai. We must keep in mind Moses knew את voice when he heard Him speak, for Moses had spoken with Him intimately for years. There would be no fooling Moses on who was speaking from Mount Sinai. I personally believe they both spoke at the same time because of the manifestation of both fire and smoke. Regardless of whom spoke they worked as ONE by ONE SPIRIT communing by thought and are never separated from that communion. C-MATS

Deuteronomy 18:17 And יהוה said to me, They have spoken well that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise up a prophet from among their brothers, like you and I will put My words in His mouth; and He will speak to them את all that I will command Him. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Deut. 18:18 Sent by the Father to speak His word-John 8:28, 29.* 19 Whoever will not listen to My words which he speaks in My name, he will have to account for himself to me. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Deut. 18:19-Whoever will not hear must bear his sin John 12:15.* 20 But that prophet will die which assumes to speak a word in My name, את which I have not commanded him to speak or speaks in the name of other gods. 21 And if you say in your heart, how will we know את the word which יהוה has not spoken to us? 22 When a prophet speaks in the name of יהוה, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that thing יהוה has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it arrogantly: you will not be afraid of him. C-MATS

Question: When does this not apply? This verse does not apply to an unfavorable prophecy that was voided because the people repented and so earned a reprieve -- such as the repentance of Nineveh that prevented its destruction. **And saw Elohim את־ their works that they turned from their evil way; and Elohim repented of the evil which He said He would do to them; and He did not do it. Jonah 3:10.** It could not apply to a favorable prophecy that could not be fulfilled because of the people's later sins -- such as Jacob's fear that his sins might have cost him יהוה's promise of protection from Esau. **Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, Esau: because I am afraid of אתו־ him, otherwise he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. Genesis 32:11.**



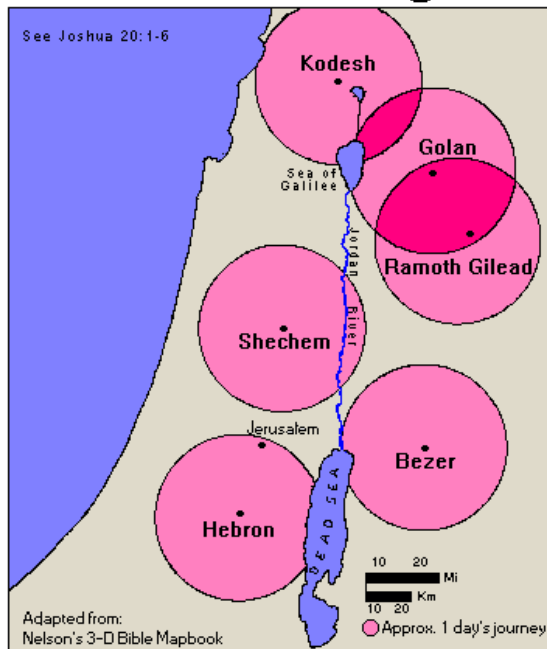
City of Refuge

Deuteronomy 19:1 When cuts off יהוה your Elohim את־ the nations and when יהוה your Elohim gives you את־ land and you succeed *against* them and live in their cities and in their houses; **2** You will separate three cities for yourself in your land, which יהוה your Elohim gives you to possess. **3** You will prepare a road and divide into three parts את־ territory (*boundary*) of your land, which יהוה your Elohim gives you to inherit, so that every manslayer (*person who kills a man*) may flee there. **4** And a manslayer (*person who kills a man*), who kills את־ his neighbor unintentionally (*ignorantly*), whom he did not hate in the past, will flee there, *so that he may live*: **5** As when a man goes with את־ his neighbor into the forest to cut wood and swings a stroke with an axe to cut down the tree and the head slips from the handle and lands upon את־ his neighbor *so that he dies*; he should flee to את־ one of those cities and live: **6** Otherwise the next of kin avenger while in the heat of anger will pursue the killer and overtake him and kill him, since the way is long; even though he *was not worthy of death and he did not hate him in the past*. C-MATS

Question: Why were cities of refuge established? Cities of refuge were established to protect the inadvertent killer from the wrath of the redeemer, to whom the Torah gives the right to avenge the death of his close relative. The redeemer will go to very great lengths to do so for his heart will be hot, and that is why the Torah commands that the path for the killer's escape should be eased as much as possible. Posting road signs to show them the way and keeping the roads to the cities in good repair eased their path to the city. The three cities were allocated not in proportion to population density, but by distance from the north-south borders and from one another. *Chumash*

Question: Did a person have the right to avenge the death of a close relative? Yes, Torah gives the redeemer the right to avenge the death of his close relative. The redeemer is not liable to the death penalty, for he had no previous hatred of the one who killed his relative.

Cities of Refuge



Deuteronomy 19:7 Wherefore, I command you saying, You will separate three cities. **8** And if enlarges יהוה your Elohim את־ your territory, as He has sworn to your fathers and gives you את־ all the land which He promised to give to your fathers; **9** If you will keep את־ these commandments and do them, which I command you this day to love יהוה את־ your Elohim and to walk always in his ways; then you will add three more cities besides these three: **10** So innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which יהוה your Elohim gives you for an inheritance and so guilt of bloodshed is not upon you. **11** But if any man hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and rises up against him and strikes him, so that he dies and flees into את־ one of these cities: **12** Then the elders of his city will send for את־ him there and deliver את־ him into the hand of the avenger of blood (next of kin) that he may die. **13** You should not pity him, but you will take away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you. C-MATS

Question: Should a man hate his neighbor? If a man transgresses a minor commandment, he will ultimately transgress a major commandment. Since he transgressed the command: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart” (Leviticus 19:17), he ultimately came to shed blood. A man should guard his heart against hating others and quickly forgive. *Chumash*

Question: Should you pity the person who has killed another person? Compassion for a murderer breeds further bloodshed, since it frees him and sets an example for others who may be tempted to follow his example. *Chumash*



Deuteronomy 19:14 Do not remove your neighbor's boundary markers, which the men long ago have set for your inheritance, which you will inherit in the land that יהוה your Elohim gives you to possess. C-MATS

Question: How was a neighbor's landmark removed? In Israel gardens and vineyards are surrounded by dry-stone walls or hedges of prickly pear, but the boundaries of fields of crops are marked by nothing but by a little trench, a small pile of stones, or a single erect stone, placed at certain intervals. It is manifest that a dishonest person could easily fill the gutter with earth, or remove these stones a few feet without much risk of detection and so enlarge his own field by a sly violation on his neighbor's rights. This law, then, was made to prevent such trespasses or theft of another's property.



Deuteronomy 19:15 One witness cannot convict a man of any offense or **חַטָּאת** *sin* of any kind: the matter will be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. C-MATS

Question: What does the New Testament say about this law? Hebrews 10:28 He that despised Moses' Torah died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of Elohim, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that has said, Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense, said יהוה. And again, יהוה shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living Elohim. C-MATS

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture said, You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward. 19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder unless confirmed before two or three witnesses. 20 Rebuke those that sin before all the believers, so that others also may fear. 21 I charge you before Elohim, and Adonai Yahusha haMashiach, and the elect angels, that you observe these things without preferring one over another, doing nothing by partiality. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no one. Neither partake in other men's sins: keep yourself pure. C-MATS

Matthew 18:15 (Yahusha said) **If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between you and him: if he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he will not hear them, tell it to the assembly: but if he will not hear the assembly, treat him as a heathen man or a publican. 18 Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.** C-MATS

Deuteronomy 19:16 If a false witness comes forward against any man to testify against him *of* wrongdoing; 17 Then both the men in the controversy will stand before יהוה, the priests and the judges *in office at that time*; 18 And the judges will make a thorough inquisition and see *if* the witness is a false witness and has testified falsely against his brother; 19 Then you will do to him as he had thought to have done to his brother: so you will put an end to the evil among you. 20 And those which remain will hear *about it* and be afraid and will commit no more evil among you. C-MATS

Question: What scenario is happening in verses 16-19? It involves a case of two witnesses whose testimony results in a judgment against a defendant. Before the judgment is carried out, two other witnesses come and testify that the first pair could not have seen the event because, "You were with us at that very same time in a different place." The Torah declares that the second witnesses are believed when they say that the first ones were engaged in a conspiracy, and the Torah states that the same penalty the first witnesses conspired to have imposed on their intended victim should be imposed on them. Thus, if they wished to have the victim executed or lashed by the court, they are executed or receive lashes. If they wanted him to pay money damages, they must pay that same amount to him.

This is a "novel ruling" because logic would dictate that since the two pairs of witnesses contradict one another, we cannot know which was telling the truth, and both testimonies should be set aside. Nevertheless, the Torah assigns credibility to the second pair. *Chumash*

Question: What happens when a person appears before a righteous court? When people appear before a court of יהוה's righteous scholars, they must feel the same awe as if they were standing before יהוה (Rashi). Justice is יהוה's prerogative (**stand before יהוה**), and those who exercise it are His partners. That an Israelite should approach judgment in a Torah court as if he were standing before יהוה is not an exaggeration; he is truly in יהוה's presence. *Chumash*



Deuteronomy 19:21 Do not pity him; but take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand and foot for foot. C-MATS

Question: What does "eye for eye" mean? This is only financial compensation. You pay for what an eye would be worth to the person, if you hit the person and blinded him. *Chumash*

Question: What does Yahusha say about this law? **Matthew 5:38 You have heard our fathers have said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But you do not resist evil: but whoever hits you on your right cheek, turn to him the other one also. 40 And if any man sues you and takes away your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 And whoever compels you to go a mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. C-MATS**



When Israel Goes to War

Deuteronomy 20:1 When you go into battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and a people more *numerous* than you, do not be afraid of them: because יהוה your Elohim is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. C-MATS

Question: How should Israel view their enemies? Let them be in your eyes as enemies; have no pity on them, for they will have no pity upon you. In your eyes, they are numerous, but in My eyes, they are insignificant (Rashi). *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 20:2 When you get ready to go to battle, the priest will approach and speak to the people, **3** And will say to them, hear, O Israel, אֲתֶם *you* are about to go into battle against your enemies: do not be fainthearted or fearful and do not be alarmed or terrified by them. C-MATS

Question: What practices does the pagan kings use to cause their enemies to become fearful? They hold their shields close together to strike them against one another, thereby producing a loud noise to alarm those confronting them, so that they should flee; they stamp the ground heavily with their horses and make them neigh, sounding the beating of their horses' hoofs, and they shout loudly and blow horns and other kinds of noisy instruments. יהוה was warning the Israelites to not be afraid of these practices. *Chumash*

Question: How can you keep from being fearful in battle? The Torah does not demand the impossible. The average person will be afraid in battle, but people should try to avoid fear by not focusing on the dangers awaiting them. Instead, they should train their minds to think that the enemy comes with the power of flesh and blood, but you come with the power of the Omnipresent. The Philistines came with the power of Goliath -- what was his end? He fell and they fell with him! (Rashi) *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 20:4 Because יהוה your Elohim goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to save אֶתְכֶם *you*. **5** And the officers will speak to the people saying, *Is there* anyone who has built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, because if he dies in the battle another man may dedicate it. **6** *Is there* anyone who has planted a vineyard and has not made use of its fruit? Let him also go and return to his house, because if he dies in the battle another man may eat of it. **7** *Is there* anyone who has become pledged to a wife and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, if he dies in the battle then another man may take her. C-MATS

Question: Who was not required to go to war? A man who builds a house must be able to live in the house before he can go to war. A man must redeem his vineyard before he goes to war. He has not redeemed the vineyard in the fourth year of its growth, for the fruits of the fourth year have to be eaten in Jerusalem or redeemed by exchanging them for money, and to eat food purchased with the money in Jerusalem. A man who is engaged to a woman should marry her first before he goes to war.

Question: What should a wise man do before he gets married? The order in which the Torah lists these actions teaches us that a person of character should:

1. Receive the blessing of her father to marry the woman
2. Find work that earns him a livelihood so he is not in debt or lives off charity
3. Build himself a house after that marry

... not like the foolish man who first gets married, then, if he can afford it, buy a house, and fall into debt. *Chumash*



Deuteronomy 20:8 And the officers will speak further to the people and they will say, *is there anyone who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, otherwise may faint אֶת heart of his brothers because of his fear.* 9 After the officers have finished speaking to the people, they will appoint captains of the צְבָאוֹת host to lead the people. C-MATS

Question: What did the captains of the armies do? They would place guards in front of them and behind them, with iron arrows in their hands, and if anybody attempted to retreat, the guard had the authority to strike his legs. They also stand at the edge of the battle array to pick up the fallen and to encourage them with words: "Return to the battle and do not flee, for flight is the beginning of defeat." *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 20:10 When you come near to a city to fight against it, וְיָרֵאתָ, *and you call to offer peace.* 11 If they accept your answer of peace and open their gates to you, then all the people *who are found there will be forced labor and they will work for you.* 12 And if they refuse to make peace with you, but want to make war against you, then you will put the city under siege. C-MATS

Question: Were the Israelites suppose to try to make peace with all the nations before going into war? This applies only to optional wars against enemies other than the seven Canaanite nations. In the wars that Israel was commanded to wage against the Canaanite inhabitants of the Land, however, they were not to offer them peace, nor to permit them to live in the Land, under any circumstances. *Chumash*

Question: What does “offer peace” mean? It's not enough to passively be willing to be at peace with others as long as they're willing to be at peace with us. Rather, we should actively go out of our way and make an extra effort to keep our relations with others peaceful. *Chumash*

Question: Are there times when it's impossible to be at peace? It could be that after making every reasonable effort, others just won't relate to us peacefully. However we should certainly try very hard at making peace before reaching that conclusion. *Chumash*

Deuteronomy 20:13 And when יהוה your Elohim has delivered it into your hands, you will kill **את־** every male in it with the sword: **14** But the women and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, including all the spoil from it, you will take for yourself; and you will eat **את־** the spoil of your enemies, which יהוה your Elohim has given to you. **15** You will do *this* to all the cities, *which are a very far distance* from you, which *are* not of the cities of these nations. **16** But from the cities of these people, which יהוה your Elohim has given you *for* an inheritance, you will kill everything alive that breathes: **17** You will totally destroy them; *namely*, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; as יהוה your Elohim has commanded you: **18** Otherwise they will teach **את־כם** you to follow after all their abominations which they have done by worshipping their gods and you would sin to ליהוה your Elohim. C-MATS

Question: What should the Israelites do about Canaanites who want to convert and worship יהוה? It was forbidden to permit any pagan Canaanites to remain, even individuals, because their modes of service to their deities would filter into the Israelite community. Even if Israelites were not to become idolaters, they would use those abominable practices to serve יהוה. But as time went on the danger was even greater: you will sin to יהוה, by actually worshiping their idols. The fact is that these dire warnings came true. Israel permitted many Canaanites to remain, and the result was that idolatry did become prevalent among Israelites and caused the many disasters that are recorded in Scripture. *Chumash*



The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans Under the Command of Titus, A.D. 70
by David Roberts 1850

Deuteronomy 20:19 When you lay siege to a city for a long time while making war in order to capture it, do not destroy **את** *the* trees in it by cutting them down with an axe: but you may eat from them and do not cut them down to use *them* in the siege *because* the tree of the field *is* man's *life*: **20** Only the trees which you know that do not produce food, **אתו** *him* you can destroy and cut down; and you will build siege works against the city that makes war against you until it falls.

C-MATS



Do not destroy fruit trees.

Question: What are some ways we can fulfill the Torah's instruction of being careful not to misuse the **יהוה**-given environment in our daily lives? When we are careful not to waste food, break things, or throw out perfectly good usable items just because we feel like it, we are fulfilling this commandment. Even by simply remembering to turn off lights, appliances, or the water faucet when not needed, we help do our part to respect and take care of **יהוה**'s world.

Question: Why is it important to take care of the environment? The world, its wide variety of animal and plant life, its varied environment is all a creation and a gift of **יהוה**. When we treat it with respect and care we show ourselves and others that we appreciate and acknowledge this gift, and that leads us to live a more fulfilling and spiritual life.

Question: What are some ways to protect the environment-the gift that **יהוה** gave us?

- **Pick Up Litter.** Make the earth a better place to live.
- **Recycle** cans, plastics, glass, and paper products in recycle bins.
- **Reuse plastic and paper bags** or make a one-time purchase of a durable cloth bag.
- **Plant a Tree.** Put oxygen back into the atmosphere.
- **Cut down on Energy Use** by unplugging appliances when not in use.
- **Park the Car.** Walk or bicycle whenever possible.
- **Turn Off Lights** and make use of natural light when possible.
- **Take Shorter Showers.** Even cutting just one minute from a shower time can save up to 10 gallons of water per shower.
 - **Turn off the water while brushing your teeth**, and save up to five gallons of water per two-minute tooth-brushing session.
 - **Choose Natural Cleaners.** Use a mix of vinegar and water or a baking soda and water combination.
 - **Avoid buying bottled water.** Use your own water bottle and refill it.
 - **Choose natural fabrics for your clothes** with the least amount of harsh chemicals, like hemp, organic cotton, wool, or silk.

- **Choose locally grown or organic food.** They are produced with fewer chemicals.
- **Avoid taking your clothes to the dry cleaners or using harsh detergents on your clothes.**
- **Grow your own food.**
- **Donate what you are not using to others.**
- **Watch leaky faucets.** An average of 120 liters of water can be wasted due to a dripping faucet.
- **Collect rainwater.** You can use it for watering plants and you can even drink if after it has been filtered.

Question: How can a person know whether he is properly or improperly partaking of the world's resources? The rule of thumb is: use it, but don't abuse it. We should relate to it as a valuable gift from יהוה that He wants us to use and enjoy, but not to waste or wantonly destroy.



Wash your hands from the shedding of innocent blood.

Deuteronomy 21:1 If a man is found dead lying in the field in the land which יהוה your Elohim gives you to possess and no one knows who has killed him: **2** Then your elders and your judges will come and measure the distance between it and the cities which are around where he was killed: **3** After it has been determined which city is next to the dead man, the elders of that city will take a heifer, which has not been worked and which has never worn a yoke; **4** And the elders of the city will bring down that את heifer to an unused valley, איתן rough (strong) which has been neither plowed nor planted and will break there את the heifer's neck in the valley: **5** And the priests, the sons of Levi, will come close; יהוה your Elohim has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of יהוה; and by their word will every controversy and every assault be decided: **6** And all the elders of that city that are next to the dead man will wash את their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: **7** And they will answer and say, our hands have not shed את blood, nor have our eyes seen it. **8** Be merciful, O יהוה, to your people Israel, whom you have redeemed and do not allow innocent blood to be shed among your people of Israel. And they will be forgiven. **9** ואתה And you will stop the shedding of innocent blood from among you by doing what is right in the sight of יהוה. C-MATS

Question: What did the ritual of the elders washing their hands over the heifer symbolize? They wash their hands to symbolize that just as their hands are clean, so they are free of guilt in the death. They mean to say that they did not know of the traveler and had no part in allowing him to go on his lonely way without food or escort. The Torah announces that when the elders and the Kohanim make their declarations, יהוה forgives the people (Rashi). The people are still responsible to execute the murderer, if he is ever apprehended. *Chumash*

Question: What is the principle behind this law? The principle behind this law is that a person is also responsible for what occurs outside of his house -- outside of the areas where he is fully in control. When a murdered traveler is found out in the field, the elders of the nearest city must go out there and bring the heifer to atone for the crime, although it occurred "outside of their jurisdiction"; for it was nevertheless their responsibility to send the traveler off with adequate provision and protection. The same applies on the personal level in all areas of life. A person never has the right to say, "This is not my problem. I have no obligation to deal with this." If it is something that, by Divine Providence, one has been made aware of, that means that there is something one can, and must, do to positively influence the end result. *Chumash*

Question: Should one ask יהוה to forgive him through the washing of his hands for all the innocent blood that has been shed around him? Yes, it is a sign to יהוה that you desire to be clean before him and not come under the judgment of the land that you are living in. *Chumash*

Do You Know?

1. When Israel goes to fight a city, they must ask for ___ first.
2. During a siege, they should not cut down the ___ trees.
3. When they go to war, they should not be _____ because יהוה goes before them.
4. Eye for eye means to compensate with _____.
5. A man who killed someone could flee to a city of ___ until he was given a fair trial.
6. We should not seek ___ to foretell future events.
7. The testimony of ___ witnesses is needed before a person is given the death sentence.
8. A righteous judge should not take a _____.
9. A king must write the ___ while he sits on the throne and read it continuously.
10. The punishment for someone who refuses to follow a judge's ruling is _____.

Answers:

1. peace
2. fruit
3. afraid
4. money
5. refuge
6. Witchcraft/occult
7. two or more
8. Bribe
9. Torah
10. death

Haftorah

After briefly reprimanding Israel for forgetting their Creator for fear of human and finite oppressors, the prophet describes the suffering and tribulations which Israel has endured. However, the time has arrived for the suffering to end.

Isaiah 51:12 I am He that comforts you: who are אַתָּה (you?)* that you are afraid of man that shall die and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; 13 And have forgotten יהוה your Maker, that stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; and you feared continually all the day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he makes ready to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor? 14 The captive exile shall speedily be loosed; and he shall not die *and go down* into the pit, neither shall his bread fail. 15 For I am יהוה your Elohim, who stirs up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar: יהוה of צְבָאוֹת Hosts is His name. 16 And I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you in the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth and say to Zion, אַתָּה You are My people. 17 Awake, Awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, that have drunk at the hand of יהוה אַתָּה the cup of His wrath; אַתָּה dregs of the cup of trembling you have drunk *and* drained it out. 18 There are none to guide her among all the sons who she has brought forth; neither is there any that takes her by the hand among all the sons that she has brought up. 19 These two things are befallen you, who shall mourn you? Desolation and destruction and the famine and the sword; how shall I comfort you? 20 Your sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of יהוה, the rebuke of your Elohim. 21 Therefore, hear now זֹאת this you afflicted and drunken, but not with wine: 22 So says your Adonai יהוה and your Elohim that pleads the cause of His people, surely, I have taken out of your hand אַתָּה cup of trembling, אַתָּה dregs of the cup of My wrath; you shall no more drink it again: 23 And I will put it into the hand of them that afflict you that have said to your soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and you have laid your back as the ground and as the street, to them that go over. Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. 2 Shake yourself from the dust; arise, sit *on your throne*, O Jerusalem: free yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. 3 For so says יהוה, You were sold for nothing; and you shall be redeemed without money. 4 For so says Adonai יהוה, My people went down at the first into Egypt to dwell there: and the Assyrian has oppressed them without cause. 5 Now what do I here, says יהוה, seeing that My people are taken away for nothing? They that rule over them do howl, says יהוה and My name continually all the day is blasphemed. 6 Therefore, My people shall know My name: therefore, *they shall know* in that day that I am He that does speak; surely, it is I. 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good news, that publishes peace, that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation (*Yeshuwah*), that says to Zion, your Elohim reigns! *Prophecy Fulfilled-Isa. 52:7 To publish good tidings of peace-Luke 4:14, 15.* 8 The voice of your watchmen! They lift up the voice, together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when יהוה returns to Zion. 9 Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for יהוה has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. 10 Has made bare יהוה אַתָּה His Holy Arm, in the eyes of all the nations; and shall see all the ends of the earth אַתָּה salvation (*Yeshuwah*) of our Elohim. 11 Depart you, depart you, go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go you out of the midst of her; cleanse yourselves, you that bear the vessels of יהוה. 12 For you shall not go out in haste, neither shall you go by flight: for יהוה will go before you; and the Elohim of Israel will be your rear guard.

C-MATS

Brit Chadashah

Question: When John said he was not the Messiah or Elijah or a prophet, they demanded by what authority he introduced a new ordinance of baptism among the Jews. Who was John preparing the way for by asking the Jews to repent and be baptized? Yahusha **John 1:19** **And this is the record of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? 20 And he confessed and did not deny but confessed, I am not haMashiach. 21 And they asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then they said to him, Who are you so we may give an answer to them that sent us? What do you say about yourself? 23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of יהוה, as said the prophet Isaiah. 24 And they who were sent were from the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him and said to him, Why do you baptize then if you are not the Mashiach nor Elias nor that prophet? 26 John answered them saying, I baptize with water, but there stands one among you who you do not know. 27 He who is coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's lace I am not worthy to unloose. C-MATS**

Question: What does the New Testament say about the prophets that would be sent after Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15?

Acts 7:35 This Moses whom they rejected saying, “Who made you a ruler and a judge?” Elohim sent him to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. 36 He brought them out of Egypt, after that He showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 37 This is that Moses, which said to the children of Israel, “A prophet shall יהוה your Elohim raise up like me for you from your brethren; him shall you hear.” (Deut 18:15) 38 This is he, that was in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him on mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give to us: 39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but cast him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, 40 Saying to Aaron, “Make us gods to go before us: as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then Elohim turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, “O you house of Israel, have you offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43 You took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which you made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.” 44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking to Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. 45 Which also our fathers that came after them brought in with Yahusha into the possession of the Goyim, who Elohim drove out before the face of our fathers, to the days of David; 46 Who found favor before Elohim, and desired to find a tabernacle for the Elohim of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built Him a house. 48 “How can the Most High dwell in temples made with hands?” as said the prophet, 49 “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. What house can you build Me?” says יהוה: or “Where is the place of My rest? 50 Hasn't My hand made all these things?” 51 You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Ruach haKodesh: as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets has your fathers not persecuted? and they have killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One; of whom you have now become the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the Torah put into effect by angels, and have not kept it. C-MATS

Question: Who did all the prophets foretell would come to Israel as its Savior? Acts 3:13 The Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Elohim of our fathers, has glorified His Son Yahusha; whom you delivered up, and disowned Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you disowned the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted to you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom Elohim has raised from the dead; who we are witnesses. 16 And through faith in His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know: the faith which is by Him has given him this perfect healing in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which Elohim has shown by the mouth of all his prophets, that Mashiach should suffer, He has fulfilled. 19 Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of יהוה; 20 And He shall send Yahusha haMashiach, which was preached to you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which Elohim has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, "A prophet like me shall יהוה your Elohim raise up for you from your brethren; you must hear whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall come to pass that every soul who does not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Deut 15:19) 24 All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after have foretold of these days. 25 You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which Elohim made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your seed shall all the people of the earth be blessed." (Gen 22:18) 26 To you first Elohim, having raised up His Son Yahusha, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. C-MATS

Watch the Gates

Question: When a guard is protecting an object from being damaged, lost or stolen, it's a sure sign that it's valuable. There is nothing we have that is more valuable than our hearts and minds; shouldn't we guard them too? This week's portion instructs us to appoint judges and officers at the gates of our cities to protect them and maintain justice. We can also learn from this to carefully guard what we allow to pass through the 'gates' of our bodies - our eyes, ears, etc. - and start to take control of what we allow to influence our precious hearts and minds.

"PRIVATE SCREENING"

"Hey Benny, that big revolving door was tricky," laughed Marc. "I almost walked out of the building before I even walked in!"

He and his friend were on their way to visit Randy, a kid they had met that summer at camp, who lived in a fancy condominium. Suddenly, they bumped straight into a pair of legs that seemed as thick as tree-trunks.

"And where exactly do you boys think you're going?" They looked up at the tall man in his crisp red uniform. Were they being arrested or something? Before they could get anything out of their frightened mouths, they heard the familiar sound of their friend's voice.

"It's okay Jim," Randy said, "they're here to visit me."

Immediately the tall man's stern look melted into a smile. "Oh, then that's different. Have a nice day," he said with a tip of his cap.

"Whoa. What was that all about?" Marc asked as they went up in the polished glass elevator.

"Don't sweat it. He's just the doorman. He guards the building to make sure nobody trespasses who doesn't belong. Anyway, I'm really glad you guys made it. Come on in", Randy said, leading them into the spacious penthouse suite.

After some cold drinks and catching up, the boys noticed the huge TV hanging like a movie screen on the living room wall. Randy gave them a wink, grabbed the remote control off the shelf, and switched it on. "Hey, good timing. Paranormal Activity is on," he said with a smile.

Benny and Marc squirmed. Neither boy's parents let them watch the show that dealt with demonic activity and ghosts.

"Let's tell him to turn it off," whispered Marc. But Benny, who was staring so intently into the big screen that he hardly heard him, just brushed him off with a flick of his hand. A commercial came on right away and Randy went into the kitchen to get some snacks. Marc nudged his friend again. "I mean it. Either this show goes, or we do."

"Oh, come on" said Benny. "What's the big deal? I know plenty of kids who watch it, and anyway it'll be over in just half an hour."

"I don't care," Marc said. "I am not into it, and more important, I don't want it to get into me."

"What do you mean?"

"Everything we see and hear has an effect on us. Our eyes, ears - all our senses are the gates of our bodies and mind, and I'm not willing to let this violent junk into mine".

"Come off it, you're overreacting. It's just a TV show! You can do whatever you want, but I'm sticking around."

Just then Randy came back in. Marc made a quick excuse about something unexpected coming up and started heading out. He hoped his exit wouldn't make a big scene but he had nothing to worry about - Benny and Randy had their eyes glued to the screen and just gave him a halfhearted wave as he left. Marc went home wondering if he had done the right thing.

The next morning Marc sat at the playground waiting for Benny to show up for their daily, late-summer game of basketball. He looked at his watch. Benny was never late for their morning game. Twenty minutes passed and just as Marc was ready to give up and go home, his friend showed up. Benny looked really tired and not like his usual himself. He could barely dribble the ball.

"Hey, what's going on?" Marc asked.

At first Benny was quiet, then he shook his head and said, "Man, were you ever right".

"Right about what?"

"That Paranormal Activity show was bad news. I saw some pretty scary stuff that kept me up all night, and I still can't shake some of those pictures out of my head."

"Please don't describe them to me."

"I wish I was smart enough to put up my guard to stop that junk from trespassing into my head."

Question: How did Benny feel at first about watching the TV show? He felt it would be okay and wouldn't do anything bad to him.

Question: How did he feel in the end? He felt scared by what he saw and wished he hadn't watched it.

Question: What lesson did the boys discover from what happened in the story? They found out that whatever we allow ourselves to see, hear or otherwise let into our bodies and minds is going to have an effect on us and we should value ourselves enough to set up guards, our good judgment, to make sure whatever we don't want in - stays out.

Question: How can we judge which experiences are worthwhile and which aren't? The main tool is common sense. If we sense something is weird or damaging, it most likely is. Besides this we can consult with others whose values and lifestyles we respect. The Torah covers the root principles of virtually every experience known to humankind, and give deep insights on which ones will bring us closer to where we want to go and which will hold us back.

Question: Does the fact that most people we know are doing something make it okay? We should learn to trust ourselves. Even if it seems everybody is doing something, if something about it doesn't seem right we shouldn't be afraid to follow our hearts and go against the tide. Our bodies, minds, and souls are the most precious things we possess and we should treat them like the highly guarded treasures they are.

Question: Is there something valuable to be gained by opening ourselves up to experiencing anything and everything? There is much more to be lost. Our bodies, mind, hearts, and most importantly souls are tremendously precious gifts from יהוה. When we use them right - letting in positive influences and guarding out negative ones, we can soar to the heights of spirituality and happiness. Some experiences just aren't worth the cost of experiencing them. Once evil things have entered your "gates" you cannot take them back.

Spiritual Exercise: Guard over your eyes and ears and allow only pure things to enter them. Be careful when you are watching TV or movies or listening to music or reading books or listening to gossip. Would יהוה approve of what you are listening to and seeing?

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)