

MISHPATIM (*ordinances of the court*)



Instructions of Torah

Exodus 21:1 Now these *are* the judgments which you will set before them. C-MATS

Question: What is the civil law? The civil laws are an extension of the Tenth Commandment: Do not covet. In order to know what he may not covet, one must know the rights and property of others. Torah now goes on to begin defining what it is that belongs to others. *Chumash*

Question: The Torah is full of very detailed codes of conduct. Why do you think an infinite Elohim would be so concerned with such seemingly unspiritual petty details as property laws? The answer to that depends upon how we define spirituality. The Hebrew spiritual ideal is to neither overly indulge in, nor abstain from the physical world and all of its activities. Rather, our goal is to perfect the physical world by being involved in it, but in a moderate and just way. יהוה's 'concern' is to provide us, via the Torah, with detailed guidance in all of life's situations, so that we can best elevate them, and by doing so, perfect the world, and ourselves. *Chumash*

In Exodus chapter 21 Moses begins to teach the instructions of Torah to the redeemed את Children of Israel (*Israelites*) and prepare them to enter יהוה Father's covenant את land. We can easily see that יהוה Father made an everlasting blood covenant though את with the Israelites, who were set free to serve the Yah-head את יהוה our Elohim and walk in His Torah. C-MATS



This basalt “Seat of Moses” was found in the 1920’s and it has an Aramaic inscription “remembering Yudan”. The seat is in the Israel Museum.

Question: Why does this chapter start with the rules for slaves? Even the most degraded men and women are made in the image of **יהוה** and their treatment is carefully regulated by Torah, just as much as the Temple service. The freedom of these servants after six years is a reminder of Israel’s own freedom from Egyptian slavery. Our own freedom and right to property is a Divine gift. *Chumash*

Exodus 21:2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, six years he will serve: and in the seventh year he will leave free *owing nothing.* C-MATS

Question: When does a Hebrew become a slave? A Hebrew becomes a slave only by order of the court. If he is caught stealing and must be sold to pay for his debt, or if he sells himself into slavery to pay for his debts, the court must decide if he becomes a slave or not. *Chumash*

Exodus 21:3 If he came in by himself, he will leave by himself: if he was married, then **אשתו *his wife* will leave with him. C-MATS**

Question: What responsibility comes with this commandment of owning a Hebrew slave? If the Hebrew slave was not married at first, his master may not give him a Canaanite maidservant from whom to marry and have children. If he is someone’s husband, meaning an Israelite woman, his wife will go out with him. Rather, the text informs us that whoever purchases a Hebrew slave is also responsible for supporting his wife and his children. When the slave leaves after six years, the owner is required to give him substantial gifts so that he can start out with a chance to rebuild his life. *Chumash*

Question: Does a Hebrew have a choice of whether to buy a Hebrew slave or a gentile slave? If a Hebrew has a choice of which to buy, he must buy the Hebrew slave even it would be more economical for him to buy or hire a gentile. If a fellow Hebrew is in such financial distress that he must sell his services, his brethren are morally obligated to help him. *Chumash*



Exodus 21:4 If his master had given him a wife and she had bore him sons or daughters; the wife and her children will be his master's and he will leave by himself. C-MATS

Question: What maidservant is this verse referring to? Only a non-Hebrew maidservant would be required to stay with her owner, otherwise she would be released after six years. *Chumash*

Exodus 21:5 And if the servant says, **אֶהְבֶּתִּי** *I love* **אֶת** my master **אֶת** my wife **וְאֶת** and my children; I will not leave free. 6 Then his master will bring him to the judges; he will bring him to the door or to the door post and will bore through **בְּאָזְנוֹ** by his master **אֶת** his ear with an awl; and he will serve him forever. C-MATS



Question: Now, why was the ear chosen to be pierced of all the organs of the body? The ear that heard on Mount Sinai, “**You will not steal**” (Exodus. 20:13) and then went and stole will be pierced. *Chumash*

Question: Why is the ear pierced with an awl into a door? The doorway symbolizes freedom, for it was against their doorpost that the Hebrews in Egypt placed some of the blood of the Passover offering just before they were freed and this caused the Angel of Death to pass over the Hebrew homes. The Hebrew, who prefers to be a servant of a human master rather than owe this allegiance entirely to the One Master, has rejected the lesson of the doorpost in Egypt. *Chumash*

Question: What is an **awl**? It is a pointed tool for marking surfaces or piercing small holes (as in leather or wood).



Question: What is a Bondservant? The best definition is “devoted to another to the disregard of one’s own interests.” On its basic level a bondservant is simply following your master to complete disregard of your own will, emotions, and desires. To put it into contrast of being a Bondservant of Yahusha, it means

- a complete and utter devotion to יהוה, His word, and His will. It is disregarding your own desires and will in all things to lay your life at the Stake and follow Yahusha.
- It is not being perfect, yet it is a dedication to following יהוה in all things.
- A Bondservant is to love as Yahusha loved; to walk as Yahusha walked.
- It means standing strong when you are weak and have nothing left.
- It means not letting up, giving up, or putting up with anything less than a true and full relationship with יהוה as a friendship and partnership through this world, doing His will.
- Being a Bondservant is standing strong on the Word of יהוה while seeking יהוה first, above all else. Everything is secondary to your relationship with Him.
- Being a bondservant means taking responsibility of your own walk with יהוה through personal study of his word, and personal and corporate prayer.
- It means the Word of יהוה is your foundation with Yahusha Himself as the Cornerstone of your life.
- It’s having faith in the best and worst of times knowing that in the end you belong to יהוה.

- Being a bondservant means knowing only you can stand in the way of a deep and meaningful walk with יהוה.
- It means you accept responsibility for your walk and bring everything you learn to יהוה's word and prayer to determine its truth against יהוה's word.
- Being a bondservant means not letting sin get you down.
- It means if you fall, you get up, seek forgiveness, and move on learning what you can. And not let it happen in the future.
- It is a dedication to purity and seeking that purity through a walk that spans your life.

Question: James calls himself “a bondservant of יהוה and of Yahusha the Messiah”. Simon Peter called himself “a bondservant and apostle of Yahusha the Messiah”. What qualities should a bondservant have?

virtue

knowledge

self-control

perseverance

righteousness

brotherly love

kindness

Question: What outlook should we have for our lives? **Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Mashiach: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Mashiach lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of Elohim, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of Elohim: for if righteousness come by the Torah, then Mashiach is dead in vain. C-MATS**

Our righteousness is as filthy rags, so we can only enter the kingdom through the blood of Yahusha. When we look at our lives, it should be through the eyes of Yahusha. This verse is very specific with what our outlook should truly be. “It is no longer I who live.” We died with Yahusha. Our faith is what accomplishes this, our repentance and asking יהוה to forgive us, and accepting Yahusha as our master and savior. “But Yahusha who lives in me”, this is at the very core of being a bondservant. My life isn't my own, I don't live for me, but I live for Yahusha who lives in me. Our lives should be lived in faith in the Son of יהוה. We need to trust Him, to walk for Him, and embrace His will as our own. Why? Because it is no longer we who live, but Yahusha who lives in us.

Question: Can you say that you serve יהוה and obey His laws? **1 John 2:3 And we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whosoever keeps his word, in him is the love of Elohim perfected: therefore we know that we are in him. 6 He that says he abides in him ought to walk as he walked. C-MATS**

You cannot disobey יהוה's word and say you know יהוה. If we mess up and fail, there is forgiveness. But to walk how you will and say, “I'll just repent later” is not acceptable. Also you CANNOT just say “I am a believer or bondservant of יהוה” and not be obedient to His Word, the two go hand and hand.

Lip service or obedience, there is no grey areas here. Sin is sin and obedience is obedience. They cannot co-exist. A bondservant should have a total dedication of faith in יהוה, trusting Him and His word. A dedication of faith is not giving up in your walk with Him. If you sin, ask forgiveness and learn from it and go forward. You don't stay a week grieving over your sin, because you failed once. It's a total and complete single mindedness to living life for יהוה, and having a close relationship and friendship with יהוה. Yes, you can be friends with יהוה. Most of all you are seeking to make יהוה's heart and will your own, this means love. יהוה is love. Yahusha's ministry was founded on Love. יהוה so loved the world He sent His Son to die for our sins. Love is and always should be our motivator. יהוה's love, not our own or the world's misguided love, but a 1 Corinthians 13 love. This love puts others above our own life. A love that's willing to give more than just a word of well wishing like James 2 says, **A love that remembers those in need.**

Exodus 21:7 And if sells a man את- his daughter to be a female servant, she will not leave as the menservants do. C-MATS

Question: What are the requirements of selling a daughter as a slave? In the case of a Hebrew maidservant, the father may sell her only when she is a minor, not after she has entered puberty. Once she becomes mature she must be freed and released even though she has not served her master for six years unless her master wants to marry her. This right is given to the father for her benefit because the sale is expected to result in her marriage to either her master or his son. If neither of the two marries her, the Torah regards it as a betrayal of the girl. *Chumash*

Exodus 21:8 If she does not please her master who has designated (*married*) her, then he will let her be redeemed: he will have no power to sell her to a foreign people, because he has dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he has designated (*married*) her to his son, he will deal with her *like* a daughter. C-MATS

Question: How would the female slave displease her master? She does not please him to the extent that he would want to marry her. He should have chosen her and married her, and the money paid for her purchase is the money of her betrothal. Here Scripture hints that it is a commandment for the master to choose her for marriage, and it hints that she would not require any other betrothal. Neither money nor articles of value would have to be given to the girl's father in order to marry her. The money the father originally received for selling his daughter now would become the money of betrothal from her master. Neither the master nor the father has the right to sell her to anyone else. If the master chooses her as a wife for his son teaches us that his son also stands in the master's place to choose her if his father so desires, and he does not require another betrothal, but he can say to her, "Behold, you are chosen to me with the money your father received originally for your value". *Chumash*

Exodus 21:10 If he takes another *wife*; her food, her garments and her *marital rights* will not be reduced. 11 And if he does not *give her* these three *things*, then she will leave free without *owing any money*. 12 He who strikes a man so that he dies will be put to death. C-MATS

Discuss: Is capital punishment found in the Torah? What about death by the electric chair or gas chamber?

Exodus 21:13 And if *a man* does not lie in wait (*not premeditated*), but Elohim delivers *him* into his hand (*and he dies*), then I will appoint you a place where he can flee. C-MATS

Question: Then I will appoint you a place where he can flee. Where did they flee? City of Refuge

Question: What does it mean by an act of יהוה? Events are not haphazard. Always there is the guiding hand of יהוה. When someone is struck by the tragedy of having unintentionally killed a fellow human being, surely a traumatic experience, he should realize that since יהוה had caused it, it indicates that he must have committed some sin or crime that went unpunished, and that this current victim must have been guilty of a capital offense that went undetected. By causing one person to cause the other's death, יהוה was squaring the accounts for יהוה's justice is unimpeachable; it is only we who are incapable of comprehending it. When a child is killed accidentally, this indicates that the parent of the child must have committed some sin or crime that went unpunished.



Victim flees to City of Refuge

Exodus 21:14 But if a man comes boldly upon his neighbor to murder him willingly; you will take him *even* from my altar *so* that he may die. 15 And he who strikes his father or his mother will be put to death. C-MATS

Question: How is assaulting a parent different from another person? One who strikes one's fellow believer is liable to make monetary compensation, but he is not liable to death. One who strikes his father or mother is liable to the death penalty by strangulation (hanging) if he inflicted a bruise on his parent. *Chumash*

Question: How does the way we treat our parents reflect on our relationship with יהוה? In many ways, יהוה is the 'ultimate parent' to us all. He gives us our lives, and provides us with everything we need. One reason יהוה gave us our 'earthly' parents, and asks us to respect and appreciate them, is in order to train us to properly relate to Him, our ultimate Parent. Therefore, the better we treat our parents, the closer we grow to יהוה, our 'ultimate parent', and vice versa.

Question: Is it enough to love our parents, regardless of how we speak and act toward them, etc.? It is a great thing to love our parents. However the Torah asks us to translate our love into tangible action, which, in this case, is treating our parents with noticeable respect. In fact, even if someone didn't feel love for his parents, the right thing to do would be to try to act with respect and appreciation, all the same.



Kidnapping

Exodus 21:16 And he who kidnaps a man and sells him or if *the kidnapped person* is found in his possession, he will be put to death. C-MATS

Question: The person kidnapped must be forced to work for the kidnapper or be sold into slavery before the death penalty is issued. How was the person who kidnapped put to death? Every death penalty mentioned in the Torah without qualification is strangulation (hanging). *Chumash*

Exodus 21:17 And he, who curses his father or his mother, will be put to death. C-MATS

Question: How is the person put to death? The person is stoned to death. The reason for the harsher punishment is to prevent cursing, since it can come so easily when one loses his temper. Since a curse is punishable by death it must include the use of יהוה's Name, one who curse his parents has combined a violation of their honor with contempt for יהוה. *Chumash*



Yahusha came to the scribes and Pharisees

Question: What does Yahusha say about honoring your parents? **Matthew 15:1** Then Yahusha came to the scribes and Pharisees, which were from Jerusalem, saying, **2** Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders since they do not wash their hands when they eat bread? **3** But he answered them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of Elohim by your tradition (¹*takanot*)? **4** For Elohim commanded, Honor your father and mother: and, He that curses father or mother let him die. **5** But you say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift (*to Elohim*) by whatever you might be profited by me; **6** And not honor his father or his mother, he shall be free (*of this commandment*). Thus have you made the commandment of Elohim no longer in effect by your tradition (¹*takanot*). **7** You hypocrites, so well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, **8** This people draws near to me with their mouth and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. **9** But in vain they worship me, because they teach doctrines that are commandments of men. **10** And he called the multitude and said to them, Hear and understand: **11** Nothing that goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth defiles a man. **12** Then came his disciples and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying? **13** But he answered them, Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. **14** Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. **15** Then answered Peter, Explain this parable to us. **16** And Yahusha said, Do you not have understanding? **17** Do you not yet understand that whatsoever enters in the mouth goes into the belly and is cast out? **18** But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart and they defile the man. **19** For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: **20** These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man. C-MATS

Question: What law did the Pharisees make that nullified the law to honor your parents? The Pharisees were in the habit of dedicating property to יהוה calling it a “gift” to יהוה or is sacred to him.” The law required that when a dedication of this kind was made it should be fulfilled. **(When you vow an oath to ליהוה your Elohim, you must not delay in paying it: because יהוה your Elohim will certainly require it from you and it will be your sin if you do not pay. Deuteronomy 23:21)** The law of יהוה required that a son should honor his parent and should provide for his needs when he was old and in distress. Yet the Jewish teachers said that it was more important for a man to dedicate his property to יהוה than to provide for the needs of his parents. **Barnes' Notes on the Bible**

Question: Should we make vows or dedicate gifts to יהוה? Yahusha did not mean to condemn the practice of giving to יהוה to help the poor and needy. Yahusha commended even a poor widow that gave all her living (Mark 12:44), but he condemned the practice of giving to יהוה where it interfered with our duty to give to earthly parents what יהוה required. Yahusha said that we should not make vows to יהוה. (Matthew 5:34) In this way, we are free to help our parents and children as יהוה would have us do.

Discuss: What other traditions do we practice today that nullify יהוה's commandments? Are we just as guilty as the Pharisees? What would Yahusha say to us today concerning our traditions? (changing Sabbath to Sunday, not celebrating feast days, but celebrating pagan feast days, etc.)



Exodus 21:18 And if *two* men fight and strikes one אֶת another with a stone or with his fist and the man *does* not die, but remains in his bed: **19** If he rises again and walks upon his staff, then he that struck him will not be guilty: only he will pay for the loss of his time and *care for him until he is completely healed.* C-MATS

Question: What is meant by “loss of his time”? The attacker is responsible to pay for the victim’s loss of earnings and for his medical expenses. However the payment of medical care must go directly to cover the expenses. If the victim prefers to keep the money and forgo the necessary care, the attacker need not pay. *Chumash*

Question: Who is liable for the damage he causes? A person is always liable for damage he causes, whether accidentally or willfully, whether awake or asleep: if he blinded his neighbor's eye or broke his possession, full compensation must be made. *Chumash*

Discuss: If you injure someone, are you responsible for paying for their time away from work and their medical care? What about in a car accident?

Exodus 21:20 And if a man strikes **אֶת** his servant or **אֶת** his maid with a rod and he dies under his hand; the man will be punished. **21** However if *the servant continues to live* a day or two, he will not be punished: because *the servant is his property*. C-MATS

Question: The master is allowed to discipline with the rod, but no other weapon. How is the servant avenged? The servant is avenged by death by the sword [decapitation]. *Chumash*

Question: How long is this time period? The master would not willingly destroy his personal property, so that is why a full twenty-four hour period is given. But if someone other than his master struck him, even if he lingered for twenty-four hours before he died, the other person is liable to incur the death penalty. *Chumash*



Scars left on slave beaten by his master

Exodus 21:22 If men fight and hurt a woman with child, so that her *unborn child dies, even though* no harm comes to her: he will be punished according to what *fine* the woman's husband lays upon him; and he will pay as the judges *determine*. C-MATS



Question: How is the assailant punished? When men fight with the intent to kill one another and one struck a pregnant slave woman, he must pay the value of the unborn child to the husband. The death of an unborn child is not a capital offense. They assess her for how much she was valued to be sold in the market, increasing her value because of her pregnancy. The court figures how much she would be worth if sold as a pregnant slave when customers would take into account the prospect of the slaves she would bear, and her value as a slave without the pregnancy. The assailant must pay the difference between these two amounts. *Chumash*

Exodus 21:23 And if *any* harm follows *the incident*, then you will give life for life, 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. C-MATS

Question: What happens if the slave woman dies after she is struck during the fight? The man who struck her deserves to be put to death “life for life”. If the slave woman receives other injuries, then the man who struck her deserves to pay “eye for eye”, etc. in restitution. But what does this mean?

Question: What type of punishment is this, “eye for eye”? The responsible party must pay the monetary value for an eye in restitution for the eye that he had blinded. Never was there a Hebrew court that ever blinded or otherwise inflicted a physical injury in revenge or retribution. The only corporal punishments ever imposed are the death penalty and lashes, where provided by the Torah. The perpetrator deserves to lose his own eye and for this reason cannot find atonement for this sin merely by making the required monetary payments, he must beg for his victim’s forgiveness, but the human court has no authority to do more than require the responsible party to make monetary restitution. *Chumash*



Before the Court

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

Question: What does “going the second mile” mean? Yahusha said, “**And whosoever compels you to go a mile, go with him two miles.**” Cyrus the Great, the king of Persia, invented the postal system to carry letters and documents from one place to another. To make his system work, any courier could force anyone to carry the mail for one mile, but only one mile. The Romans adopted this system for their military to keep their soldiers from getting worn out from carrying heavy backpacks, which weighed about 66 pounds. Roman soldiers could compel any Jew to carry his backpack for one mile. Roman roads had mile markers similar to the mile markers we have today on Interstate highways, so it was easy to know where each mile started and ended. If someone refused to do it, he would be flogged. The Jews hated the Romans because they were Gentile foreigners running their country and they had to pay taxes to Caesar. Carrying a Roman soldier’s heavy backpacks for a mile added to their hatred. The distance was actually two miles because he had to carry it one mile to wherever the soldier was going, and then he had to walk back a mile to get where he was previously. When a Roman soldier told someone to carry his pack, the Jew would have to drop everything he was doing and go out of his way to obey his order. I’m sure every Roman soldier felt resentment and heard complaining by the person carrying the pack.

Now Yahusha says, “Not only do I want you to carry it one mile, I want you to carry it an extra mile.” This was actually four miles (2 miles there and 2 miles back). We don’t carry Roman backpacks anymore, but the principle applies to every area of our lives today—in our relationships, at home, at school, at our jobs—Yahusha calls us to go the extra mile going above and beyond what is asked of us. A Roman soldier says to a believer, “Hey you, carry my pack.” The believer says, “Yes sir!” And then he joyfully starts walking along with the soldier. After one mile the soldier says, “Okay, you can put it down now.” The believer says, “I would really like to carry it another mile for you.” The shocked soldier asks, “Why would you do that?” The believer explains, “I am a disciple of Yahusha and He told us to do this for you.” The soldier asks, “Who is this Yahusha that you follow?” By carrying the pack an extra mile, it not only showed him the love of יהוה but opened up an opportunity to tell him about Yahusha. There’s no telling how many soldiers became believers during that second mile. I’m sure we would see a lot more people become believers if we would just go “the extra mile” for them.



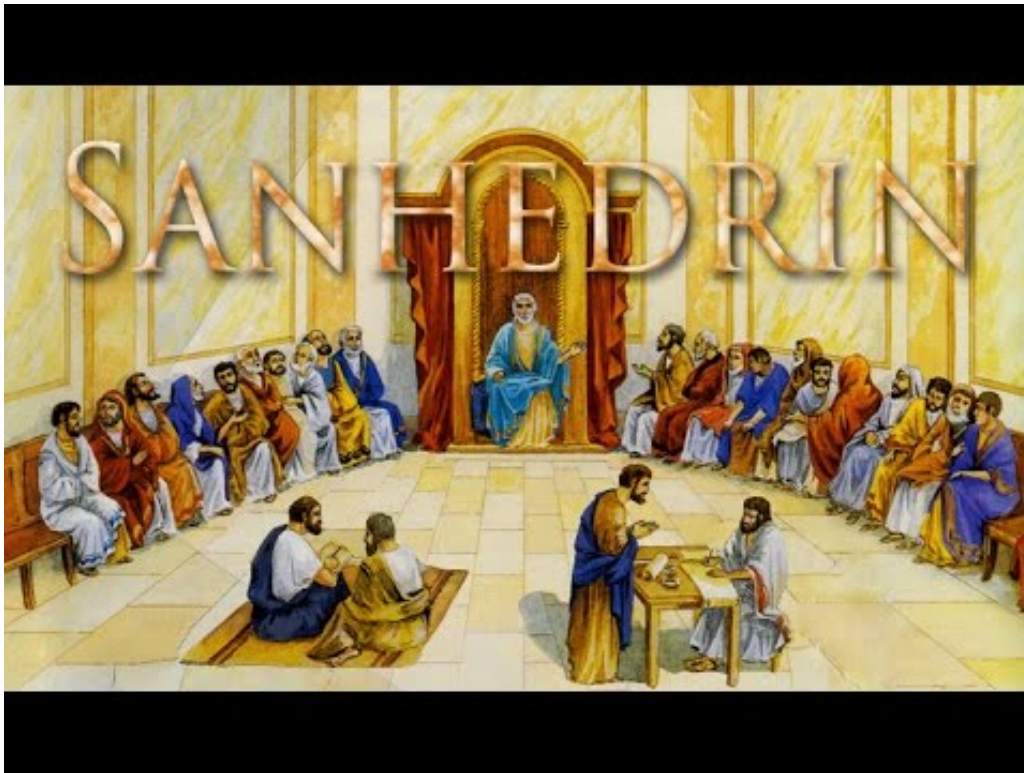
Lost tooth

Exodus 21:26 And if strikes a man **את** *the* eye of his servant or **את** *the* eye of his maid and destroys it; he will let him go free for his eyes sake. **27** And if he knocks out his male servant’s tooth or his female servant’s tooth; he will let him go free for his tooth’s sake. **28** If gore, an ox **את** a man or **את** a woman that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned and shall not be eaten **את** his flesh; but the owner of the ox *shall be acquitted (have no further liability)*. C-MATS



Question: How is the animal judged? Just like a person can be sentenced to death only by a *Sanhedrin* (tribunal) by 23 judges, so an ox (or any other animal) that kills can be condemned to death by stoning only by a *Sanhedrin* of twenty-three. *Chumash*

Discuss: If your animal destroys or damages property, should you make restitution for what the animal has destroyed? If your animal injures or kills a person, should you kill the animal?



Question: What is the Sanhedrin? The **Sanhedrin** ("sitting together," hence "assembly" or "council") were assemblies of either twenty-three or seventy-one elders (known as "rabbis" after the destruction of the Second Temple), appointed to sit as a tribunal in every city in the ancient Land of Israel. The origin of this assembly is traced in the Mishna to the seventy elders whom Moses was directed, to associate with him in the government of the Israelites. (And **יהוה** said to Moses, **gather 70 men from the elders of Israel, who you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring אֹתָם them to the Tabernacle of the Congregation, so that they may stand there with you. Numbers 11:16**) In the Second Temple period, the Great Sanhedrin met in the Temple in Jerusalem, in a building called the Hall of Hewn Stones. The Great Sanhedrin convened every day except festivals and the Sabbath day (Shabbat). After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Great Sanhedrin moved to Galilee, which became part of the Roman province of Syria Palaestina. In the late 200s CE, to avoid persecution, the name "Sanhedrin" was dropped and its decisions were issued under the name of *Beit HaMidrash* (house of learning). The last universally binding decision of the Great Sanhedrin appeared in 358 CE, when the Hebrew Calendar was abandoned. The Great Sanhedrin was finally disbanded in 425 CE after continued persecution by the Eastern Roman Empire.

Exodus 21:29 But if the ox was known to *gore* in the past and it has been told to his owner and he has not kept him in and *the ox* has killed a man or a woman; the ox will be stoned and his owner also will be put to death. **30** However a ransom may be imposed on him and then he will pay the ransom for his life (*instead of the death penalty*). **31** Whether *the ox* has gored a son or daughter, the judgment will *be the same*. **32** If the ox gores a male or female servant, *the owner of the ox* will give to their master thirty shekels of silver and the ox will be stoned.



Exodus 21:33 And if a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and *does not* cover it and an ox or a donkey falls in it, **34** The owner of the pit will make restitution and give money to the owner of the *beast*; and the dead *beast* will belong to *the owner of the pit*. C-MATS

Question: Does this law only refer to a pit? The Torah forbids people to leave a dangerous condition in a public place. This applies when the responsible party has created the danger himself and not kept the area safe. *Chumash*

Question: If someone is hurt on your property because you have not repaired property or left out dangerous items, are you responsible for making restitution to them for their medical care? You are responsible for keeping your property safe. If you do not maintain your property and someone is hurt on your property, then you are liable to care for their medical expenses.



Question: Do you think a person has the ethical right to willingly destroy his or her own property? Even if something belongs to us, it is still a gift from יהוה and therefore we should treat it with respect.

Question: Do you think monetary and property laws, etc. have anything to do with being righteous? Being righteous doesn't mean being apart from the world, rather being involved with the world, but in an elevated way. Therefore, certainly acting fairly and ethically with ours and other's property is a big indicator of how righteous we are.



Keep a goring animal contained.

Exodus 21:35 And if one man's **את** ox hurts another *man's ox* so that he dies; then *the men* will sell **את** the live ox and divide **את** the money from it; and also **את** the dead *ox* they will divide. 36 Or if it is known that the ox had been known to gore in the past and his owner has not kept him in; *the owner of the ox* will pay ox for ox; and the dead *ox* will be his. C-MATS

Chapter 22 is a continuation of the previous one and continues the laws of thieves and their penalties. In the Torah there are no chapters. The division of the Torah into the commonly used chapters is a device began by Italian printers. The Bible scholars responsible for the divisions did not take into account the interpretations of the Torah as it was transmitted from Sinai.



Man stealing a goat

Exodus 22:1 If a man steals an ox or a sheep and kills it or sells it; he will restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. C-MATS

Question: Why the difference in restitution for someone stealing livestock? See how valuable work is. For an ox, whose theft deprived the owner of its labor, the thief pays fivefold. For the theft of a sheep, which caused no such loss of labor, he pays but four times. *Chumash*

Exodus 22:2 If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, it is not murder (*the death penalty will not be imposed on him because it was night*). C-MATS

Question: What does the Torah teach us here? When necessary, one may kill to save his own life, but may not kill if only his property is at risk. There is no guilt in killing in self-defense. *Chumash*



Kill only in self-defense.

Exodus 22:3 If the sun has risen, *it is murder. The thief must make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he will be sold for his theft.* C-MATS

Question: What is the difference in a thief coming to steal in the daylight hours? If he comes when the sun is shining to steal from you, it is obvious to you that he has not come to kill you, and it is considered murder if the property owner kills him. The thief will pay the money he stole, and he is not liable to death. If the thief has no money, he is sold as a slave. If the stolen articles are found in his possession, he should pay twice the amount of the articles to the owner and any damages that he may have caused. *Chumash*

Exodus 22:4 If *what the thief has stolen* is found in his possession alive, *whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep; the thief will restore double.* C-MATS



The thief must restore double.

Question: Can a person ever act dishonestly and 'get away with it'? It depends what and who he is trying to 'get away' from. There are three levels of awareness of every act we do: the awareness of other people, our own awareness, and that of **יהוה**. It is possible that our act might escape other's awareness - although less often than we might hope, however we, ourselves will always be aware of our behavior and acting dishonestly will lower our self-esteem even if we are not conscious of it doing so. What is more, **יהוה** is intimately aware of our every thought, word, and act. In fact our tradition teaches that part of our afterlife consists of being shown a detailed 'replay' of our entire lives and the more our choices reflected our higher values the more positive will the experience be.



Exodus 22:5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten and shall put **אֶת** in his beast and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. C-MATS

Question: What would be the owner's penalty? Goring is not normal behavior for an ox, so the owner pays only half-damages, unless this ox has gored three times in the past, in which case he pays full damages. On the other hand, eating and trampling is common behavior for an ox, which the owner should have anticipated; so for damages thus inflicted, he must pay full compensation. *Chumash*

Question: How should the owner pay? This is to teach us that if he wishes to pay with land for damages he or his animal caused, he must pay with prime land. (A debtor, on the other hand, can settle his debt with land of average quality.) *Chumash*



Exodus 22:6 If fire breaks out and spreads to thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn or the field is consumed; the man that started **אֶת** the fire must make restitution. C-MATS

Question: What responsibility does a person have that lights a fire? Although he ignited the fire within his own property, and it spread by itself through thorns that it found, he is liable to pay because he did not guard his burning fire so that it would not inflict damage on another's property. *Chumash*

Discuss: If you start a fire and it damages someone's property, should you make restitution?

Exodus 22:7 If a man gives to his neighbor money or other possessions to keep and it is stolen out of the man's house; if the thief is found let him pay double. C-MATS

Question: What is the penalty for loss of property when borrowing? There are four guardians: the unpaid guardian, the borrower, the paid guardian, and the renter. The unpaid guardian swears on everything and is forgiven; the borrower pays for everything; and the paid guardian and the renter swear in the case of breakage, robbery, and death, and pay for loss and theft. *Chumash*

Exodus 22:8 If the thief is not found, then the master of the house will be brought to the judges *to see* whether he *has stolen* his neighbor's goods. **9** For all *cases of dispute over ownership, whether it is an ox, donkey, sheep, garments, or for any other lost thing which another challenges to be his, the cause of both parties will come before the judges and whoever the judges find guilty will pay double to his neighbor.* **10** If a man trusts his neighbor to keep a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast; and it dies or is hurt or driven away and no *man* sees it: **11** *Then an oath of יהוה will be made between them, that he has not stolen his neighbor's possessions; and the owner will accept it and the neighbor will not make restitution.* C-MATS

Question: What is the responsibility of a paid custodian? A paid custodian is held to a higher degree of responsibility than a renter. A paid custodian would be required to pay restitution if something is lost or stolen, because he is paid to watch over someone else's property and he should keep it more secure. *Chumash*

Exodus 22:12 And if the possessions are stolen from *the neighbor*, he will make restitution to the owner of it. **13** *If the beast is torn in pieces, then let the neighbor bring it as a witness and he will not have to make restitution for that which was torn by wild animals.* C-MATS



Evidence of sheep torn by wild beasts

Question: When is the custodian exempt from paying for the animal that is in his keeping? The custodian will bring witnesses to testify that the animal was torn apart in a way that was beyond his control, and he is exempt. In the case of less ferocious beasts, like a fox, since the shepherd could have saved his animal, he is liable to make payment. For more ferocious beasts, like a lion, he is not liable to make payment. *Chumash*

Exodus 22:14 And if a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor and it is hurt or dies and the owner *is not present*, the man will make restitution. C-MATS

Question: What is the responsibility of the borrower? A borrower is responsible for every sort of loss unless the borrowed animal or item died or broke in the course of its normal but not abusive use. If a hammer cracked while driving a nail, then the owner is at fault because he is the one who authorized its use for this purpose. If the item could not stand the rigors of ordinary usage, the owner should not have made it available. *Chumash*

Question: The Torah requires one to be extremely careful with the property of others. If you borrow an item and it breaks, are you responsible for replacing the item? Yes, you must make restitution to the person from whom you borrowed.

Question: Should you always return what you borrow? If you forget to give the borrowed item back, are you stealing the item? **יהוה** holds you responsible for whatever you borrow. If you keep the item and not give it back, then you have stolen from the person that you borrowed from.

Spiritual Exercise: Look through your house and car and see if you have anyone's possessions. Give them back to the person as soon as you can, so you can be clean before **יהוה**.

Exodus 22:15 *But if the owner of the beast is present, he will not make restitution: if the owner hires it out, the loss is covered by the hiring fee. C-MATS*

Question: What is the responsibility of the renter? A renter's liability is less than that of a borrower. A borrower derives all the benefits at no cost, while a renter pays for his use. The renter's fee covers the cost of the damage. *Chumash*



Renter's fee covers the cost of damages

Exodus 22:16 *And if a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and sleeps with her, he will endow (pay the bride price) her to be his wife. 17 If her father refuses to give her to him, he will pay money according to the dowry of virgins. C-MATS*

Question: What is meant by “seduces a virgin”? Seduction is theft of the heart. The man speaks to her heart until she yields to him. He should marry her, but only with the father’s permission. The seducer should treat her as respectfully as any husband would treat his wife. *Chumash*



Witch being stoned

Exodus 22:18 You will not allow a witch to live. C-MATS

Question: What does “**witch**” mean in this verse? The word “witch” is more properly translated “sorceress”. The Hebrew word means “to practice the magical article.”

Question: What does the bible say about killing a witch? **Leviticus 20:27** A man or woman who is a medium, spiritist, or wizard will be put to death: they will stone אֶתְּ them with stones: their blood will be upon them. C-MATS

Question: What is sorcery? Sorcery is the practice of using occult supernatural means, such as incantations and/or spells, in order to control forces in the spiritual realm with the intention of influencing the physical realm. Sorcery was used, and still is used, in order to gain control of the environment and/or people, to foretell the future, to summon spirits, to harm others, and/or benefit one's self. It is often associated with magic, whether it be black or white. Black magic is the attempt to produce harm upon someone through curses and spells. White magic is the attempt to use incantations and spells for personal benefit.

Following are some of the verses listed in the Bible that deal with various aspects of sorcery and bad practices associated with it.

1. Astrology (Isaiah 47:13)
2. Divination, witchcraft, omens, sorcery (Deut. 18:10; 2 Chron. 33:6; Ezek. 1:21; Galatians 5:20; Rev. 18:23)
3. Magic and Magicians (Gen. 41:8; Acts 8:9; 13:6)
4. Mediums (Deut. 18:11)
5. Necromancy (Deut. 18:11)
6. Sorceries and spells (Isaiah 47:9)
7. Sorcerers and magicians (Exodus 7:11; Jer. 27:9; Dan. 2:2; Rev. 21:8; 22:15)
8. Spells (Psalm 58:5; Isaiah 47:9, 12)

Exodus 22:19 Whoever has sexual relations with a beast will be put to death. **20** He who sacrifices to any god except to ליהוה only, he will be destroyed. **21** You will not mistreat a stranger or oppress him: because you were strangers in the land of Egypt. C-MATS



Be kind to orphans

Exodus 22:22 You will not oppress any widow or fatherless child. **23** If you oppress אתם them (him) in any way and they cry out to Me, I will hear their cry; **24** And My wrath will grow hot and I will kill אתכם you with the sword; and your wives will be widows and your children fatherless. C-MATS

Question: How will the violator be punished for abusing widows or orphans? This is a curse that the wives will be bound in living widowhood -there will be no witnesses to their husbands' deaths, and thus they will be forbidden to remarry. The children will be orphans because the court will not allow them to have their fathers' property, since they do not know whether they died or were captured. *Chumash*

Exodus 22:25 If you lend money to *any of* **את** My people *who are* **את** poor among you, you will not treat him like a creditor; neither will you charge him interest. C-MATS

Question: Are you obligated to make a loan? A person is obligated to loan money to a fellow believer in need of a loan if he is capable of making the loan. *Chumash*

Question: How should you act towards a brother that owes you money? Do not show yourself constantly to him. Do not press him for payment when you know that he is unable to pay. Do not embarrass him.

Question: What does “**interest**” mean in this command? Interest means “*biting*”. Interest, which is like the biting of a snake, which bites by making a small wound in a person’s foot, and the person does not feel the wound, and suddenly, it spreads and swells up as far as his crown. So it is with interest. He does not feel it, and it is not noticeable until the interest accumulates and it costs him a considerable sum of money. *Chumash*



Do not charge interest.

Exodus 22:26 If you take your neighbors garment as a pledge (*collateral*), you will bring it to him by the *time the sun goes down*. 27 That is his only garment, he needs it to cover *his body*: *what else does he have to sleep in?* If he cries to Me, then I will hear; because I *am* compassionate. C-MATS

Question: When do you take security from a neighbor? No security is given at the time of the loan, but only when the debt becomes due and the debtor does not pay. The Torah repeats the taking of the security implying that one may take security even many times. The entire day you will return it to him until the sun sets, and when the sun sets you may again take it until the next morning arrives. This verse speaks of a garment worn by day, which he does not need at night. What is his covering? This is a cloak. What is his garment? This is a shirt. With what will he lie? This comes to include a spread or blanket. *Chumash*



Do not curse one of your rulers.

Exodus 22:28 You will not curse Elohim or curse the ruler of your people. **29** You will not delay *offering* the first of your ripe fruits and of your wine: the firstborn of your sons you will give to Me. **30** Likewise you will do with your oxen and sheep: seven days it will be with his mother; on the eighth day you will give it to Me. C-MATS

Question: What does this teach us? This is to teach us that יהוה does not deprive any creature of its just reward. **But a dog will not growl against any of *the* Children of Israel or against man or beast that you may know that יהוה does put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel (see Exodus 11:7), יהוה said: Give them their reward. *Chumash***

Exodus 22:31 And you will be set apart to Me: you will not eat *any* flesh *that is* torn from beasts in the field; you will cast אָתָּה *it (him)* to the dogs. **Exodus 23:1** You will not repeat a false report: *do not join hands* with the wicked to be a false witness. 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*. C-MATS

Question: What does the law say about following the majority? If you see wicked people perverting justice, do not say, "Since they are many, I will follow them." But tell the truth and let the many people bear the punishment for their perversion of justice. *Chumash*

Exodus 23:3 Neither will you show partiality *to a poor man in his lawsuit.* **4** If you come upon your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you will bring it back to him again. C-MATS

Question: Are you obligated to return a lost item? You are required to return a lost item repeatedly, even if the person is careless and continues to lose the item. *Chumash*

Question: How far should you go to return something you find? If there is a name on the object, the right thing to do would be to try to find the owner. Perhaps you could try to look up the name online. You can put up a notice with your phone number where you found the object. If there is no name on the item, leave the item where you found it. The owner may retract his steps trying to find the item. Taking the item for yourself is the same as stealing.



Exodus 23:5 If you see the donkey of him who hates you laying under his burden you will not *pass by him,* you will help him with it. C-MATS

Question: What are your obligations to the owner of the animal? If the owner sits down and does not want to help you free the animal, then you are exempt, because the verse says, "**you will help him with it.**" If, however, the owner of the animal is old or unable to help you, then you must do it yourself even though the man may hate you. *Chumash*

Question: Is it okay not to help when asked? There may be times when we simply don't have the time or energy to help someone or they are asking us to do something dangerous or wrong. Then of course we don't have to. But almost always in our daily lives when people need us we can and should be willing to lend a hand.

Exodus 23:6 You will not deny justice of the poor in his lawsuit. 7 Keep yourself far from fraud; and do not murder the innocent and righteous: for I will not justify the wicked. C-MATS

Question: How important is it to stay away from falsehood? יהוה hates falsehood so much that he tells us to stay away from even the appearance of a lie.



Do not take a bribe.

Exodus 23:8 And you will not take a bribe: the bribe blinds the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. C-MATS

Question: What is a bribe? A poor widow once came to the courthouse of Rabbi Kutner. Weeping bitter tears, she begged him to summon to the court a man she accused of having wronged her. Rabbi summoned the man to appear before the court, but referred the case to another rabbi, refusing to preside over the case himself. "The Torah forbids the taking of bribes," he explained. "Do you think that a bribe is only a gift of money? Tears can also be a bribe that 'blinds the clear-sighted' -- especially the tears of a poor widow." *Chumash*

Question: What will happen to a judge who accepts a bribe? Even if one is wise in Torah, and he accepts a bribe, he will eventually become deranged, forget his studies, and lose his eyesight. *Chumash*

Exodus 23:9 Also you will not oppress a foreigner: אֲהַבְתָּ and you know אֶת־ the heart of a stranger, since you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 10 And six years you will sow אֶת־ your land and will gather אֶת־ in the fruits from it: 11 But the seventh year you will let it rest and lie still; so that the poor of your people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field will eat. In the same way you will deal with your vineyard and with your olive grove. C-MATS

Question: What can we derive from this law? The land should also have a Sabbath rest just as we are given a Sabbath rest on the seventh day. Virtually all agricultural colleges know the benefits of crop rotations and of "resting" land by putting it in pasture or cover crops periodically. Good soil conservation measures should also be practiced.



Rest from Work, 1890 by Vincent Van Gogh

Exodus 23:12 Six days you will do your work and on the seventh day you will rest: so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the son of אִמְרָתְךָ *your maidservant* and the foreigners may be refreshed. C-MATS

Discuss: How many days a week are we commanded to work? Is “going into retirement” biblical? Is there ever a time we should not work every day?

Exodus 23:13 In all *things* אִמְרָתִי *I say to you be on your guard and make no mention of the names of other gods neither let it be heard out of your mouth.* C-MATS

Question: What is יהוה saying to us in this verse? Idolatry is equivalent to all the commandments combined, and whoever is careful not to mention the name of an idol or worship it is considered as if he has observed all the laws. *Chumash*

Question: Why do we have 613 commandments? The 613 commandments are parallel to the total of all the organs and major blood vessels, because the performance of every commandment safeguards one of them. By observing the commandments, one safeguards his own health and survival. *Chumash*

Exodus 23:14 Three times in the year you will keep a feast to Me. 15 אֶת־ **Feast of Unleavened Bread** you will keep seven days: You will eat unleavened bread as I commanded you, in the time appointed in the month of Abib; because in it אֶצְאָתְךָ *you came out from Egypt:* And none will appear before me empty *handed.* C-MATS



Exodus 23:16 And the Feast of Harvest (*Shavuot*), the firstfruits of your labors, which you have planted in the field: and the Feast of Ingathering (*Sukkot*), which is at the end of the year, when you have gathered in **תבוא** your labors out of the field. C-MATS

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Festival
of
First
Fruits





Celebrating Sukkot with the Four Species
(painting circa 1894–1895 by Leopold Pilichowski)

Exodus 23:17 Three times in the year all your males will appear before Adonai יהוה. **18** You will not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither will the fat of My sacrifice remain until the morning. **19** The first (*best*) of the firstfruits of your land you will bring into the House of יהוה your Elohim. You will not boil a kid in his mother's milk. C-MATS

Question: What does the commandment “**You will not boil a kid in his mother's milk**” mean for us? Is this a dietary commandment? Notice that this is a commandment connected with the end of the harvest. This is a prohibition against imitating the superstitious rites of the idolaters in Egypt, who, at the end of their harvest, seethed a kid in its mother's milk and sprinkled the broth as a magical charm on their gardens and fields, to render them more productive the following season. *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* This is not a dietary commandment but a warning against using magic instead of relying on Elohim to bless the harvest.

Exodus 23:20 I will send an Angel before you to guard you *along* the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. C-MATS

Discuss: Did an **Angel** lead them into the Promised Land? Moses pleaded with יהוה not to withdraw from the people and יהוה listened to his request. After Moses' death, an “**Angel**” appeared to Joshua and identified Himself as the head of יהוה's legion. *Chumash*

Joshua 5:13 And it came to pass, when Y'hoshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked and, surely, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Y'hoshua went to him and said to him, *are אַתָּה you* for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And He said, Neither; but *as* Prince of the Host of יְהוָה am I now come. And Y'hoshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship and said to Him, what says my Adonai to His servant? 15 And the Prince of יְהוָה Host said to Y'hoshua, Take off your shoes from off your feet; for the place on which *אַתָּה you* stand, on Him, *is* Sacred. And Y'hoshua did so. C-MATS

Question: Who was this Angel? An angel would not have allowed himself to be worshipped by Joshua. יהוה did not send an angel to guide them, but He came Himself in the form of Yahusha to lead them.



I will send an Angel before you to guard you.

Exodus 23:21 *Pay attention to* Him and obey His voice, do not *rebel against* Him; because He will not forgive your wrongdoings: because My name (*authority*) is in Him. 22 But if you will obey His voice and do all that I speak; your enemies *אֶת* then shall be *My* enemies *and* I will be an adversary *אֶת* unto your adversaries. 23 My Angel will go before you and bring you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites: and I will *make an end to them*. 24 You will not bow down to their gods or serve them or *follow their practices*: but you will overthrow them and crush *and* break down their images. 25 And you will serve *את* יְהוָה your Elohim and He will bless *את* your bread *אֶת* and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you. 26 Nothing will miscarry their young or be barren in your land: *את* the number of your days I will fulfill (*You will live out the full span of your lives*). C-MATS

Question: Should you ever yoke yourself to an unbeliever in marriage or business? You should not *follow their practices*.



**Do not be unequally yoked.
2 Corinthians 6:14**

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness? 15 And what concord has Mashiach with Belial? What part has he that believes with an infidel? 16 And what agreement has the temple of Elohim with idols? You are the temple of the living Elohim; as Elohim has said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. 17 Come out from among them, and be separate," said יהוה, "and do not touch any unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters," said יהוה Almighty. C-MATS



Hornets will drive out your enemies.

Exodus 23:27 **את** My fear I will send before you and will destroy (*throw into confusion*) **את** all the people to whom you come and I will make turn **את** all your enemies their backs to you (*and flee*). 28 And I will send **את** hornets ahead of you, which will drive out **את** the Hivite, **את** the Canaanite **את** and the Hittite before you *arrive*. C-MATS

Question: What kind of hornet did **יהוה** send? This was a kind of flying insect, which would strike the people in their eyes, inject venom into them, and they would die. *Chumash*

Exodus 23:29 I will not drive them out from before you in **אחת** one year; otherwise the land *will* become desolate and the beast of the field *will be too many* for you. 30 Little by little I will drive them out from before you until you have increased and inherit **את** the land. C-MATS



Greater Israel's Borders

Exodus 23:31 And I will set **את** your bounds from *the Red Sea* to the sea of the Philistines and from the desert to the (*Euphrates*) river: **את** I will give into your hand **את** the inhabitants of the land; and you will drive them out *from* before you. C-MATS

Question: Who set the boundaries of the covenant land? It is **יהוה** Father through **את** that sets the boundaries of the covenant land, which to this day, Israel is yet to acquire. C-MATS

Exodus 23:32 You will make no covenant with them or with their gods. 33 They will not live in your land; otherwise they *will* make **את** you sin against Me: *if* you serve **את** their gods, it will certainly be a trap to you. C-MATS

Question: Is chapter 24 out of place? This section was actually said before the Ten Commandments were given. *Chumash*

Exodus 24:1 And He said to Moses, Come up to יהוה, אתה you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship. 2 And Moses alone will come near יהוה: but the others will not come near; neither will the people go up (the mountain) with him. 3 And Moses told the people את all the words of יהוה ואת יהוה and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which יהוה said we will do. C-MATS

Question: All the words which יהוה said we will do. How did this show the faith of the Israelites? The Israelites declared their resolve to do and obey whatever יהוה would command-even before the commandments were issued. This declaration has remained for all time the anthem of Israel's faith in יהוה and devotion to His word. This shows that the Israelites were wholesome people who love יהוה and know that He would never command the impossible, but would only give laws that would benefit them. יהוה likened them to angels, because angels are mighty in strength, that fulfill His word, hearkening to the voice of His word. (Psalms 103:20). The Israelites lost their crowns after the Golden Calf incident. People fall short of their aspirations at times, but they are shaped by their longings nonetheless. We are the heirs of those who expressed their devotion so wholeheartedly to יהוה. That was once our plateau, and it remains our goal. *Chumash*

Question: What ordinances did Moses give the people at Sinai? The seven commandments of the Noachides had already been given to them to observe but other commandments were added to them:

Commandment One: Establish and Follow A System of Rulership/ Justice

Commandment Two: Do Not Blaspheme יהוה's Sacred Name

Commandment Three: Only Worship the Creator. Idolatry Is Prohibited.

Commandment Four: Do Not Steal!

Commandment Five: Do Not Take Another Man's Wife

Commandment Six: Do Not Murder!

Commandment Seven: Be Kind To Animals

Exodus 24:4 And wrote Moses את all the words of יהוה and rose up early in the morning and built an altar at the base of the mountain and set upright twelve pillars to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. C-MATS

Question: Why were 12 pillars set up by the altar? Moses showed all the people that all 12 tribes accepted the Torah and its responsibility as יהוה's nation. Each of the tribes has its own unique role in carrying out the destiny of the Hebrew people. *Chumash*

Exodus 24:5 And he (Moses) sent את young men from the Children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen (calf) to ליהוה. C-MATS

Question: Who were the young men who helped with the sacrifices? These were the first born males, who performed the sacrificial service until Aaron and his sons were appointed as priests. Moses chose young men who were pure and had not yet experienced lust. *Chumash*

Exodus 24:6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 And he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the presence of the people and they said, We will do all that יהוה said and be obedient. C-MATS

Question: What was written in the **Book of the Covenant**? The book began with “**In the beginning**” (Genesis 1:1) until the giving of the Torah, and he also wrote the commandments that they were commanded in Marah. *Chumash*

Exodus 24:8 And took Moses **את** the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people and said, *This is the blood of the covenant, which יהוה has made with you concerning all these words.* C-MATS

Question: What covenant was created at Mount Sinai? The Israelites swear an oath to be obedient to all that יהוה Father commands and Moses sprinkles them with **את** blood of a bull (*calf*). At this point, the everlasting Mosaic Covenant is created between the Israelites and their descendants forever with יהוה Father through **את** blood represented in the bull. This is continuing in proper protocol with how the Yah-head has always made covenants. This is a type and foreshadow that Yahusha will follow at Calvary renewing the covenant made with יהוה Father through **את** Yahusha's blood fulfilling the prophecy given by Jeremiah 31:33 **But this is the covenant that I will make with את House of Israel after those days, says יהוה: I will put את My Torah in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim and they shall be My people.** C-MATS



Mount Sinai

Question: Is the covenant with Yahusha a new or renewed covenant? Yahusha shed his blood to cover our sins, so that we could again be under יהוה's covenant upholding His Promises to us. **Hebrews 9:15** **And for this cause he is the mediator of the new (renewed) covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance** 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Torah, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which Elohim has enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the Torah purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. C-MATS



The Throne of יהוה

Exodus 24:9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel went up *(the mountain)*: **10** And they saw **את** Elohim of Israel: and under his feet there was *something like a sapphire stone pavement as clear as the sky itself*. **11** And He *did not reach out His hand against the nobles of the Children of Israel*: they saw **את** Elohim and ate and drank *with Him*. C-MATS

Question: Who do Moses and the elders see when they go up Mount Sinai? Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel go up **את** Mount Sinai and see **את** Elohim and they ate and drank with Him. This can only be Yahusha that they eat and drink with in the presence of יהוה Father's Holy Spirit since Yahusha states in **John 6:46** **Not that any man has seen the Father, save he which is of Elohim, he has seen the Father**. C-MATS

Question: What was the reaction of the elders? Their joy upon seeing the vision was as great as if they had been enjoying the utmost physical pleasure. After their vision they ate the flesh of offerings and drank in grateful celebration of the great spiritual privilege יהוה had awarded them that was far beyond a human being's capacity to endure. *Chumash*

Exodus 24:12 And יהוה said to Moses, come up to Me into the mountain and stay there: and I will give you **את** tablets of stone with the Torah and commandments I have written *on them*; so that you may teach them. C-MATS

Question: Who gives Moses the stone tablets? Moses is told by יהוה to come up the mountain where he will receive **את** tablets of stone of the commandments from יהוה. This is the Yah-head יהוה Father working with and through **את** Yahusha together in ONE accord. C-MATS

Exodus 24:13 And Moses and his minister Y'hoshua got up: and Moses went up onto the mountain of Elohim. **14** And Moses said to the elders, You wait here for us until we come back to you: Aaron and Hur *are with you*: *if any man has any problems*, let him come to them. C-MATS

Question: Who was Hur? He was the son of Miriam and Caleb.

Exodus 24:15 And Moses went up onto the mountain and a cloud covered **את** the mountain. 16 And the glory of יהוה stayed upon Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 And the sight of the glory of יהוה was as fire **אֵשׁ אֹכֵלֶת** *devouring* on the top of the mountain in the eyes of *the* Children of Israel. 18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud and he went up onto the mountain: and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. C-MATS



Question: What do the 18 verses in this Torah section respond to numerically? The word in Hebrew means יהוה *is My Strength* and can be interpreted two ways.

- 1) יהוה shows His strength to Israel when it observes the civil laws in these verses.
- 2) יהוה expresses his great strength through the rigorously national laws of these verses and their application to daily life. *Chumash*



Do You Know?

1. A Hebrew slave must work for ___ years and released in the ___ year.
2. A Hebrew slave who wanted to serve his master forever was pierced through his ear with an ____.
3. If a man murders or kidnaps someone, he must be ____.
4. If a slave loses his ___ or ___, he must be set free.
5. If a thief is killed at ____, then it is not murder.
6. A thief must restore ____ (how much?) what he has taken.
7. If a man starts a fire, then he must make ____.
8. If a man borrows something and it is damaged, then he must make ____.
9. If a man seduces a ____, then he must make restitution.
10. You should not lend money to your brother with ____.
11. Do not follow a ___ to do evil. (Who?)
12. Do not take a ___ to pervert justice.
13. The names of other gods should not be spoken from your ____
14. יהוה ran the Israelites' enemies out of the Land by swarms of ____
15. Moses sprinkled ___ on the Israelites to seal the covenant.
16. The glory of יהוה was like a devouring ___ on the mountain.

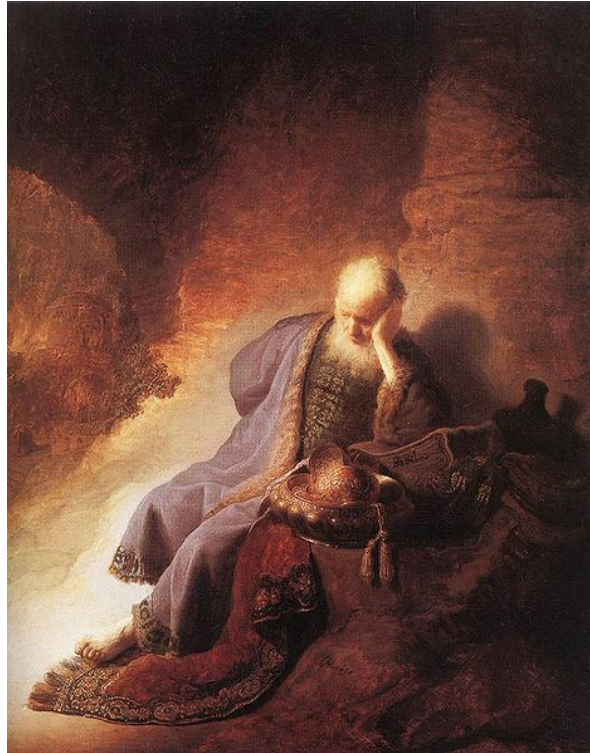
Bonus: During what 3 festivals does יהוה require you to bring Him offerings?

Answers:

1. six, seventh
2. awl
3. killed
4. eye, tooth
5. night
6. double
7. restitution
8. restitution
9. virgin
10. interest
11. crowd
12. bribe
13. mouth
14. hornets
15. blood
16. fire

Bonus: Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits-Shavuot, Feast of Tabernacles-Sukkot

Haftorah



Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem (1630 painting by Rembrandt)

In this week's *Haftorah*, Jeremiah describes the punishment that would befall the Israelites because they continued enslaving their Hebrew slaves after six years of service—transgressing the commandment discussed in the beginning of this week's Torah reading.

Jeremiah 33:25 So says יהוה; If My covenant *be not with* day and night and *if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heavens and earth; **26** Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David My servant, *so that* I will not take *any* of his seed *to be* rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: for I will cause to return אֶת־ their captives and have mercy on them. C-MATS



King Zedekiah (1553 etching published by Guillaume Rouille)

Jeremiah 34:8 *This is* the word that came to Jeremiah **מֵאֵת** *from* יְהוָה, after that the King Zedekiah had made a covenant *with* **אֶת־** all the people which *were* in Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them; 9 That *they* should let go every man **אֶת־** his male servant and every man **אֶת־** his female servant, *being* a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, *go* free; that no one should keep a Jehudite his brother in bondage. 10 *Now* when all the princes and all the people who had entered into the covenant, heard that everyone should let **אֶת־** his male servant and **אֶת־** his female servant go free, that none should serve them anymore, they then obeyed and let them go. 11 But afterward they changed their minds and returned **אֶת־** the servants **וְאֶת־** and the female servants, who they had let go free and brought them into subjection for servants and for female servants. 12 Therefore, the word of יְהוָה came to Jeremiah **מֵאֵת** *from* יְהוָה, saying, 13 So says יְהוָה, the Elohim of Israel; I made a covenant *with* **אֶת־** **אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם** *your fathers* in the day that I brought **אֹתָם** *them* forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, 14 At the end of seven years let you go every man **אֶת־** his brother a Hebrew, which has been sold to you; and when he has served you six years, you will let him go free from you: but **אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם** *your fathers* listened not to Me, neither inclined **אֶת־** their ear. 15 And **אֲתֶם** *you* were now turned and had done **אֶת־** right in My sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbor; and you had made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name: 16 But you turned and polluted **אֶת־** Name of Mine and caused every man **אֶת־** his servant and every man **אֶת־** his female servant, who you had set at liberty their pleasure, to return and brought **אֹתָם** *them* into subjection, to be to you for servants and for female servants. 17 Therefore, so says יְהוָה; **אֲתֶם** *You* have not listened to Me, in proclaiming liberty, everyone to his brother and every man to his neighbor: see, I proclaim a liberty for you, says יְהוָה, to the sword, to the pestilence and to the famine; and I will make **אֶתְכֶם** *you* to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. 18 And I will give **אֶת־** the men that have transgressed **אֶת־** My covenant, which *they* have not performed **אֶת־** words of the covenant which they had made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it, 19 The princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs and the priests and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; 20 I will even give **אֹתָם** *them* into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies will be for meat to the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the earth. 21 **וְאֶת־** and Zedekiah King of Judah **וְאֶת־** and his princes **אֶתְּךָ** *will I give* into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of them that seek their life and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you. 22 See, I will command, says יְהוָה and cause them to return to **הָעִירִיזָה** *this city*; and they will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire: **וְאֶת־** and the cities of Judah **אֶתְּךָ** *I will make* desolate without any inhabitants. C-MATS

Brit Chadashah

Question: Did Yahusha want his disciples to have the same experience that Moses had when he went up the mountain with the elders? Matthew 17:1 And after six days Yahusha took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Yahusha, Master, it is good for us to be here: if you will, let us make here three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear you him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Yahusha came and touched them, and said, **Arise, and be not afraid.** 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man but Yahusha only. C-MATS

Matthew 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Yahusha charged them, saying, **Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man has risen again from the dead.** **10** And his disciples asked him, saying, **Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?** **11** And Yahusha answered and said unto them, **Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.** C-MATS

Question: Does Yahusha want us to keep laws of Torah? Does Yahusha want you to give up all for Him? **Mark 10:17** And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, **Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?** **18** And Yahusha said unto him, **Why call you me good? There is none good but one, that is Elohim.** **19** **You know the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor your father and mother.** **20** And he answered and said to him, **Master, all these have I observed from my youth.** **21** Then Yahusha beholding him loved him, and said to him, **One thing you lack: go your way, sell whatsoever you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the stake, and follow me.** **22** And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. **23** And Yahusha looked around and said to his disciples, **How hard it is for those that have riches to enter into the kingdom of Elohim!** **24** And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Yahusha answered again and said to them, **Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of Elohim!** **25** **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Elohim.** **26** And they were astonished beyond measure saying among themselves, **Who then can be saved?** **27** And Yahusha looking upon them said, **With men it is impossible, but not with Elohim: for with Elohim all things are possible.** **28** Then Peter began to say unto him, **Lo, we have left all, and have followed you.** **29** And Yahusha answered and said, **I say unto you, There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,** **30** **But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life.** **31** **But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.** C-MATS

Question: Did Paul keep the laws of Torah? **Acts 23:1** And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, **Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before Elohim until this day.** **2** And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. **3** Then said Paul unto him, **Elohim shall smite you, you whitened wall: for sit you to judge me after the Torah, and command me to be hit contrary to the Torah?** **4** And they that stood by said, **Do you revile Elohim's high priest?** **5** Then said Paul, **I wish not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.** **6** But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, **Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.** **7** And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. **8** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. **9** And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, **We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against Elohim.** **10** And when there was a great dissension, the chief captain fearing that Paul should have been pulled in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and bring him into the castle. **11** And the night following Adonai stood by him and said, **Be of good cheer, Paul: for as you have testified of me in Jerusalem, so must you bear witness also at Rome.** C-MATS

Question: What warning does Paul give us about despising the Torah and not keep the commandments? Hebrews 10:28 He that despised Moses' Torah died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 How much worst punishment do you suppose shall he be given one who has trodden underfoot the Son of Elohim and has counted the blood of the covenant where he was sanctified as an unholy thing and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that has said, Vengeance belongs to 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. 32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which after you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly while you were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly while you became companions of them that were so used. 34 For you had compassion on me in my bonds and accepted joyfully the spoiling (*confiscation*) of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. 36 For you have need of patience after you have done the will of Elohim, you might receive the promise. 37 In a little while he that shall come will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man drawback, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe in saving the soul. C-MATS

Question: What did Yahusha think of the traditions of men being honored more than the laws of Torah? Mark 7:1 Then came together to him the Pharisees and certain scribes which came from Jerusalem. 2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they wash their hands often, do not eat holding the tradition of the elders. 4 And when they came from the market, unless they wash, they do not eat. And many other traditions they do, such as the washing of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not your disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, **Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 How in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well you reject the commandment of Elohim, that you may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother; and, Whoso curses father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But you say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift by whatsoever you might be profited by me; he shall be free. 12 And you suffer him no more to do nothing for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of Elohim having no effect through your tradition, which you have delivered: and many such like things do you. 14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, **Listen to me every one of you, and understand: 15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. 16 *If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.* 17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. 18 And he said unto them, **Are you so without understanding also? Do you not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without enters into the man, it cannot defile him; 19 Because it enters not into his heart, but into the belly, and goes out into the draught, purging all meats? 20 And he said, That which comes out of the man that defiles the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.** C-MATS****

Playing Fair

Sometimes cheating seems like a quick and easy way to get what we want. But in this week's Torah portion we learn that we should keep far away from cheating or anything else less than true and honest. יהוה wants us to be honest and in the long run it will make us much happier and successful if we are.

"EXTRA CREDIT"

"Hah! That's a 'check'!" Barry's cousin, Jonathan, said as he moved his chess piece with a confident smile. "I've really got you on the run now, but I also have to run to the other room for a minute. So you'll have some time to think over your next move - not that it'll help."

He winked and dashed off, leaving Barry alone. The two boys didn't get together very often - mostly at family gatherings like this one. But when they did, competition was the name of the game and this game of chess looked like one Barry was going to lose.

Barry studied the chessboard and shook his head. He just didn't see a way to turn the game around. The thought of Jonathan gloating in front of everyone about how he beat his older cousin in chess would be tough to take.

Out of nowhere, a thought popped into Barry's head. There was no one in the room. He could easily just move a couple of his pieces around and Jonathan would never notice. Yes ... if he just switched his rook and knight ... it would change everything.

Barry took a quick glance around the room to make sure no one was there, bent forward, and just started to stretch out his hand when suddenly he heard a noise. He quickly sat up straight as Aunt Mollie's Siamese cat darted across the room.

The boy laughed to himself and started once again to make his 'unofficial' move. He'd have to hurry before Jonathan got back.

He was about to switch his pieces when something stopped him - not a noise this time, but a voice inside his head. *'That's cheating!'* it said. Barry sighed. He really wanted to win this game, but to do it dishonestly was so ... slimy. But on the other hand, it would feel really bad to lose to his gloating cousin... But what kind of win would it be to win this way? He decided he would not cheat.

A minute later Jonathan came back. "Well, did you come up with a move?" Barry shrugged and made a move. They played on and somehow Barry managed to eke out a draw.

"Okay, everybody to playroom!" Uncle Larry called out, holding a huge bowl of popcorn. Everyone followed him downstairs, spread themselves around the sofas and armchairs, and began to munch as Uncle Larry rolled out a video screen. "I made a secret video of today's festivities and you are all the stars!"

The family all laughed as they watched the funny video, with close ups and cool sound effects. Barry was laughing too, but stopped suddenly as the scene switched to the den where he and Jonathan had been playing chess. He was all alone in room - it must have been when Jonathan had stepped out.

"And here is our resident chess master, deep in thought", quipped Barry's uncle. The screen zoomed in on Barry's hands and face. The boy turned pale. That was just when he considered - and thankfully decided not to cheat. If he had, everyone - Jonathan, his parents, the whole family - would be watching it all in living color! How would he ever have lived it down?

The video moved on to something else, but Barry didn't pay much attention. All he could do was silently whisper a prayer of thanks that he hadn't cheated and decided from now on he would try hard to make only right and honest moves - the kind he wouldn't mind seeing replayed over and over - in chess and in life.

Question: How did Barry feel at first about cheating in the chess game? He really wanted to win and thought this might be a way to do it.

Question: How did he feel in the end? He was really glad he hadn't cheated, both because he would have been caught and also because it was a bad thing to do.

Question: What life-lesson do you think Barry came out with that day? At first he had been very tempted to cheat in order to get what he wanted. He fortunately stopped himself but even then thought he had lost out a little by doing so. But when they showed the video he realized that being honest wasn't only ethically right, but also pays off in unexpected ways.

Question: Do you think if Barry had cheated, won the game and hadn't been caught; he would have come out ahead? Why or why not? It might have seemed so at first, but cheating and dishonesty never brings a person good or happiness in the long run. He's likely to get caught eventually and even if not, he's always living a lie and feels bad about himself deep down.

Question: Is it ever okay to cheat or break the rules? Generally speaking the ethical choice is adhere to the laws, rules, and codes of conduct of whatever situation we are involved in. However when these are genuinely unethical and destructive there may be times when it is more ethical to break the rules than to follow them.

Helping Hands

What should we do when we see someone who needs our help, but we don't really feel like helping? According to this week's Torah portion, we should help them! The Torah way is to help others in distress and not turn our back on them. **Exodus 23:5 If you see the donkey of him who hates you laying under his burden you will not pass by him, you will help him with it. C-MATS**

FINDING HER MARBLES

At first Karen, who was finished with her babysitting job and halfway out the door, didn't know what that funny bouncing sound was. But a few seconds later when she heard Greg shouting and racing around the patio, she realized his big cloth bag of marbles -- the ones she knew he'd been collecting -- had somehow popped and dozens of marbles were bounding, bouncing and rolling all over the place.

"Ayy! Oh no! Ayy!" he was crying and desperately trying to round up his runaway -- or make that *bounce-away* -- toy treasures.

Poor kid, she thought in passing, *Hope he finds his stuff*. She was about to leave, when she felt a tug on her skirt.

"Ka-wen...h-help me find my maa-bles!" That was just what she *didn't* feel like doing right then. She was tired -- had a ton of homework to do -- and had made big plans with her friends for later on that she had to get ready for.

"Um, Greggy, don't worry. I'm sure you're going to find them. Karen's got to go home now... okay?"

But the desperate look on the boy's face told her that it wasn't okay at all -- at least with him. "Please, Ka-wen, they're lost! H-help me find them."

The girl was about to give him an 'it'll be alright' pat and dash out the door, when she remembered how she'd felt -- just two weeks before, when to her horror, she'd discovered that one of her absolute favorite and most expensive earrings had somehow fallen out of her ear and ended up...who knew where? She'd combed her room, the school bus and even retraced every step she had taken in school that day. A lot of kids seemed curious about what she was doing, but none of them had been willing to help. How she'd wished back then that they would have -- maybe then she would have found it...

"Okay, Greg. You convinced me. Let's find those marbles," she said with a resigned smile. Bending down she and the little boy searched for and scoped out and scooped up every last marble. Now she could finally go home -- at least that was what Karen had thought...

"Look Ka-wen, there's a shiny one over dare!" Greg said, excitedly pointing to the grass behind the hammock. He ran over, but his short arm couldn't reach. "Ka-wen help me!" "Are you *sure* there's something there, Greggy?" Karen sighed. The boy nodded brightly. *Alright, she'd gone this far, might as well look one more time*. Getting down on her knees, the girl stretched out her arm, reached, and sure enough pulled out from the tall grass a gleaming, shiny...earring! The one she'd lost!!! It must have fallen out last time she was babysitting and had rocked Greg to sleep in the hammock!

Seeing it wasn't his marble after all, the boy lost interest and ran off to play with his marbles. Karen slipped her earring into her pouch, amazed at the way things worked out, how she'd found her earring -- by finding room in her heart to help someone in need.

Question: What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story? When people ask us for help, sometimes it can seem like a bother. But it's a great thing to help others and almost always we'll feel good about ourselves when we do.

Question: Do you think whether we like or dislike the person asking us for help should affect our decision? We should be willing to help simply because help is needed -- personal feelings aside. We should try even harder to help out someone we dislike. Acting this way will bring true peace into our lives and to the world.

Question: What if we are truly unable to physically help someone who asks us to -- are there any other ways we can assist them? Sure. We can certainly offer sincere encouragement, which is worth its weight in gold. Also, we can try to find others who *could* help them, as well as to pray for the person's success.

Question: There is a famous proverb that "there is nothing as whole as a broken heart." How do you understand this statement? While we all hope for a life of "smooth sailing", it doesn't always work out that way. We all have issues in our lives which may cause us to feel heartbroken. Some have problems with friends, others with family, and still others with health. While these situations are certainly not comfortable, they do contain a hidden gift. It is exactly these times and situations which can motivate us to look more deeply into the real meaning of our lives and discover levels of awareness that we likely would have missed during smoother times.

Question: In the animal kingdom, only the strong survive and it's normal for stronger animals to prey upon weaker ones. Do you think stronger people also have such a "natural right" to dominate and rule over those weaker than themselves? Why or why not? While survival of the fittest, "the law of the jungle" is certainly the rule throughout nature, a human being is unique in that he has two conflicting drives. One is an animal impulse to dominate and take what he can from those around him. The other is a higher more spiritual impulse to show compassion to the weak and unfortunate, which requires giving. One of the most important lessons of the Torah is to teach us to develop this more compassionate and righteous aspect of ourselves. When we choose to be compassionate givers rather than takers, we elevate ourselves into more complete and spiritually developed people.

Spiritual Exercise: Are there people you know who really need you to be there for them? Are you compassionate towards these people?

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