

BEHAR (*on Mount Sinai*)



Agricultural Laws

Leviticus 25:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai saying, 2 Speak to *the* Children of Israel **וְאָמַרְתָּ** *and you say* to them, when you come into the land which I give you, then the land *itself* will keep a Sabbath to ליהוה. 3 Six years you will sow your field and six years you will prune your vineyard and gather in **אֶת־** *the* fruit from it; 4 But in the seventh year will be a Sabbath rest for the land, a Sabbath to ליהוה: you will neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. C-MATS



The seventh year is a Sabbath rest for the Land.

Leviticus 25:5 **אֵת** That which grows of itself from the seeds of your previous harvest you will not reap, **וְאֵת־** and neither gather the grapes of your untended vine: for it is a year of rest for the land. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה set up the Sabbatical Year cycle? The land's rest in the seventh year teaches that the primary force in the universe is יהוה, not the law of nature. By leaving his fields untended and unguarded for a year, the Israelite demonstrates that this world is but a corridor leading to the ultimate world, that true life comes when man stops striving for material gain in favor of dedication to spiritual growth. The Torah emphasizes, therefore, that it is יהוה Who gives the land and יהוה who provides your food. יהוה told the Israelite people to let their fields rest and not to plant their crops every seventh year. He promised them that if they do, they wouldn't lose out - He would perform a miracle and bring a double crop. This was a huge test of trust for the people, since in those days no crops meant no food! Each person had to face that test, and his decision really showed just how much trust he did or didn't have in יהוה. We can apply this idea to our lives as well. Whenever we find ourselves in a dilemma where doing what is ethical and right seems like an inconvenience or loss, we can choose to trust in יהוה, knowing that if we do the right thing, in the end we will never lose out. *Chumash*

Discuss: How have you trusted in יהוה this week to provide for you and was He faithful?

Question: What does a person gain by trusting in יהוה? Trust in יהוה, called "bitachon" in Hebrew, is just about the most valuable thing a person could have. Someone who has TRUST can literally be happy and calm every moment of his life. This is because he knows that he is never alone, and that nothing that happens to him is merely by chance. Since nothing can help him or harm him unless יהוה wants it to happen, he doesn't have to be afraid of anyone or anything. He doesn't have to flatter anyone, hoping for their help. Trust in יהוה can transform our lives and put us into an entirely different plane. It's worth doing whatever we can to acquire it.

Question: Does trusting in יהוה assure that things will always turn out the way we want them to? To trust in יהוה is to know that He loves us, always has our best in mind, and sends us just what we need at every moment. But our perspective is limited, and it is quite possible that what יהוה thinks is genuinely best for us may not be the same as what we think. Trusting in יהוה means knowing that whatever happens is ultimately for our best.

Leviticus 25:6 And the Sabbath *produce* of the land will be your food; for you, your servant, your maid, your hired servant and the stranger that lives with you, 7 And for your cattle and the beasts that *are* in your land, *everything the land produces* will be used as food. C-MATS



Leviticus 25:8 And you will count seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; that is forty-nine years. C-MATS

Question: What does the number seven represent? The number seven represents the cycle of completion in Creation; thus the Sabbath day and the Sabbatical year symbolize testimony that the fullness of Creation is *שְׁמִימָה*. *Chumash*



Leviticus 25:9 Then you will sound the trumpet of the Jubilee on the tenth *day* of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement you will sound the trumpet throughout all your land. C-MATS

Question: How is the shofar blown on the Year of Jubilee? The broken blast must be preceded and followed by long, clear shofar blasts, so that the shofar ceremony of the Jubilee is identical to that of Rosh Hashanah. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:10 And you will consecrate **אָחַד** year, the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants in it: it will be a Jubilee to you; and you will return to every man his possession and you will return every man to his family. C-MATS

Question: What does the Hebrew root word mean for Jubilee? The root word is yovel which means ram. Thus the name of the year alludes to the blowing of the ram's horn (shofar) that consecrated it. *Chumash*

Question: Who was freed in the Year of Jubilee? All Israelite slaves must be freed (not gentile slaves), even if they have not worked the usual minimum of six years, or if they have elected to remain with their masters after the six years. *Chumash*



Sound the Trumpet



Year of Jubilee was a time of freedom and rejoicing.

Leviticus 25:11 A Jubilee will be on the fiftieth year: you will not sow or reap **אֶת־** that which grows from the land or gather **אֶת־** your untended vine. 12 For it *is* the Jubilee; it will be sacred to you: you will eat **אֶת־** the produce out of the field. 13 In the year of **הַיָּבֵיאוֹת** *this* Jubilee you will return to every man his possession. 14 And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy anything from your neighbor, you will not oppress one **אֶת־** another. C-MATS

Question: What happens if one's greed keeps him from observing the Sabbatical and Jubilee commandments? The man will eventually have to lose his money and be forced to sell his movable property (v. 14). If he still does not repent, he will be forced to sell his ancestral portion (vs. 25-28) and his house (vs. 29-31), and, finally, to borrow at interest. If this progression of punishment has no effect, he will eventually have to sell himself as a bondsman to a fellow Israelite (vs. 37-43), and finally as a slave to a non-Israelite. Finally, and worst of all, he will sell himself and become a servant of idols (vs. 47-55). *Chumash*

Question: Should you conduct business with a fellow believer as opposed to a non believer? In addition to the simple meaning that it is forbidden to cheat anyone in business, the verse has the further meaning that, in doing business, one should give preference to a fellow Believer. When you make a sale -- or when you make a purchase -- you should try to do business with your fellow Believer. This is an extension of the general principle that one should seek to help his brethren in any way possible. The highest form of charity is to enable someone to make a living in an honorable way, without being required to seek charity, so that the best way to help a needy Believer is to do business with him. Chumash You can take this a little further and support local businesses, so that your community can prosper.

Leviticus 25:15 According to the number of years after the Jubilee; you will buy **גֵּאֲתָהּ** from your neighbor based on the number of year's crops that will be raised. C-MATS

Question: How is a field sold? Since fields revert to their original owners in the Jubilee Year, the buyer of a field has actually purchased the number of crops it will produce until the Jubilee. Consequently, if the seller sets a price based on the land value -- as if the buyer will remain in possession permanently -- he is violating the previous verse's warning not to defraud. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:16 If the number of years is large you will increase the price of *the land* and if the number of the years is few, you will diminish the price of *the land*: he will be selling the number of crops it will raise. 17 Therefore, you will not oppress one **אֶת־** another; but you will fear your Elohim: for I *am יהוה* your Elohim. C-MATS

Question: What does it mean by "not oppress one **אֶת־** another"? The phrase refers to not hurting people with words in personal relationships. It is forbidden to remind people of their earlier sins or of embarrassing aspects of their past or their ancestry, or to give advice that one knows to be bad. Lest one think that he can easily do so and no one will know that his intentions were malicious, the verse concludes with **fear your Elohim**, for יהוה knows what is truly in man's heart. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:18 Therefore, you will keep **אֶת־** My statutes **וְאֶת־** and My judgments and do **אֲתֵמְ** them; and you will live in the land in safety. C-MATS

Question: What "statutes" and "judgments" should we keep? יהוה tells Moses that the Children of Israel are to keep (*obey*) **אֶת** My statutes and My judgments. We cannot separate יהוה Father's commandments in Torah from **אֶת** Yahusha's commandments that He spoke in the Brit Chadashah (*New Covenant*) for they cannot have different commandments...all commandments come from יהוה Father. When Yahusha said in both John 14:15 **If ye love Me, keep My commandments...**and in John 15:10 **If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love,** Yahusha was clearly talking about the commandments in Torah and we can see the proof of this in the Tanakh by the placement of the **אֶת**. C-MATS

Leviticus 25:19 And the land will yield her fruit and you will eat your fill and live in it in safety. C-MATS

Question: Where is "the land"? This is the land of Israel.



THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL

■ Reubea	■ Jucah	■ Naphtali	■ Issachar	■ Zebulun
■ Simeon	■ Dan	■ Gad	■ Asher	■ Benjamin
■ Ephraim	■ Manesseh			



Question: If you fail to keep the laws of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, what will happen? Failure to observe the laws of Sabbatical and Jubilee is a cause of exile. יהוה offers assurance that those who let their land lie unplanted will not suffer famine and be forced to travel abroad to purchase food. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:20 And if you say, what will we eat in the seventh year? We will not sow or gather in **אֶת־** our produce. C-MATS

Question: How would יהוה supply for His people during the seventh year? The question "What shall we eat in the seventh year?" is even more pressing in light of the fact that, the land having been depleted by five years of planting, the sixth year's yield is naturally less than average. Yet יהוה promises that it will provide not only for a full year's sustenance, but also for the seventh year and beyond. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:21 Then I will command (*order*) **אֶת־** My blessing upon you in the sixth year and it will bring forth **אֶת־** fruit for three years. C-MATS

Question: Whose blessing will be on the fruit? The one who will be administering the blessings upon us is **את** Yahusha the Messiah, if we obey His Torah. C-MATS

Question: What does יהוה promise to provide for those who keep His Sabbatical year laws? The sixth-year crop will suffice for parts of three calendar years: the sixth year from Nissan until the end of the year, throughout the seventh year, and at least until Nissan of the eighth year, when the new winter crop will be fully grown. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:22 And you will sow **את** year, *on* the eighth and eat the old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in you will eat *of the old produce*. 23 The land will not ever be sold: the land *is* Mine; **אתם** *you are* strangers and sojourners with Me. C-MATS

Question: How can a person buy back his land before the Year of Jubilee? As long as the family can raise the money to pay fair value for the field, the purchaser is required to sell it to them. This law is a further expression of the principle that the land is ה'יהוה's, and cannot be sold in eternity for you are sojourners and residents with Me. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:24 And in all the land of **אֶרֶץְכֵּן** *your possession* you will grant redemption for the land. 25 If your brother becomes poor and has sold *some of* **בְּאֶחָדָם** *his possession (land)* and if any of his kin comes to redeem it, then he will redeem **את** that which his brother sold. C-MATS

Question: Should a man ever sell his ancestral heritage? One should not sell his ancestral plot unless he becomes impoverished, and even then he should try not to sell all of it. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:26 And if the man has no *kin* to redeem it, but he is able to redeem it; 27 Then let him count **את** *the years from the sale of the land* and restore **את** the remainder to the man to whom he sold it; so that he may return to his possession (*land*). C-MATS

Question: How is the value of the land calculated? If a man bought some land with ten crops remaining before the Jubilee, then each crop is worth one-tenth of the purchase price. *Chumash*

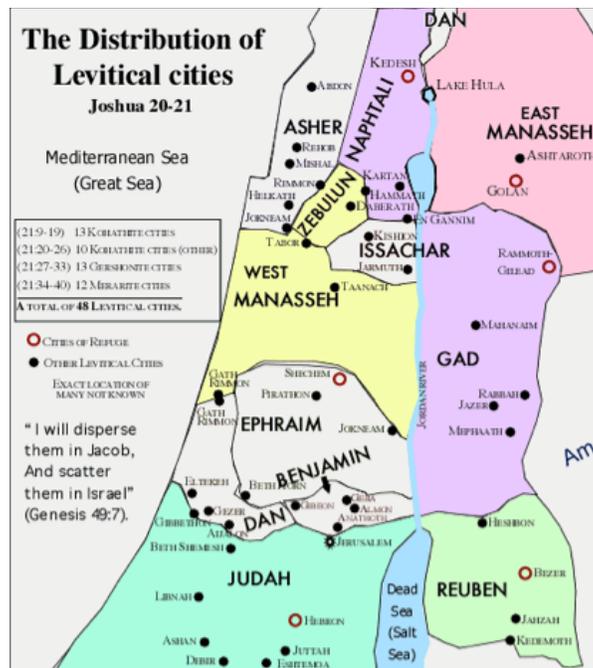
Leviticus 25:28 But if *he is* not able to buy it back, then that which is sold will remain in the hand of **אתו** *him* that has bought it until the Year of Jubilee: and in the Jubilee he will return to his possession (*land*). C-MATS



Jerusalem-walled city

Leviticus 25:29 And if a man sells his house *in* a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; after a full year he may redeem it. 30 And if it is not redeemed after a full year, then the house that *is* in the walled city will be established forever to him that bought אָתָּה *it (him)* throughout his generations: it will not return *to him* in the Jubilee. 31 But the houses of the villages which *have* no walls round about them will be counted as the fields of the country: they may be redeemed and they will be released (*revert back*) in the Jubilee. 32 The cities of the Levites and the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. 33 And if *someone* purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession, will be released in the Year of Jubilee: the houses of the cities of the Levites *are* their *tribe's* possession among *the* Children of Israel. C-MATS

Question: What property did the Levites own? They owned 48 cities and its surrounding fields among the tribes of Israel. Since the Levites' only heritage in Israel is their cities and the surrounding area, they cannot be deprived permanently of any part of their property. *Chumash*



Leviticus 25:34 But the fields in the open land around their cities may not be sold; it is אָתָּה *their holding (possession)* for them forever. 35 And if your brother has become poor and fallen in poverty; then you will assist him: *as though he is* a stranger or a sojourner (*stranger*); that he can *continue* living with you. C-MATS

Question: What should we do when we see someone who has become poor? We might be tempted to think: "That's his problem and not mine." But the Torah teaches us otherwise. יהוה tells us that "if your brother has become poor and fallen in poverty; then you will assist him" and help him "live." When we encounter a poor person or someone failing in any way, we should do what we can to help him to pick himself up and live a better life. We are all children of the same Elohim and responsible to help each other out whenever we can.

Question: What is the highest form of charity? The highest form of charity is to step in with help to prevent a person from becoming poor. This includes offering him a loan or employment, investing in his business, or any other form of assistance that will avoid poverty. Do not wait until he becomes poor. When a donkey's load begins to slip from its back, even one man can adjust it and keep the donkey from falling. But once the animal has fallen, even five people cannot get it back on its feet.

Question: All יהוה's children are guarantors for one another. What does this mean? A guarantor is someone who agrees in advance to help his friend to shoulder his burdens and to help him to get up when he falls. He guarantees - so to speak - his friend's success to the extent that he is able. This is how we should ideally relate to each other. When we see another falling in some way, we should be willing to step in and help prop him up. By boosting up someone who is falling, we can often change his entire direction in life for the better.

Spiritual Exercise: Help someone out this week.



Leviticus 25:36 Take no usury (*interest*) or profit **מִאִתּוֹ** *from him*: but fear your Elohim; that your brother can *continually* live with you. C-MATS

Question: How is the phrase "that your brother can *continually* live with you" connected with not taking interest? When a person lends money on interest, he profits with every day that passes. Thus, the lender wants every day to be as short as possible so that more days pass and he will earn more money. On the other hand, the borrower prays that each day should become longer so that he will have to pay for fewer days. Consequently, these two people have a different outlook on time. By giving an interest-free loan, the lender will not pray for a shorter day and the borrower will not pray for a longer day, and thus, "your brother can *continually* live with you" — with the same outlook on time. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:37 **אֶתְךָ** your money you will not give him with interest or sell *him* your produce for profit. C-MATS

Question: What is the root word of interest? Interest is derived from the same root word as biting, and describes what happens to the borrower; the transaction bites into his wealth. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:38 I am יהוה your Elohim, which brought **אֶתְכֶם** *you* out of the land of Egypt to give you **אֶתְּ** *the* land of Canaan and to be your Elohim. C-MATS

Question: Did יהוה give us the right to sell ourselves as slaves? Although the Torah gave Israelite men the right to sell themselves to fellow Israelites, they are not slaves in the generally accepted sense of the word. They do not lose their status in the religious or civil community. Do not assign him to do the sort of degrading tasks that would be given only to a slave, such as having him bring his master's personal effects to the bathhouse or put shoes on his master's feet. Rather, he should be assigned to skilled work or field labor, like hired help. The master is responsible for the upkeep of the slave's family. Since an Israelite is owned only by יהוה, it is disrespectful to sell him on an auction block; rather, he must be sold discreetly and with dignity. *Chumash*

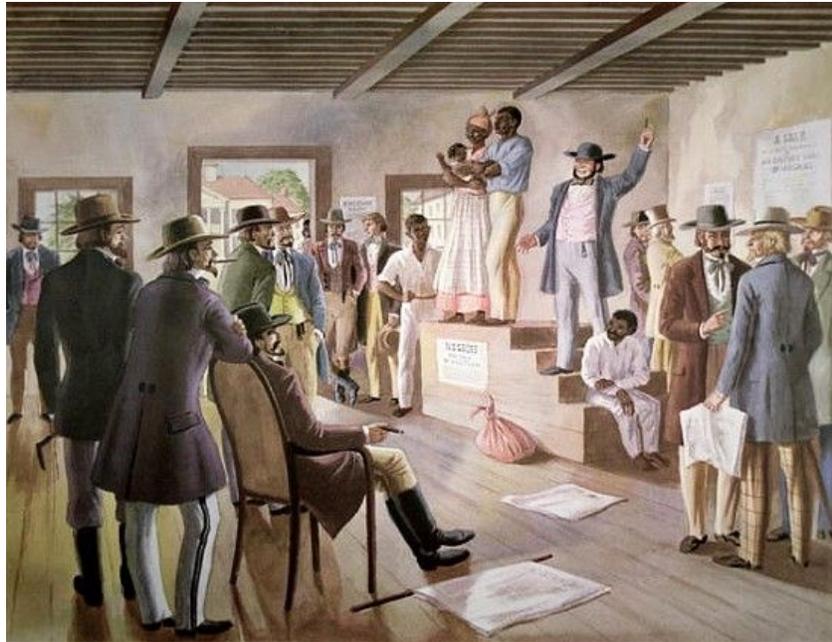
Leviticus 25:39 And if your brother *who lives by you* becomes poor and is sold to you; you will not make him to serve as a slave servant: 40 *But* as a hired servant and as a sojourner, he will live with you and will serve you until the Year of Jubilee: 41 And then he will leave you, *both he and his children with him* and will return to his own family and to אֶרֶץ אָבוֹתָם *your holding (land) of his fathers.* 42 For they *are* My servants, which I brought אֹתָם *them* out of the land of Egypt: they will not be sold *as* male slaves. 43 You will not treat him harshly; but fear your Elohim. 44 Your male and female slaves *shall be taken* מֵאֶרֶץ *from the heathen that are around you; from them you will buy male and female slaves.* C-MATS

Question: Are we allowed to own slaves? The Torah states that one may purchase slaves from among the surrounding nations. Such slaves become the property of their owners. *Chumash*

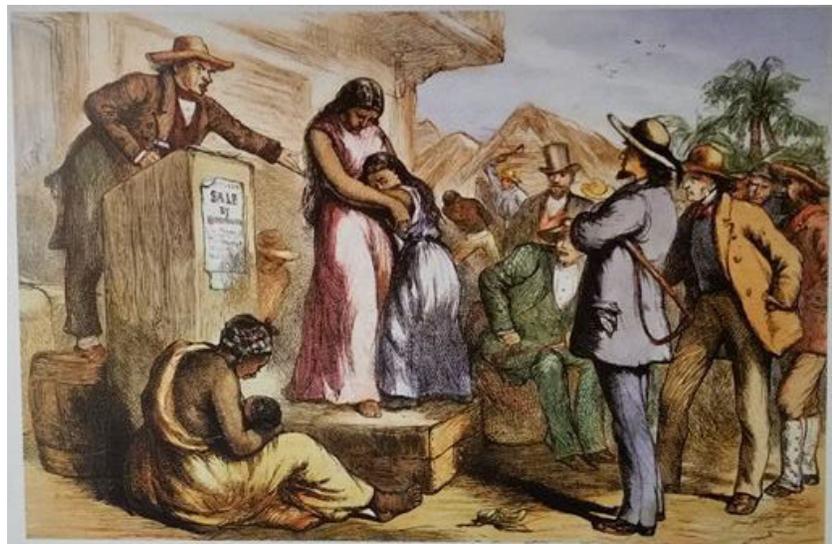
Question: What attitude do you think could help a person treat others - especially those who seem to be 'less' than he is - with respect? There are two aspects to reality. The first and more superficial is the reality we see - in which some of us are smarter, richer, better-looking, etc. than others. However, there is a coexistent deeper, spiritual reality in which each human being, each creature is equally valued and valuable as a creation of יהוה. By focusing on this deeper reality, we will find it easier to relate to everyone and everything with deep respect. *Chumash*

Question: One who acquires a servant - acquires a master. How do you understand this statement? They are teaching us that one shouldn't erroneously think that he has the right to mistreat someone under him (such as his servant). In fact, if a servant's master has only one pillow he must give it to his servant rather than himself! The Torah way is to treat all - regardless of their social station - with unconditional respect. *Chumash*

Discuss: America's Founders were predominantly Believers and had a Biblical worldview. Was the slavery that they practiced a sin, since they bought slaves from pagan nations? Biblical slavery and the slavery that was practiced in the United States are not the same. In the United States, a slave was a person who was forced by penalty of death to obey his "master". This master automatically owned not only the slave, but everything the slave owned (including an unborn child in the mother's womb). The slaves were treated cruelly; they were forced to be uneducated; they slept in little shacks, and they only received the basic necessities for survival. But biblical slavery was much different from this. In biblical times, a slave/servant was considered to be anyone who worked for someone else. It was their labor that was purchased, not their person. Today, we would refer to Biblical slaves as *workers* or *employees*. The master would treat the servant as one of his own household (family). In exchange for labor the master will provide all the slave needed and knew all people are equal in יהוה's sight.



Slaves on the auction block



Leviticus 25:45 You may also purchase slaves from the children of strangers that live among you and members of their families, which they gave birth to in your land: and they will be your possession. 46 And you will take אֶתָּם *them* as an inheritance for your children to inherit *them* for a possession; they will be your permanent slaves forever: but you will not rule over your brothers, *the* Children of Israel, harshly. 47 And if a sojourner or stranger becomes rich and your brother *who lives* by him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger *or* sojourner or to a member of *the* stranger's family: 48 After he is sold he may be redeemed; one of his brothers may redeem him: 49 Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or *any* that is near kin to him from his family may redeem him; or *if* he is able, he may redeem himself. C-MATS

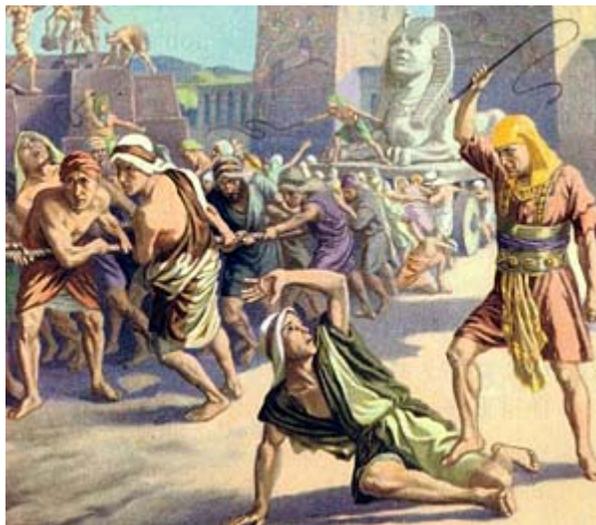
Question: What should you do if one of your relatives sells himself as a slave to a non-Israelite? It was very wrong for the Israelite to sell himself to a non-Israelite, and his brethren might feel that he has forfeited his right to their mercy, but the Torah disagrees. Even after he has been sold, we are commanded to redeem him. An Israelite owned by a non-Israelite is required to work until the Jubilee Year when he goes free by Torah law -- but his brethren should not permit him to remain a slave for that long. It is their duty to redeem him as soon as possible, lest he assimilate among the pagans. Nevertheless, the Torah does not permit the Israelite authorities to free their fellow Israelite by force. They must give his owner fair compensation.

Leviticus 25:50 And he will calculate with the person who bought him from the year that he was sold to the Year of Jubilee: and the amount to be paid will be based on the number of years and his wages as a hired servant. C-MATS

Question: Is it worst to cheat or steal from a non-believer or a believer? It is worse to steal from a non-believer than from a believer, because if a believer is mistreated by his fellow believer, he will not condemn all believers or lose his faith in יהוה. He will say that the individual who cheated him is dishonest, but not that he is a reflection on the Torah or its Giver. But if a believer cheats a non-believer, the victim will rail against the Torah and יהוה. Such dishonesty will result in the cardinal sin of desecration of His Name. For this reason, Jacob instructed his sons to return the money that they found in their sacks when they returned from Egypt; he wanted to sanctify יהוה's Name by demonstrating the integrity of His people. *Chumash*

Leviticus 25:51 If many years *remain*, according to them he will refund the amount of money that he was bought for. **52** And if few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, according to his years will he refund him again **אֵת** his redemption *price* from the amount he was bought for. **53** He will be like a yearly hired servant: *you will see to it that he is not treated harshly*. C-MATS

Question: Were Israelites allowed to stand by when fellow Israelites treated their slaves harshly? Israelites are forbidden to stand by and tolerate the sight of their fellow Israelites being dominated harshly. *Chumash*



Remember you were slaves in Egypt

Leviticus 25:54 If he is not redeemed in these *years*, then he will be released in the Year of Jubilee, both he and his children with him. 55 *The Children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought אֶתָּם them out of the land of Egypt: I am יהוה your Elohim. C-MATS*

Leviticus 26:1 You will make no idols or graven images or set up a standing image; you will not set up *any* image of stone in your land to bow down to it: for I am יהוה your Elohim. 2 אֶתָּה My Sabbaths, you will keep and reverence My sanctuary: I am יהוה. C-MATS

Question: Who is appointed over the Sabbaths? Leviticus 26:2 clearly points to אֶתָּה Yahusha as to whom is appointed over יהוה Father's Sabbaths...Matthew 12:8 **For the Son of man is Master even of the Sabbath day.** Luke 6:5 **That the Son of man is Adonai also of the Sabbath.** C-MATS

Bechukotai (*in My statutes*)



Leviticus 26:3 If you walk in My statutes אֶתָּה and keep My commandments and do אֶתָּם them; 4 Then I will give you rain in its season and the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will yield their fruit. C-MATS

Question: What does “If you walk in My statutes אֶתָּה and keep My commandments and do אֶתָּם them” actually mean? If you will follow My decrees by engaging in intensive Torah study, with the intention that such study will lead you to observe My commandments properly, and if you actually do perform them, you will merit the blessings given in the following verses. *Chumash*

Question: Why does it say throughout the Torah, "If you obey, you will receive such and such; if you do not obey, it shall happen to you such and such"--things that are of the present world, such as plenty and hunger, war and peace, sovereignty and conquest, inhabitation of the land and exile, success and failure, and the like? יהוה promised us in the Torah that if we observe it with joy... He will remove from us all things that may prevent us from fulfilling it, such as illness, war, hunger, and the like, and He will bestow upon us all blessings that bolster our hand to observe the Torah such as abundant food, peace, and much gold and silver, in order that we should not need to preoccupy ourselves all our days with our material needs but be free to learn the wisdom and observe the commandments by which we shall merit the life of the World To Come. *Chumash*



The Harvesters by Pieter Brueghel

Leviticus 26:5 And shall last *until* your threshing אָתָּה until the grape harvest and the grape harvest will extend to אָתָּה the sowing time: and you will eat as much as you want and live in your land safely. C-MATS

Question: How plentiful will your crops be if you keep the laws of the Sabbatical years? The prosperity will be so great that you will still be busy threshing your grain when the time comes to harvest your grapes, and you will still be occupied with your vintage when the time comes to sow next year's grain. The verse stresses that constant activity is part of the blessing. *Chumash*

Question: Is working hard a blessing? When people are busy, they feel fulfilled and their health is better, as the verse says, you will eat your bread until you have had enough, and they have neither the time nor the inclination to go visiting other lands, as the verse says, you will dwell securely in your land. But when people are idle, they seek amusement and motivation. They lose the discipline of home, routine, and community. This increases the dangers of sin and has ill effects even on physical well-being.

Spiritual Exercise: Seek fulfillment in working hard this week. Do not seek ways to amuse or pleasure yourself.

Leviticus 26:6 And I will give peace in the land and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid: and I will remove wild beasts out of the land and the sword will not go through your land. C-MATS

Question: What is the value of peace? There may be food, there may be drink, but if there is no peace, there is nothing. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:7 And you will chase אֶת־ your enemies and they will fall before your sword. 8 And five of you will chase 100 and 100 of you will put 10,000 to flight: and your enemies will fall before your sword. C-MATS

Question: Is it natural that the observance of Sabbatical years will enable a hundred Israelites to pursue ten thousand enemies, and that the violation of the Sabbatical laws will cause the nation to be exiled and helpless? The Torah's intention is to teach that obedience to יהוה is of such magnitude that it will be rewarded miraculously. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:9 For I will turn towards you and make אֶתְכֶם you fruitful and multiply אֶתְכֶם you and establish אֶת־ My covenant אֶתְכֶם with you. 10 And you will eat last year's harvest and throw out the old to make room for the new. 11 And I will set My Tabernacle among you: and I will not reject אֶתְכֶם you. C-MATS

Question: What does this promise mean, "I will not reject אֶתְכֶם you"? יהוה's Presence will rest with Believers wherever they are. יהוה's Presence will rest directly upon the righteous among you meaning that יהוה will be even closer to the righteous than to the angels. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:12 And I will walk among you and will be your Elohim אֲנִי and you will be My people. 13 I am יהוה your Elohim who brought אֶתְכֶם you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would not be their slaves; and I have broken the bands of your yoke and made אֶתְכֶם you walk upright. 14 But if you do not listen to Me and obey אֶת all these commandments. C-MATS

Question: Why does יהוה punish His people? If the Israelite people fail to live up to their obligations as the Chosen People, they will fall from the blessed state promised them above, and become the victim of the horrendous punishments described below. These are meant not as revenge, but to influence the people to repent, and for that reason they are inflicted in stages of increasing severity, measure for measure. If the first stage comes and Israel does not derive the desired lesson, their refusal to recognize and heed the word of יהוה makes the sin more serious. Consequently, the next and more severe stage of punishment will befall them, and so on, until, as the climax of the chapter states, repentance and יהוה's mercy finally comes. *Chumash*

Question: What are the seven sins that receive punishment? (a) to not dedicate yourselves to Torah study; (b) eventually stop performing commandments (or pick and choose the ones you want to keep) (c) be disgusted by others who are loyal to the Torah; (d) hate the teachers who explain the ordinances; (e) prevent others from being observant; (f) deny that יהוה gave the commandments, (g) deny the very existence of the יהוה Who made the covenant. *Chumash*

Question: What are the first series of punishments? The seven sins will have brought the following seven punishments: (a) swelling lesions; (b) burning fever; (c) frustrated longing; (d) sowing seeds that will produce crops for the enemy; (e) being struck down before the enemy; (f) being under enemy control; and (g) fleeing with no one in pursuit. *Chumash*

Spiritual Exercise: Dedicate yourself to studying Torah this week and see if your frustrations disappear and peace comes to you instead.

Leviticus 26:15 And if you despise My statutes, or if **אֶת־** My judgments you reject, so that you do not obey **אֶת־** all My commandments, *but* you break **אֶת־** My covenant: **16** Also I will do **אֶת־** *this* to you; I will bring upon you terror, **אֶת־** consumption (*disease*) **אֶת־** and burning fever that will dim your eyes and cause sorrow of heart: and you will sow your seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. C-MATS

Question: Are there curses on us today?

Throughout the course of history, disease outbreaks have ravaged humanity, sometimes changing the course of history and, at times, signaling the end of entire civilizations.

Here are 20 of the worst epidemics and pandemics, dating from prehistoric to modern times.

1. Prehistoric epidemic: Circa 3000 B.C.
2. Plague of Athens: 430 B.C. (may have been typhoid fever or Ebola killed 100,000)
3. Antonine Plague: A.D. 165-180 (may have been smallpox 5 million died in Roman Empire)
4. Plague of Cyprian: A.D. 250-271 (unknown disease killed 5,000 people a day in Rome)
5. Plague of Justinian: A.D. 541-542 (bubonic plague killed 10% of the world's population)
6. The Black Death: 1346-1353 (bacterium *Yersinia pestis* killed 50% of Europe's population)
7. Cocoliztli epidemic: 1545-1548 (viral hemorrhagic fever killed 15 million inhabitants of Mexico and Central America)
8. American Plagues: 16th century (smallpox deaths contributed to the collapse of the Inca and Aztec civilizations)
9. Great Plague of London: 1665-1666 (black death killed 15% of the population of London)
10. Great Plague of Marseille: 1720-1723 (30% of the population of Marseille died)
11. Russian plague: 1770-1772 (100,000 died in Moscow)
12. Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic: 1793 yellow fever (5000 died in Philadelphia)
13. Flu pandemic: 1889-1890 (1 million died)
14. American polio epidemic: 1916 (6,000 died)
15. Spanish Flu: 1918-1920 (100 million died)
16. Asian Flu: 1957-1958 (1 million died)
17. AIDS pandemic and epidemic: 1981-present day (35 million and counting)
18. H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic: 2009-2010 (500,000 died)
19. West African Ebola epidemic: 2014-2016 (11,325 died)
20. Zika Virus epidemic: 2015-present day (South America and Central America)

(Source: 20 of the worst epidemics and pandemics in history By Owen Jarus)

TODAY: Covid 19 pandemic: 2019-2023 (7 million worldwide)

Let us not forget mental illness (**terror and sorrow of heart**). 19% (47.1 million) of people in the U.S. are living with a mental health condition nationwide, a 1.5 million increase over last year's report. *Mental Health American 2021*

Leviticus 26:17 And I will set My face against you and your enemies will defeat you: those who hate you will reign over you; and you will flee when no one is pursuing אֶתְכֶם you. C-MATS



Babylon conquers Israel



Leviticus 26:18 And if you will still not listen to Me (*and obey Me*), then I will punish אֶתְכֶם you seven *times* more for your sins. C-MATS

Question: What does it mean “I will punish אֶתְכֶם you seven *times* more for your sins.”? יהוה punishes only measure for measure; there would not be seven punishments for one sin, but only one punishment per sin. If you do not repent, you will receive seven punishments in total.



Leviticus 26:19 And I will break **אֶתְּ** *the* pride you have in your *own* power; and I will make **אֶתְּ** your heavens like iron **אֶתְּ** *and* your earth like brass: **20** And your strength will be spent in vain: because your land **אֶתְּ** her increase, will not yield its produce, neither will the trees of the land yield their fruits. C-MATS

Question: What is this curse “**your strength will be spent in vain**”? This curse is doubly painful. If one does not try hard, and fails to achieve, it is not nearly as aggravating as it is if one works very hard, but fails to achieve success. *Chumash*

Discuss: Are you having success at work? Are all your profits being eaten up and you are still in debt? Consider how you are living your life.

Leviticus 26:21 And if you go against Me and will not listen to Me (*and obey Me*); I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. C-MATS

Question: What is the second series of punishments? The seven punishments of this series are: (a) destruction of the Temple; (b) the heaven will be like iron; (c) the earth will be like copper; (d) you will work hard in vain; (e) the earth will not yield crops; (f) trees will not yield fruit; and (g) whatever fruit does grow will drop from the tree before maturity. *Chumash*

Question: Will the Israelites recognize that their misfortunes are caused by their sins? The people will refuse to recognize that their misfortunes were Divinely ordained and that, if carefully and objectively analyzed, the punishments could be seen to fit the crime, and therefore, as a clear message to repent. Instead, they will insist that everything was a coincidence, the result of natural causes. *Chumash*

Discuss: Are the people in your country in the same state of mind as the Israelites-refusing to recognize that their misfortunes are punishment from יהוה?



Leviticus 26:22 I will send among you **אֲתֶיךָ** beasts that will rob **אֶתְכֶם** you of your children and destroy **אֶת־** your cattle and make **אֶתְכֶם** you few in number until your highways are desolate.23 And if you refuse my correction and still go against Me; 24 Then I will go against you and punish **אֶתְכֶם** you seven times *more* for your sins. C-MATS

Question: What are the third series of punishments? The seven punishments of this series are: (a) wild beasts; (b) domestic animals; (c) poisonous snakes; (d) death of children; (e) loss of livestock; (f) decrease of population; and (g) destruction of roads. *Chumash*

Question: What will happen if the Israelites continue to not repent? If you persist in thinking that all of My carefully calibrated punishments were merely coincidental -- so that My message is wasted -- I will punish you measure for measure by making it more difficult for you to perceive the Divine hand. The next series of punishments will seem haphazard, for their correspondence to your sins will not be as obvious as in the case of the earlier punishments. This follows the principle that if people refuse to "see" יהוה, He withdraws His Presence [Hiddenness of the Countenance], and makes it harder for them to recognize the truth. *Chumash*

Discuss: Has your country already come to this punishment that they cannot recognize Truth even when presented to them?

Leviticus 26:25 **וְהִבֵּאתִי** *And I will bring* a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of My covenant: and when you are huddled together within your cities, I will send the sickness among you; and you will be delivered into the hand of your enemy. 26 *And I will cut off the supply of your bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven and they will dole out your bread by weight: and you will eat and not be satisfied.* C-MATS

Question: What does it mean “ten women will bake your bread in one oven”? Due to a shortage of firewood, many women will share an oven. To make matters worse, the grain will be rotten, so that the loaves will fall apart, forcing the women to weigh the baked crumbs to divide them equally. *Chumash*

Question: What is the fourth series of punishments? The seven punishments of this series are: (a) the sword of foreign invaders; (b) siege, forcing people into the cities; (c) plague; (d) food shortage; (e) lack of fuel; (f) crumbling bread; and (g) constant hunger. The victory of the enemy is not counted separately because it is included in the punishment of the sword. *Chumash*



The Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Francesco Haye

Leviticus 26:27 And if **בְּזַאת** *in this* you still will not listen (*obey*) to Me, but go against Me; 28 Then I will go against you furiously; and I will chastise **אֶתְכֶם** *you* seven times *more* for your sins. 29 And you will eat the flesh of your sons and daughters. 30 And I will destroy **אֶתְ** your high places and cut down **אֶתְ** your images and throw **אֶתְ** your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols and I will detest **אֶתְכֶם** *you*. 31 And I will make **אֶתְ** your cities waste and bring to desolation **אֶתְ** your sanctuaries and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet odors. C-MATS

Question: What are the fifth series of punishments? The seven punishments of this series are: (a) cannibalism; (b) destruction of defense structures (city walls); (c) death of people; (d) loss of the Shechinah; (e) destruction of cities; (f) desolation of the sanctuaries; and (g) יהוה's refusal to accept offerings. *Chumash*

Question: Why did יהוה destroy their cities? The people placed their confidence in the high towers from which they would be able to repulse invaders, but יהוה would destroy the buildings, leaving the people helpless against their enemies. *Chumash*



The Flight of the Prisoners by J James Tissot

Leviticus 26:32 And will bring I אֶת־ the land into desolation: and your enemies who live in *your land* will be astonished at it. C-MATS



The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by David Roberts

Question: What curse still rests on Israel? Although Israel would be exiled from its land, none of its conquerors or successors would ever prosper on it. Indeed, throughout the many centuries of Israelite exile, Israel, once a land flowing with milk and honey, remained a desolate, inhospitable country, barely able to support its inhabitants on a subsistence level. *Chumash*



Israel today as a barren wilderness

Leviticus 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen (*gentile nations*) and will draw a sword in pursuit after you: and your land will become desolate and your cities wasted. C-MATS

Question: One positive decision or action leads to another, and likewise one negative decision or action leads to another. Why do you think this is so? The decisions we make, and the actions we take, largely determine the course of our lives. Each time we choose to do something positive, we are in essence training ourselves in that direction. The next time we are faced in a similar situation, we will find ourselves more naturally inclined to make another positive choice. The same dynamic works in the negative, as well. Sometimes choosing to do the right thing, even when it's difficult, can be a turning point to bring us to a better, happier life.

Question: How is יהוה like our parent? A parent has a very special relationship with a child. He loves him intensely, yet at times he must express this love in the form of restriction or discipline. The parent has a clear picture of what life-tools will ultimately give the child the best chance to achieve happiness and success. In his great love for the child, he will do whatever he can to educate him in this way, even if at times it brings him into conflict with the child's desires. יהוה, our loving parent, cares for us so deeply that He arranges every event in our lives for the sole purpose of bringing us the most ultimate spiritual good, although at times we, His children aren't yet able to recognize it.

Question: Why is exile such a curse? Israelites will be scattered and isolated from one another, and exile is much harder to bear when one does not have the support of fellow citizens. *Chumash*

Question: How did our exile bless the world? The people of Israel were exiled among the nations only in order that the Truth about יהוה would be spread among the nations. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:34 Then shall enjoy the land אֶת her Sabbaths, as long as it lies desolate וְאַתֶּם and you will be in your enemies land; even then the land will rest and enjoy אֶת her Sabbaths. C-MATS

Question: Why were the Israelites exiled to Babylon? The exile resulted from Israel's failure to observe the commandment of the Sabbatical year. If the people do not let the land rest in their presence, it will rest in their absence. Because of the seventy Sabbaticals that Israel had violated prior to and during the period of the First Temple, the Babylonian exile lasted for seventy years, during which the land made up for the rest of which it had been deprived. *Chumash*



the land will rest

Leviticus 26:35 As long as *the land* lies desolate it will rest אֶת because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when you lived on it. 36 And on those of you who are left, וְהִבֵּאתִי and I will bring anxiety in their hearts בְּאַרְצֵת in lands of their enemies and will chase אֹתָם them and the sound of a shaken leaf will frighten them; and they will flee like fleeing from a sword; and they will fall when no one pursues them. 37 And they will stumble over each other when no one pursues them like fleeing from a sword and you will have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 And you will perish among the heathen and the land of your enemies will devour אֹתְכֶם you. 39 And those who are left will pine away in their iniquities בְּאַרְצֵת in lands of your enemies in the iniquities אֲבֹתָם of their fathers אִתָּם with them shall they pine away. C-MATS

Question: What will happen to those Israelites in exile? The exile will so demoralize people that even brothers will become selfish and think only of their own best interests. The exiles may be subject to new sins, committed because they will be in the lands of their foes. Instead of recognizing the true cause of the exile, some people will say that the Torah's commandments applied only in Israel, but in foreign lands Israelites must adapt to the new conditions. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:40 If they will confess **אֶת־** their iniquity **וְאֶת־** and the iniquity **אֲבוֹתָם** of their fathers, which they committed against Me in their rebellion and that they went against Me, 41 At that time I will be going against **אֹתָם** them **וְהִבֵּאתִי** and I will bring them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they accept **אֶת־** the punishment of their iniquity, 42 Then I will remember **אֶת־** My covenant with Jacob and also **אֶת־** My covenant with Isaac and also **אֶת־** My covenant with Abraham; and I will remember the land. C-MATS

Question: When will we know that Israel has truly repented? When Israel repents and becomes worthy of redemption, יהוה will remember the Land by not allowing pagans to remain on it. The people will seek to appease יהוה, so that He will allow them to return to the Land. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:43 The land will be left abandoned by them and will enjoy **אֶת־** her Sabbaths, while she lies desolate without them: and they will accept **אֶת־** the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because their soul abhorred My judgments, and they despised **וְאֶת־** and My statutes. 44 And even for all **זֹאת** this when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away or reject them to destroy them and break My covenant **אִתָּם** with them: I am יהוה their Elohim. C-MATS

Question: How will יהוה care for us in exile? יהוה comforts His exiled, tormented people. Let them not think that the violence of exile prove that they are no longer יהוה's Chosen People. No, says יהוה. Even in exile, they are still My people and My covenant with them remains in full force. Even at times when the exiles have not repented and do not deserve His help, יהוה will perform miracles for them so that His Name will not be desecrated. *Chumash*

Leviticus 26:45 I will, for their sakes, remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought **אֹתָם** them out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their Elohim: I am יהוה. 46 These are the statutes and judgments and Torah, which יהוה made between Him and the Children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses. C-MATS



Exiles cared for by angels

Question: The Israelites did not listen to the warnings in this chapter, so what happens to them? Leviticus 26 refers to the sins of the First Temple era and its aftermath, while Deuteronomy 28 refers to the sins leading up to the second Destruction and the current exile. Leviticus 26 speaks frequently of neglect of the Sabbatical Year as a cause of the exile, a theme that is explicitly mentioned in II Chronicles 36:21 as a reason for the exile. Another major proof that our chapter speaks of the First Temple era is that it does not promise either complete repentance or a total redemption. Verse 42 says only that יהוה will remember the covenant, but not that He will return Israel to its former eminence or that all the exiled Israelites will return to the Land. After the promise that יהוה will remember the covenant, the very next verse speaks again of the violated Sabbaticals and the Land bereft of its children. Indeed, when the Babylonian exile ended, Israel did not become a free country; it was a vassal state of Persia, and later of Syria and Rome. When King Cyrus of Persia gave permission to the Israelites to return to the Land, only 42,360 people did return, a very small percentage of the nation, and during the years of the Second Temple, the majority of Israelites lived elsewhere.

Question: Should we despise the discipline of יהוה? Should we be angry when bad things happen to us?

Psalms 94:12 Blessed is the man who You chasten (*discipline*), O Yah and teach out of Your Torah; 13 That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be dug for the wicked. 14 For יהוה will not cast off His people; neither will He forsake His inheritance. 15 For judgment shall return to righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it. C-MATS

Job 5:17 Surely, happy is the man who Eloah corrects; therefore, despise not you the chastening of the Almighty. 18 For He makes sore and binds up; He wounds and His hands make whole. 19 He will deliver you in six troubles; yes, in seven there shall no evil touch you. 20 In famine He will redeem you from death; and in war from the power of the sword. 21 You shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shall you be afraid of destruction when it comes. 22 At destruction and famine you shall laugh; neither shall you be afraid of the beasts of the earth. 23 For you shall be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you. 24 And you shall know that your tent is in peace; and you shall visit your fold and shall miss nothing. 25 You shall know also that your seed shall be great and your offspring as the grass of the earth. 26 You shall come to your grave in a full age, like as a shock of grain comes in its season. C-MATS

Hebrews 12:7 If you endure chastening, Elohim deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? 8 But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. C-MATS

Question: What is Hebrews 12:11 saying? According to this part of scripture, יהוה is giving us the discipline so that we have a life of peace and make us righteous like him. יהוה wants each of His sons away from the things of this world and everything that keeps us from Him. So when we suffer a tragedy or something that we see and recognize as a discipline of יהוה, then it is because He wants us to come to Him and obey His word!

Question: Does יהוה discipline unfairly? Jeremiah 30:11 For I am אֶתֶד with you, says יהוה, to save you: for I will make a full end of all the nations where I have scattered you, but I will not make a full end of you; but I will correct you in measure (justice) and will in no wise leave you unpunished. C-MATS

Question: What happens to the man who ignores יהוה's discipline? Proverbs 13:18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuses correction; but he that regards reproof shall be honored. C-MATS

Question: Should a father discipline his child like יהוה disciplines us? Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child; for if you beat him with the rod, he will not die. 14 אֶתֶד You shall beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul from Sheol. C-MATS

Leviticus 27:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying 2 Speak to the Children of Israel וְאָמַרְתָּ and you say to them, When a man makes a *clearly defined vow (promise)* to ליהוה to give him an amount equal to the value of a human being. 3 The value you are to assign to a man between the ages of 20 and 60 years is to be 50 shekels of silver (*1 ¼ pounds*) with the sanctuary shekel being the standard. C-MATS

Question: How much is 50 shekels of silver (*1 ¼ pounds*) worth today? Silver is approximately \$26.00 an ounce (2023). Twenty ounces (1 ¼ pounds) of silver today would equal \$520.00.



Paying vows in the Temple

Leviticus 27:4 And if a female, assign a value of 30 shekels. 5 And if *it is a child* 5 to 20 years old, assign a value of 20 shekels for a male and 10 shekels for a female. 6 And if *it is a child* from one month old to 5 years old, assign a value of 5 shekels of silver for a male and 3 shekels of silver for a female. 7 And if *it is a person past 60 years old*, if *it is* a male, assign a value of 15 shekels and for the female 10 shekels. 8 But if he *is too poor* to be evaluated, then he will present himself before the priest and the priest will value **אתו** *him* in keeping with the means of the person who made the vow. 9 And if *the vow is for the value of* an animal of the kind that *men bring as an offering* to ליהוה, all that *a person* gives of such to ליהוה will be sacred. 10 He will not exchange or replace **אתו** *it (him)* by *substituting* a good *animal* for a bad *animal*, or a bad *animal* for a good *animal*: and if he does make a substitution, then the animal and the one he has exchanged will be sacred. 11 And if *it is* any unclean animal that they do not offer *as a sacrifice* to ליהוה, then he will present **אתו** *the animal* before the priest: 12 And the priest will value **אתה** *it (him)*, whether *it is* good or bad: the value *set by* the priest will stand. 13 But if *the person making the vow* wants to redeem it, then he will add one-fifth to your valuation. 14 And when a man consecrates **אתו** *his house to be sacred* to ליהוה, then the priest will set a value based on whether *it is* good or bad: the value of **אתו** *it (him)* set by the priest will stand. 15 And if he that consecrates *it* will redeem (*purchase, ransom*) **אתו** *his house*, then he will add *one fifth* to the value you have set on it and it will revert back to him. 16 And if a man consecrates (*sanctifies*) to ליהוה *a part of a field* belonging to his tribe's possession, you are to value *it according to* the production of it: a homer (5 bushels) of barley seed *being valued* at 50 shekels of silver. 17 If he consecrates his field during the year of Jubilee, this valuation will stand. 18 But if he consecrates his field after the Jubilee, then shall *he* calculate to him the priest **אתו** *the money* according to the years that remain until the next Year of Jubilee and it will be deducted from your valuation. 19 And if the anyone wants to redeem **אתו** *the field*, then he that sanctified **אתו** *it (him)* will add *one fifth* to your evaluation and the field will be set aside to revert back to him. C-MATS

Leviticus 27:20 And if the seller does not want to redeem **אתו** *the field*, or if he has sold **אתו** *the field* to another man, it will not be redeemed any more. 21 But when the *purchaser of the field* has to vacate during the Jubilee, it will be sacred to ליהוה, as a field unconditionally consecrated; it will belong to the priest. 22 And if *he consecrates* **אתו** *a field to ליהוה which he has bought*, which is not a field from his tribe's possession; 23 then the priest **אתו** *the worth of* will *he* calculate according to the years remaining until the Year of Jubilee: and the man will pay **אתו** *the amount on that same day*, *since it is* sacred to ליהוה. 24 In the Year of Jubilee the field will returned **מאתו** *from him* to whom it was bought, to the person to whose tribal **אדמתו** *you held of (possession)* it belongs. 25 And all your valuations will be according to the shekel (2/5 of an ounce) of the sanctuary: 20 gerahs to the shekel. C-MATS



Shekel

Question: How was the value of the field calculated? The Torah gives a fifty-shekel assessment for a field big enough to require one chomer of barley seed or approximately 300,000 square feet. Smaller or larger fields would be redeemed for proportionate amounts. If the field was consecrated at the start of the fifty-year cycle -- and it is redeemed before any crop-years have elapsed -- the redeemer pays the full valuation of fifty shekels. The valuation goes down according to the number of elapsed years. *Chumash*

Leviticus 27:26 Only the firstborn of the animals, which should be ליהוה firstborn, no man will consecrate (*sanctify*) אָתָּה *it (him)*; whether *it is an* ox or sheep: *it is* to ליהוה. **27** And if *it is* an unclean animal, then he will redeem *it* according to your valuation and will add one fifth to it: or if the man does not want to redeem it, then it will be sold according to your valuation. **28** However nothing consecrated unconditionally which a man may consecrate to יהוה from all he owns-person, animal and a field he owns, is to be sold or redeemed: because everything consecrated unconditional *is* most sacred to יהוה. **29** No person sentenced to die, who is unconditionally consecrated, will be redeemed; *but* will certainly be put to death. **30** And all the tithe of the land, *whether* the seed of the land *or* the fruit of the tree, *is* to ליהוה: *it is* sacred to ליהוה. **31** And if a man wants to redeem his tithes, he must add a fifth to it. C-MATS

Question: What is the second tithe? During the first, second, fourth, and fifth years of the seven-year Sabbatical cycle, a farmer sets aside one-tenth of his produce, which he must protect from contamination and take to Jerusalem to be eaten. It is known as the second tithe, because it is separated from the crop only after the first tithe is separated for the Levite. The Torah permits the owner to redeem the tithe for coins, whereupon the sanctity devolves from the tithe to the coins, which the owner must take to the Jerusalem and use to purchase food or offerings that may be eaten. *Chumash*

Question: How can we tell if a man is righteous? A man is righteous if his household is righteous. A person who has been able to raise children who are filled with a spirit of righteousness and devotion to יהוה must be righteous himself. *Chumash*

Leviticus 27:32 And concerning the tithe from the herd or flock, the tenth *animal* that passes under the *shepherd's* staff will be sacred to ליהוה. **33** *The owner* will not inquire whether *it is* good or bad and he will not exchange it *for another animal*: if *the owner* exchanges it at all, then *both it and the one* he exchanged for it will be sacred; it cannot be redeemed. C-MATS

Question: How does a man count what animals belong to יהוה? Every tenth animal of those born during the current season must be sanctified as an offering. The entire newborn herd or flock is put into a corral with a narrow opening, and the animals are allowed to leave one by one. The owner or his designee touches each tenth one with a paint-daubed stick, marking it as maaser, or the tithe. Unlike other offerings, for which it is meritorious to choose only the best animals, the tithe must be left purely to chance; whichever one exits tenth is given to יהוה. The maaser-animal is brought as an offering. Its fats are offered upon the Altar and all of its meat is eaten by the owners and their guests. None of the meat need be given to the Kohanim. *Chumash*

Leviticus 27:34 These *are* the commandments, which commanded אֲתָּה יהוה Moses for *the* Children of Israel in Mount Sinai. C-MATS

Do you know?

1. יהוה rewards those who keep His _____.
2. יהוה punishes you ____ for ____ if you do not keep His commandments.
3. יהוה will break the ____ you have in your own power.
4. יהוה has scattered us to the ____ nations because of the sins of our ancestors.
5. The Israelites were exiled to ____ because they did not give the land its _____ rest.
6. Even in ____ we are still cared for by יהוה.
7. Everyone has the same ____ in יהוה's eyes.
8. A man must give יהוה a _____ of what he earns, grows, or produces.
9. If a man wants to redeem his tithes, he must add a ____ to it.
10. Every _____ years is a Sabbatical year.
11. The Year of Jubilee comes on the _____ year in the Sabbatical cycle.
12. The Year of Jubilee begins on the Day of _____.
13. In the Jubilee year, all land returns to the original _____
14. Every seventh year is like a _____ for the land, because no work is allowed to be done on it; the land must rest.
15. On the Year of Jubilee, a _____ was sounded in the Land.
16. The Tribe of ____ kept their land as a permanent possession.
17. You should not make a _____ when selling something to a poor man.
18. You are forbidden to charge _____ on a loan to another believer.
19. Slaves can be purchased from ____ nations.
20. If we keep יהוה's laws, יהוה promised us ____ in the Land and no wars.

Answers:

1. commandments
2. measure, measure
3. pride
4. gentile
5. Babylon, Sabbath
6. exile
7. value
8. tenth
9. fifth
10. seven
11. Fiftieth
12. Atonement
13. Owners
14. Sabbath
15. Shofar
16. Levi
17. profit
18. interest
19. Gentile, non-Israelite
20. peace

Bonus: What 35 curses will come upon you if you sin against יהוה? How many can you name?

Bonus:

1. swelling lesions
2. burning fever
3. frustrated longing
4. sowing seeds that will produce crops for the enemy
5. being struck down before the enemy
6. being under enemy control
7. fleeing with no one in pursuit
8. destruction of the Temple
9. the heaven will be like iron
10. the earth will be like copper
11. you will work hard in vain
12. the earth will not yield crops
13. trees will not yield fruit
14. fruit will drop from the tree before maturity
15. wild beasts
16. domestic animals die
17. poisonous snakes
18. death of children
19. loss of livestock
20. decrease of population
21. destruction of roads
22. cannibalism
23. destruction of defense structures (city walls)
24. death of people
25. loss of the Shechinah
26. destruction of cities
27. desolation of the sanctuaries
28. יהוה's refusal to accept offerings
29. the sword of foreign invaders
30. siege, forcing people into the cities
31. plague
32. food shortage
33. lack of fuel
34. crumbling bread
35. constant hunger

Haftorah

This week's *Haftorah* discusses the purchase of a field by Jeremiah, echoing one of the themes of this week's Torah portion—the purchase and redemption of real estate.

Jeremiah 16:19 O יהוה, my strength and my stronghold and my refuge in the day of affliction, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and shall say, Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, *even* vanity and things in which there is no profit. 20 Shall a man make to himself gods, which are not gods? 21 Therefore, surely, I will cause them to know, **הִנֵּנִי** *this* once will I cause them to know **אֶת־** My hand **וְאֶת־** and My might; and they shall know that My name is יהוה.

Jeremiah 17:1 The **חַטָּאת** *sin* of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the tablet of their heart and upon the horns of your altars; 2 While their children remember their altars and their Asherim by the green trees upon the high hills. 3 O My mountain in the field, **אֶתֶּן** *I will give* your substance and all your treasures for a spoil and your high places, because of sin, throughout all your borders. 4 And you, even of yourself, shall discontinue from your heritage that I gave you; and I will cause you to serve **אֶת־** your enemies in the land which you know not: for you have kindled a fire in My anger which shall burn forever. 5 So says יהוה: Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm and whose heart departs from יהוה. 6 For he shall be like the bush in the desert and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited. 7 Blessed is the man that trust in בִּיהוה and whose trust יהוה is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, that spreads out its roots by the river and shall not fear when heat comes, but its leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it? 10 I, יהוה, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. 11 As the partridge that sits on *eggs* which she has not laid, so is he that gets riches and not by right; in the midst of his days they shall leave him and at his end he shall be a fool. 12 A glorious throne, *set* on high from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary. 13 O יהוה, the Hope of Israel, all that forsake you shall be put to shame. They that depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken, *the fountain of living waters* **אֶת־** יהוה. 14 Heal me, O יהוה and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved: for **אֶתֶּךָ** *You* are my praise. C-MATS

This week's *Haftorah* discusses the punishments that await those who disregard יהוה's law, and the blessings that are the lot of those who follow the Creator's wishes. This follows the theme of this week's Torah reading which details at length the blessings and curses.

Jeremiah 32:6 And Jeremiah said, The word of יהוה came to me, saying, 7 Surely, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle shall come to you, saying, *Buy* you **אֶת־** my field that is in Anathoth; for the right of redemption is yours to buy it. 8 So Hanamel my uncles son came to me in the court of the guard according to the word of יהוה and said to me, *Buy* **אֶת־** my field, I pray you, that is in Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours and the redemption is yours; buy it for yourself. Then I knew this was the word of יהוה. 9 And I bought **אֶת־** the field **מֵחַנַּמֶּל** *from* Hanamel my uncles son that was in Anathoth and weighed him **אֶת־** the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I subscribed the deed and sealed it and called witnesses and weighed him the money in the scales. 11 So I took **אֶת־** deed of the purchase **אֶת־** that which was sealed, *according to the ordinance and custom* **וְאֶת־** and that which was open. C-MATS

Jeremiah 32:12 וְאָמַרְתִּי *and I am giving אֶת-* the deed of the purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's *son* and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the deed of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the guard. 13 And I charged אֶת Baruch before them, saying, 14 So says יהוה of צְבָאוֹת *Hosts*, the Elohim of Israel: Take *these אֶת-* evidences, this אֶת evidence of the purchase וְאֶת *and* which is sealed וְאֶת *and* this evidence which is open and put them in an earthen vessel; that they may continue many days. 15 For so says יהוה of צְבָאוֹת *Hosts*, the Elohim of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in אֶת הַאֲדָמָה *this* land. 16 Now after I had delivered אֶת- the deed of the purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to יהוה saying, 17 Ah Adonai יהוה! Surely אַתָּה *You* have made אֶת- the heavens וְאֶת- *and* the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm; there is nothing too hard for You, 18 Who shows loving-kindness to thousands and recompenses the iniquity of *the אֲבוֹתָם fathers* into the bosom of their children after them; the great, the mighty Elohim, יהוה of צְבָאוֹת *Hosts* is His name; 19 Great in counsel and mighty in work; Whose eyes are upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings: 20 Who set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even to this day both in Israel and among *other* men; and made you a name, as at this day; 21 And did bring forth אֶת- your people אֶת- Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror; 22 And gave them אֶת הַאֲדָמָה *this* אֶת- land which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; 23 And they came in and possessed אֶתָּה *it* (her), but they obeyed not Your voice, nor walked in Your Torah neither walked *in אֶת* all that You commanded them they have done nothing: therefore, You have caused אֶת all אֶת הַאֲדָמָה *this* evil to come upon אֶתָּה *them*. 24 Behold the mounds, they are come to the city to take it and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans that fight against it because of the sword and of famine and of pestilence and what You have spoken is come to pass; and, surely, You see it. 25 וְאַתָּה *And You*, אָמַרְתָּ *You said* to me, O Adonai יהוה *Buy* you the field for money and call witnesses; whereas the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 Then came the word of יהוה to Jeremiah, saying, 27 Surely I am יהוה, the Elohim of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?

Brit Chadashah

Question: Should you be happy with your station in life? 1 Corinthians 7:21 Were you called being a servant? Worry not about it: but if you desire to be made free, do so. 22 For he that is called in Adonai, being a servant, is Adonai's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Mashiah's servant. 23 You are bought with a price; you are not the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with Elohim. C-MATS

Question: Should you marry or become close friends with unbelievers? 2 Corinthians 6:14 Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what concord has Mashiah with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel? 16 And what agreement has the temple of Elohim with idols? for 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 Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says יהוה, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says יהוה Almighty. C-MATS

Discuss: How are you separate from the others around you? Do others see you as different or do you just act like everyone else around you?

Spiritual Exercise: Do something this week to come out of the world and be separate.

Question: What must you do to prove your love for יהוה? Yahusha said:

John 14:15 If you love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more; but you see me: because I live, you shall live also. 20 At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. C-MATS

John 15:10 If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. C-MATS

Spiritual Exercise: Do you love יהוה enough to obey his commandments? What can you change in your life this week to show יהוה that you love Him?

Question: Will Elohim pay a man back for his sins? **Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; Elohim is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. C-MATS**

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Yahusha haMashiach. 4 And these things we write to you, that your joy may be full. 5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that Elohim is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Yahusha haMashiach his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. C-MATS

Spiritual Exercise: Do not say that you are not in sin this week, but confess your sins and be purified from your wrongdoing.

Question: Did Yahusha regularly attend synagogue on the Sabbath Day? Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 **The Spirit of יהוה is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,** 19 **To preach the acceptable year of יהוה.** 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.** C-MATS

Question: Why must we STOP AND THINK BEFORE WE SPEAK? It is so important not to embarrass other people, and unless we really think about it, it's possible to hurt people's feelings without even knowing it. This week's portion gives us a specific reminder to be extra careful not to hurt or embarrass people with our words.

"OFF THE RACK"

Beverly always had mixed feelings when she dropped off a bag of used clothing at The Depot, the local second-hand clothing store. This store sold the used clothing at very cheap prices for people who couldn't afford to buy their clothing at regular stores, giving it the not-so-nice nickname, 'the poor people's store.' On the one hand it felt good to clean out her overstuffed closet of so many outdated outfits that thankfully her family could afford. Yet somehow each outfit, even though she had hardly worn a lot of them, sort of felt like an old friend. It was a bit hard to say goodbye. 'Well enough of this,' she thought as she was about to dump the bag into the drop-off box at the back of the store. Suddenly she heard a familiar voice from the other end of the store. She looked up, surprised to see her friend Liz walk in with her younger sister. 'Are they dropping off clothing too?' Beverly noticed that they came in empty-handed, and they were going up and down the racks like they were trying to pick out clothes. It didn't make sense. Why would a couple of well off kids like them be shopping in the 'poor people's store'? Suddenly it clicked. Beverly remembered hearing how Liz's dad had lost his job a while ago. Even though Liz had laughed it off at the time, she had also stopped coming with Bev and the gang when they would go off to the mall and stock up on the latest fashions. 'Wow, things must be harder for them than I thought,' sighed Beverly. She watched from across the store, without being seen by the girls who were picking through the used clothing bins. Beverly was about to go over to them and say 'hi' when it dawned on her how embarrassed Liz would feel if she knew she had seen her. But what could she do? They were moving her way, and there was no other exit or way to get out of sight, short of jumping into the drop-off box! She braced for what was sure to be a very embarrassing encounter for her friend, when suddenly she got an idea. She quickly dug a few of the outfits from her drop-off bag and emptied the rest onto one of the tables. She held up one of the outfits in front of herself as if she was looking it over. "Oh hi Liz!" Beverly said in her best, surprised voice. "Do you shop here too?" The two sisters looked at her and started to blush. "Um, well, you know we were just..." Liz started to mumble, but Beverly cut her off. "Oh, I thought this was just my little secret. I don't know why more people don't shop here. I found some of the nicest things here at a really great price. Why waste money at the mall for no reason, right?"

Beverly smiled brightly, and was happy to see Liz and her sister looking relieved and much more relaxed. "So what do you think of this outfit for me?" she asked, holding up one of her own outfits. "It looks practically brand new! I think I'm gonna take it. You know I saw a lot of nice stuff over there," she said pointing to the clothing she just brought. "I'm done shopping for now, but I bet there's some stuff that would be perfect for the two of you." With that, she grabbed her outfit and brought it to the sales counter, waving to the now smiling sisters. She paid for (her own) dress and left the store before the confused sales woman could ask any questions. The next morning, Beverly's mom noticed her heading out for school wearing the outfit. "Hey, didn't you drop off that one at The Depot?" she asked surprised. "Well, Mom, I was going to, until I realized how I could do an even bigger act of kindness by keeping it instead."

Question: Why did Beverly do what she did instead of just going up to her friends and saying 'hi'? She realized that if her friend, Liz, who could once afford to shop at exclusive stores and now had to buy second-hand, saw she was dropping off clothes, it would make her feel inferior and embarrassed, so she came up with a good way to let her friend save face - by pretending she was shopping there too.

Question: Is not having a lot of money and buying things second-hand something to be embarrassed about? Though it's understandable that someone might feel embarrassed in Liz's situation, and Beverly was right to be sensitive of her feelings, Liz really had nothing to be embarrassed about. As long as a person is trying to do good and live a life of proper values she needn't feel embarrassed regardless of whether she is rich or poor, good looking or ugly etc., and vice-versa.

Question: Do you think Beverly was being untruthful by saying she was there shopping when she was really dropping off clothes? Truthfulness is much more than a matter of stating correct or incorrect facts. The Torah permits one to change his words in order to save someone from embarrassment. In this case, by pretending to be shopping to save her friends' embarrassment, Beverly, in a higher sense, was being much more truthful than if she had merely told them the straight facts. But this can be done in only rare instances and no one should ever get into the habit of telling a 'white lie' even when it's justified.

Question: If a formerly rich person loses his money and requires charity, we should give him more than someone who was always poor. Why do you think that is? Do you agree or do you think it is fairer to support everyone equally? Someone who was always poor has grown used to it, and doesn't feel the same degree of pain about the situation as someone who was once wealthy and now must make do on much less. Therefore, we should be sensitive to his predicament, and give him more, even if it means giving less to the other.

Question: Is it worst to hurt someone personally or financially? It is worse to hurt someone personally than financially, because money can be replaced, but shame lingers on. Someone who embarrasses his fellow Believer in public is like a murderer.

Spiritual Exercise: How can you save someone from being embarrassed this week?

Question: Isn't a person supposed to be able to just 'take a joke' and not feel hurt over things that people say? No more than he is supposed to just 'take a punch' and not feel the pain of a fist on his nose. Hurtful words simply hurt, and labeling them as a 'joke' doesn't make them any less of an assault.

Discuss: A friend bought a certain type of car based on your advice. After a couple of days the car breaks down. Are you responsible to reimburse your friend since he or she bought the car based on your advice?

Question: Why do you think people make the mistake of thinking they can act differently when they are dealing with money and business? Many times a person can feel a desire for something, and only afterwards come up with a reason, or rationalization why it's okay. The prospect of wealth of any sort can be extremely tempting, and cause a normally ethical person to find a reason to put his values on hold. The Torah realizes this, and goes out of the way to tell us to remain kind and honest, even in the face of this kind of temptation.

Question: But if nearly everyone around us is acting unscrupulously, won't we lose out unless we do act the same way? We might think so, and it even might look that way in the short run. But in the end, fairness and honesty will always win out. יהוה is really the one who is running the show, and He wants us to be fair. So we can be sure that somehow He will make sure a person won't lose, but only gain by doing things the right way.

Question: How do a person's business scruples reflect on the closeness of his relationship with יהוה? A great Torah leader once said that even if a person appears on the outside very religious, if he is dishonest in his business dealings it is a sign that deep down he really does not believe in יהוה. We can understand this, as our concept of belief in יהוה includes within it the belief that יהוה is the only source of a person's success - including business success. Therefore one who truly believes in יהוה would never imagine that he would have to do something against His will, like act dishonestly, for יהוה to supply him with success. The mark of a close relationship to יהוה is one who trusts Him enough to act the way He wants him to act.

Question: Is there ever an exception, when one is justified in abandoning his ethical values? Although what is ethical can change depending on the circumstance, once the ethical course is determined, there is never a justification to abandon it. However, it is often difficult to know exactly what the ethical option at any given moment is and the Torah is a comprehensive but brief account of יהוה-given ethics which goes into great detail to present virtually every conceivable life situation, and a guide to its ethical response.

"PAYING RESPECTS"

Another fun-filled summer at Camp Wallabee was in full swing. The campers had settled in, and were really enjoying the long, lazy days of sports, nature walks, and especially swimming and boating on Lake Wallabee. One day, Jay and his friends were chatting and joking as they made their way back from the lake on their way to lunch. They walked quickly past the old janitor's shack, paying it no attention. Only Jay stopped for a moment to greet the small, wrinkled man half-doing inside.

"Hi Ed, have a good day!" Jay said, with a big smile. He exchanged a few pleasant words with the man, and ran to catch up with his friends who had already reached the lunchroom.

"Hey Jay, what took you so long?" teased Adam. "Having another deep conversation with your friend, the janitor?" he laughed derisively.

Jay blushed, embarrassed by the boy's comment. Old Ed was a plain, simple man without much of an education, doing what the boys considered an unimportant job. They would sometimes laugh and make fun of him behind his back, but usually just ignored him, as if he didn't even exist.

But Jay's parents had always taught him to show respect to everyone he met. His dad would always say, "If יהוה felt somebody was important enough to put into His world, certainly he's important enough for us to treat decently."

Jay dug into his lunch, trying to ignore his friend's barb, and the incident was soon forgotten.

The next day was boating day. The excited campers trotted down the path to the lake, each running past Ed, the janitor, without giving him a second look. As Jay passed by, he felt tempted to do the same. Maybe the other kids were right, and it was just foolish to pay so much attention to someone like that.

He was about to fly by like the rest, but something inside wouldn't let him. "A person is a person," he thought. "Just because he's not someone people consider so important, that doesn't mean I should ignore him." He stopped and greeted Ed, who as usual smiled back at him and mumbled a few friendly words.

Jay and Adam, who had teamed up, felt like ancient explorers as they rowed their boat to the far end of the lake. But they got a little carried away, and rowed a bit too close to the rocky shore. Suddenly there was a big bump and a loud ripping sound. The boys were shocked to hear those sounds, and even more shocked to see water gushing into the boat.

"A sharp rock must have pierced the bottom of our boat!" yelled Jay.

Fortunately they were very close to the edge of the lake, and they were able to row the leaking boat quickly to the nearby shore.

"What do we do now?" asked Adam, panic in his voice.

"Don't worry," Jay said. "When the counselors check the list of boats, and notice that the one you signed out didn't come back in time, they'll for sure come and find us."

But Adam didn't look relieved. In fact he looked terrified. "Oh, no!" he gasped. "I was in such a hurry, I forgot to sign us out for the boat this time. No one knows we're here. We'll be stuck here forever!"

Sure enough, hours passed with no sign of help on the way. It was now starting to get dark. The boys had no idea what to do and were on the verge of despair.

Suddenly they heard the sound of an approaching motorboat. They were relieved to see chief water counselor who spotted them with his searchlight. "Wow, thanks for saving us!" cried out the grateful boys.

The counselor shook his head. "Don't thank me," he said with a stern look. "Without your names on the sign-out list, I had no idea you were out there."

The boys looked confused. "So how did you know we were missing?"

"You can thank old Ed, the janitor," the counselor said. "I was about to lock up the dock for the night, when he came running over and told me that all of the boys hadn't come back. I assured him they had, but he insisted, saying that he had been in his shack all afternoon, and one boy, the only boy who ever spoke to him, had greeted him on the way to the lake, but not on the way back. I counted the boats again, and sure enough, we discovered he was right."

The boys stood there with mouths wide open. They both saw very clearly just how important the 'unimportant' man that Jay had properly treated with respect had really been in their lives.

Question: How did most of the boys feel about Ed the Janitor? They felt that since he wasn't very smart or rich, he wasn't important enough to talk to.

Question: How did Jay feel differently? He felt that every single person is important because he was made by יהוה.

Question: Why do you think Ed the janitor noticed that Jay hadn't returned and went out of his way to tell the water counselor? Unlike his friends, Jay made a special effort to greet Ed every day, and treat him with dignity. Because Jay cared about the janitor, Ed, in turn, cared about Jay. It was only natural that he would notice that Jay hadn't passed him and greeted him again on his way back from the lake. When we go out of our way to treat each and every person we meet in a way that lets them know we feel they are important, we bring a lot of light into their lives, and do our part to make the world a better place.

Question: What gives a person value and makes him important? Is it his wealth, looks, or talents? According to the Torah, a person is important and valuable just because he's a person created by יהוה. When somebody wanted to donate his 'value' in silver to the Tabernacle, each person in every age group was told to give the same amount, implying that they all had equal value in the eyes of יהוה. We learn from here to treat each and everyone we meet with true respect, no matter how important or not they seem on the outside.

Question: We shouldn't look down on any person, as there is nobody who doesn't have his moment. What does this statement mean to you? There is a temptation to look at the world from a very limited viewpoint, and see people in terms of 'haves' and 'have-nots.' It can seem that only those who have whatever society values are worthy of our respect. You should adopt a higher, more spiritual perspective, and realize that if someone weren't an important part of יהוה's plan for the world, he wouldn't be here. Each person has his 'moment,' his unique reason for being put here, and therefore is just as important in the big scheme of things as anyone else.

Question: Are all men created equal? Yes and no. In the ultimate sense, as יהוה's children we are all equally valuable and necessary parts of creation. Yet each of us has been given a role to play, and the assets needed to play that role, which can be vastly different. The ideal way of thinking is to respect the intrinsic spiritual value of every human being, but not make the mistake of thinking that we should somehow discourage, or prevent people from being their unique selves, and playing the roles for which they are especially suited.

Question: Would you say there is any difference between being polite and showing respect? On the surface, they can appear quite similar, but really, they are miles apart. Politeness is merely a set code of actions and patterns of speech that a given society deems acceptable. As long as one follows the rules, he is being polite, regardless of how he feels inside about the other person. Respect comes from within. It requires us to truly care about the other person's feelings, and realize that every person we meet is a special creation of יהוה and for that reason alone deserves our utmost respect.

Question: Why do you think it is often harder to treat family and close friends with respect than it is to treat strangers? Ironically, it is because we feel so close to them. We let our guard down and feel they will accept us with our imperfections, and a stranger would not. Yet, although this may be true, we must overcome the temptation to lower our level of behavior. Someone's tolerance of our imperfections doesn't justify our failure to try to improve. While we need not be formal to those closest to us, we should always be respectful.

Seeing Things Differently

Question: What should we look for in people? It's good to try to see the good in everyone. We should always try to see the good in what people do even when at first it's not apparent.

DOUBLE VISION

Brad looked at the list on the classroom wall and frowned. The teacher, Mr. Gable, had split the class into research teams to work together on their month-long science project about the five senses, and from the looks of it, it was going to be a month of misery. His group was supposed to study the sense of sight. The problem was who he'd been assigned to work with. First on the list was that bossy kid Kevin who just couldn't stop telling everyone what to do. Next, and even worse, was Larry, who drove him crazy by always asking a million questions about everything. Then -- oh, no! -- was Jack the joker -- how were they ever going to get any work done with him cracking jokes all the time? He scanned the rest of the names. The only decent kid on the whole list was his pal, Mike. "Mr. Gable, you've got to switch me to a different team!" Brad begged. "Switch me to Hearing, Smell, Touch! I don't care which. But I just can't work a whole month with those guys on the Vision team. I'll go nuts!" "Going nuts, that would be quite serious, Brad," the teacher agreed, with a bemused look over the tops of his glasses. "But do you think you could retain your sanity for just one day? Class is just about to start. Come see me again after class and we'll discuss it further, okay?" Without much of a choice, Brad glumly nodded and shuffled over to the corner of the classroom where his team was supposed to meet. He grabbed the chair next to Mike -- at least his friend could help share in his misery.

Sure enough, things went as expected, as bossy Kevin stood up, appointed himself group leader and began giving a speech. That is, when he didn't have to stop every two minutes to answer one of Larry's constant questions or to wait for the group to stop cracking up over one of Jack's jokes. "Pretty bad, huh?" Brad whispered into Mike's ear. "What do you mean?" "I mean it stinks that we got stuck on the terrible research team. The teacher said that I could maybe switch tomorrow -- maybe we can ask if you can too."

Brad expected Mike to readily agree, but instead the kid gave him a confused look. "Why do you want to switch? This is a great team. Kevin's already agreed to take charge, which will make sure things get done. Larry's questions will keep everything clear and make sure we stay on track. And in case it gets too heavy, we've got a guy like Jack around to keep things light. All the other kids fit in perfectly too, so why in the world would you want to switch?" "Um, well, I guess when you look at it that way..." Just then, the bell rang to go to the next class. Brad gathered his stuff and began dashing out when the teacher waved him over to his desk. "Okay, Brad, you mentioned that you wanted to switch teams. Let's see, there's..." "Uh, that's okay, Mr. Gable," Brad cut in with a nervous smile. "I don't need to switch anymore." "You mean you want to stay on the 'Vision' team, after all?" "Yeah," Brad smiled. "I'm learning so much about vision. Just one day on the team, and I'm already seeing things differently!"

Question: What life-lesson do you think Brad learned that day? He'd been focusing on what was bad about the traits of the kids on his research team. But from the way his friend was able to see the good in each kid and how he acted, Brad learned a valuable new and positive way of seeing things.

Question: How do you think focusing on people's good traits could enhance your life? A lot of the way we feel comes from how we look at the world. If we try to see the good in others, we will find ourselves surrounded by people we enjoy being around. Also, positively is contagious-the more we see the good in others, the more they will see the good in us.

Question: Whose way of looking at things was more accurate-Brad or Mike? Why? In one sense, they both were accurate. The kids had the traits they observed in them. Yet their interpretations were very different. By choosing a positive interpretation, we are creating a brighter world for ourselves and the positive energy we emit helps the people around us bring out their best, too.

Question: Is there ever a time when we shouldn't strive to see the good in others? While searching for the good in others is generally a positive value, we mustn't try to find good in people or situations, which could place others or ourselves in danger.

Spiritual exercise: At least one time today, try to see something good in a person around you.

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