

משפטים

MISHPATIM/ORDINANCES

Shemot/Exodus 21:1-24:18

Our **heavenly Father** has made the **Hebrews** to be a **unique people** in the world. They are a **nation** and a **religion** at the same time. We are beginning to take a look at the **2nd covenant** entered into with the **Hebrews**. The **1st covenant** was made with **Abram**, the **first patriarch**, and the **first Hebrew**. The **2nd covenant** is made with **all of the Hebrews** at **Mount Sinai**. In the **1st covenant**, **יהוה** promised **Abram** both **descendants** and a **Promised Land**. Now we are taking a look at the **commandments** which would be the **glue holding together a people** who were **still without that Promised Land**. The **covenant at Mount Sinai** would **continue to hold them together** even when they were **scattered** through all **four corners of the earth**.

Many have commented on the **Hebrew letter vav** (ו) which is the **first letter** of the first word that **begins** our parasha (Hebrew reads right to left):

Shemot 21:1 "And these (וְאֵלֶּה) are the judgments which you shall set before them:

Commentators point out that wherever the **Torah** uses the word “**these**” (וְאֵלֶּה) by itself, it signals a **discontinuity** with **what has been stated previously**. But where it uses “**and/then these**” (וְאֵלֶּה) it signals **continuity**. At first it would seem that it would be **hard to find a greater contrast between the revelation** the Israelites **experienced** last week at **Mount Sinai** and **this week’s laws** pertaining to the **family life of a slave**, **judicial proceedings**, **agriculture rules**, etc. Yet our **beginning Hebrew word** (וְאֵלֶּה) points to these **everyday laws** as a **continuation** of last week’s **revelation on Mount Sinai**. “The **faith** of the **Hebrew** is not meant to be just a **religion of ‘peak experiences’**, but of **living in accordance with the divine will**” (Abraham Maslow). Our **heavenly Father** is “**in the details**” as we shall see in this parasha.

Let’s begin with an attempt to **define** the **name** of our parasha this week – **Mishpatim** (משפטים). In our **English translations**, the word is usually translated as “**judgments**” or “**ordinances**”. There is **more than one Hebrew word** translated as “**judge**” in our Bibles. It is important for us to be able to **tell them apart**. The Hebrew word “**palil**” (פָּלִיל) means “**to judge**” or “**to distinguish the difference between things**.” In **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:31** we have an example of people being able to “**judge**” the **difference between gods**:

Devarim 32:31 For their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge (פָּלִיל) this.

We find this word in our parasha this week as **appointed men** are **required** to **make a decision** based on **Torah**:

Shemot 21:22 "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges (פָּלִיל) determine.

The Hebrew word “**din**” (דִּין) is most often about **יהוה** making “**judgments**”. Perhaps you’ve heard of the term “**Beit Din**,” which means the “**house of judgment**”, based on **elected judges making the determination of how to walk out Torah**. **Individuals** do not always have the right to **decide on grey areas**. **Torah** gives the **elders** or the **elected officials** these **responsibilities**. Here are a couple examples of the word “**din**” (דִּין):

Psalm 135:14 For יהוה will **judge** (שָׁפַט) His people, And He will have compassion on His servants.

Zechariah 3:7 "Thus says יהוה of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, And if you will keep My command, Then you shall also **judge** (שָׁפַט) My house, And likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk Among these who stand here.'

Thus we come to the Hebrew word “shaphat” (שָׁפַט) which refers to “**judging sin**”. An example of this is in **Bereshith** (Genesis) **18:25** where Abraham calls Elohim a “**Judge of all the earth**”:

Bereshith 18:25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the **Judge** (שָׁפַט) of all the earth do right?"

In **Devarim 1:16**, Elohim instructs “**judges**” (שֹׁפְטִים) to “**judge** (שָׁפַט) **righteously**”:

Devarim 1:16 "Then I commanded your **judges** (שֹׁפְטִים) at that time, saying, 'Hear the cases between your brethren, and **judge** (שָׁפַט) **righteously** between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.'

The name of our Torah parasha is **Mishpatim/Ordinances/Judgments** (מִשְׁפָּטִים) and is the **plural** of “**mishpat/ordinance/judgment**” (מִשְׁפָּט). The root of “**mishpat**” is “**shaphat**” (שָׁפַט), our word above which refers to “**judging sin.**” The “**mishpatim**” (מִשְׁפָּטִים), these **judgments** which are **listed for us** in our **parasha**, are what is used by the “**judge**” (shaphat) to “**judge sin.**” In other words, these are **rules** for the **judges** to use in making **fair resolutions**. They are **not intended** to be used by **individuals** for **taking the law into their own hands**.

In the **Brit Chadasha**, we are often **confused** by verses concerning **judging**:

Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.² "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."³ "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?⁴ "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?⁵ "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

In context, these verses simply mean, “**do not place yourself in the position reserved for the elected judges or in the position of the Almighty.**” Before we try to **force correction** upon a **brother/sister** for what **WE** perceive to be a **sin**, we should **consider** that we often **do not have the right perspective** on the **situation**. Are we able to **judge another’s motives**? Do we have a **critical spirit**? We must not be **prejudiced** by making a **judgment before** we have the **proper basis** or are **in the position** to be **able to judge**. **Yeshua** gave us a **perfect example** of **proper/improper judging** with the **woman** brought to Him who was **accused of adultery**. Here is the story:

John 8:1 But Yeshua went to the Mount of Olives.² Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.³ Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst,⁴ they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act."⁵ "Now Moshe, in the Torah, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"⁶ This they said, testing Him, that they might have

something of which to accuse Him. But Yeshua stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.⁷ So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "**He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.**"⁸ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.⁹ Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Yeshua was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.¹⁰ When Yeshua had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "**Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?**"¹¹ She said, "No one, Adonai." And Yeshua said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Notice the different types of “**judging**” done by **Yeshua**:

- He **properly judges or discerns the sin** (implied when He tells her to sin no more)
- He **properly judges (discerns) the appropriate response**
- He **does not “judge” the woman** because at this time, **He is not the One in position to make the “judgment”**. In other words, **He is following Torah.**

Okay, let’s change directions. Were the **Israelites led out of bondage, into freedom**, only to be “**burdened**” by a set of restrictions and laws? We know this is **absolutely not true**. The **truth** is that the **Israelites** are entering into a **binding relationship** with the **Elohim** who is the **source of their freedom**. To be the **children of the Most High** do they not need to **learn ways of holiness** in order to **draw near to Him**?

In our parasha, יהוה is **teaching the Israelites how to KEEP their freedom by entering into a holy lifestyle**. They will learn to **appreciate their freedom** by applying **Torah in all aspects of their lives**. This “**freedom**” comes with the **price of being responsible to the “freedom Giver.”** From the beginning, it was **never meant to be a burden**.

*Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** by which **Messiah** has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a **yoke of bondage**. (referring to the **bondage of sin**)*

*1 John 5:3 For this is the **love of Yah**, that we **keep His commandments**. And **His commandments are not burdensome**.*

Justice in the **Torah faith flows from the experience of injustice at the hands of the Egyptians**. יהוה is giving them a **radically different type of society**. The laws are meant to be **impartially administered, treating all fairly**. Consider one of the ordinances:

Shemot 23:2 "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice."³ "You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

In fact **Torah belonged equally to the entire congregation of Israel**:

*Devarim 33:4 Moshe commanded **Torah** for us, A **heritage of the congregation of Jacob**.*

In the first century, **Josephus** would write that:

“should any **one of our nation** be asked about our **laws**, he will **repeat them as readily as his own name**. The **result** of our thorough education in our laws from the very dawn of intelligence is that they are, as it were, **engraved on our souls**. Hence to **break them is rare**, and **no one can evade punishment by the excuse of ignorance.**”

Read the following carefully as **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks** compares **laws** with **love**:

“Judaism is a religion of law – not because it does not believe in love (You shall love the Lord you G-d, You shall love your neighbor as yourself) but because, without justice, neither love nor liberty nor human life itself can flourish. Love alone does not free a slave from his or her chains.”

In the **United States** we have **literally hundreds of thousands of laws** which **govern and regulate social interactions**. **Laws ensure** that our **selfish drives** for **possessions and power** are **held in check, deterring us** from otherwise **exercising our often unbridled and selfish passions**. **Laws set up a method of restitution** when someone damages another’s person or property. **Lawless societies breed anarchy**. **Laws are an absolute necessity** for a **free society**.

Jewish Rabbi Ibn Ezra (12 century Spain) taught that the **truest measure of a moral system** is how it **relates to the weakest and most vulnerable members of that society**, those who typically **lack the natural protections** that come with **fame and fortune**. **Ibn Ezra enumerates three broad categories of laws** that are found in our parasha:

- 1. Laws concerning oppression of another’s body**
 - a. **Regulation of servitude** (Shemot 21:1-11)
 - b. **Addition bodily damages** including striking another person or one’s parents (21:12-17)
 - c. **Kidnapping**, causing **loss of limb** or other injury to their organs, whether with one’s body, one’s animals or one’s possessions (21:18-22:3)
- 2. Laws concerning harm to another’s property**
 - a. **Damages to the field and vineyard** or to their respective products (22:4-5)
 - b. **Laws of custodianship** and the care of borrowed articles (22:6-14)
 - c. **The seduction of minors** (22:15-16)
 - d. Regulations concerning **lending money** (22:25-27)
- 3. Laws formulated in order to restrict the violence that one may perpetrate in secret**
 - a. Various **ritual infractions** (22:28-31)
 - b. **Bearing false witness**, favoring litigants, failing to restore lost articles, perverting justice and taking bribes or oppressing the convert (23:1-9)

Thus, considering **Ibn Ezra’s divisions**, the **laws are arranged** according to a structure that aims to **foster concern for not only another’s body, but for their possessions and welfare** as well. **Violence** is often **obvious**, but one can also **commit more subtle crimes** that are also **insidious**.

Now note how the **above order of laws corresponds** with the **last five of the Ten Commandments**:

- 1. Oppression of another’s body**
 - a. You shall **not kill** (6th)
 - b. You shall **not commit adultery** (7th)
- 2. Harm to another’s property**
 - a. You shall **not steal** (8th)
- 3. Violence that one may perpetrate in secret**
 - a. You shall **not bear false witness** (9th)
 - b. You shall **not covet...** (10th)

Okay, let's narrow our focus on a repeated command against harming a stranger (gare - גַּר):

Shemot 22:21 "You shall neither mistreat a stranger (gare - גַּר) nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Shemot 23:9 "Also you shall not oppress a stranger (gare - גַּר), for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Verse 22:21 mentions “mistreating” and “oppressing” the stranger. The sages have concluded that “oppressing” means monetary wrongdoing, or taking financial advantage by robbery or overcharging. “Mistreating” refers to verbal wrong-doing. Rabbi Eleazar notes that:

“harsh or derogatory speech touches on self-image and self-respect in a way that other wrongs do not. What is more, as Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani makes clear, financial wrongdoing can be rectified in a way that wounding speech cannot. Even after apology, the pain (and the damage to reputation) remains. A stranger (gare - גַּר), in particular, is sensitive to his status within society. He is an outsider. Strangers do not share with the native-born a memory, a past, or a sense of belonging. They are conscious of their vulnerability. Therefore the Almighty wanted His people to be especially careful not to wound them by reminding them that they are not ‘one of us.’”

There is in fact a repeated emphasis on the “stranger” throughout the Torah. Sometimes the stranger is mentioned along with the poor, and other times he is mentioned along with the widow and the orphan. Often we see this thought:

Shemot 12:49 "One Torah shall be for the native-born and for the stranger (gare - גַּר) who dwells among you."

יהוה seems to have a heart for the stranger. In fact, He tells His people that the stranger must be loved:

Vayikra/Leviticus 19:34 "The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am יהוה your Elohim.

The Israelites are to pursue the heart of יהוה, and for this reason they are to love the stranger. For loving the stranger is an attribute of יהוה, Himself. He has made Himself the protector of those who have no one else to protect them:

Devarim 10:17 "For יהוה your Elohim is Elohai of Elohim and Adonai of Adonim, the great El, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.¹⁸ "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.¹⁹ "Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

It is the Ramban who gives commentary on the logic of this command to love the stranger:

“The correct interpretation appears to me to be that He is saying: **do not wrong a stranger or oppress him, thinking as you might that none can deliver him out of your hand; for you know that you were strangers in the land of Egypt and I saw the oppression with which the Egyptian oppressed you, and I avenged your cause on them**, because I behold the tears of such who are oppressed and

have no comforter, and on the side of their oppressors there is power, and I deliver each one from him that is too strong for him. **Likewise you shall not afflict the widow and the orphan for I will hear their cry, for all these people do not rely upon themselves but trust in Me.**"

Rabbi Ohr ha-Hayyim adds another fascinating insight. He says:

"It may be that the **very sanctity that Israelites feel as children of the covenant may lead them to look down on those who lack a similar lineage.** Therefore they are commanded not to feel superior to the **stranger** (gare - גַּר), but instead to **remember the degradation their ancestors experienced in Egypt.** As such, it is a **command of humility in the face of strangers.**"

There are a couple of other **Hebrew words** translated as "stranger". Both **nachri** (נַכְרִי) and **zur** (זוּר) have a strong sense of "alien" or "foreigner." The word "stranger" (gare - גַּר) that we have been studying, however, signifies **one who is not an Israelite by birth but who has come to live, on a long term basis within Israelite society under the laws of Torah.**

This all has **special significance** to us who may **not physically** be "Israel", but who have been **grafted into Israel.** In **Ephesians**, **Rav Sha'ul** (Paul) speaks specifically of the **stranger**:

*Ephesians 2:12 that at that time you were without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without Adonai in the world.
¹³ But now in Messiah Yeshua you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.*

Well, it seems as if the **Father** was **from the beginning, preparing a place within the commonwealth of Israel for the "stranger".** He never intended for the stranger to feel like a second class citizen.

Moving on...let's consider a couple more **interesting mishpatim**:

Shemot 23:4 " If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. ⁵ "If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

We have **two commands** in these verses. The **first** is the **restoring of lost property to your enemy.** The **second** is that of **relieving an enemy's animal of its burden.** First of all, we have a **question.** **Who is the "enemy"?** We know that these **mishpatim** are **given within the community of Israel.** The problem is that it is **inconceivable that one Israelite should have another Israelite for an enemy,** when the **Torah** states that **"you should not hate your brother":**

Vayikra/Leviticus 19:17 ' You shall not hate your brother in your heart...

Another verse from the **Hebrew Scriptures** concerning the **way to treat your "enemy":**

Proverbs 25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;

Back to the question...**who is my enemy?** **Shemot 23:4** refers to someone as your "enemy", even though **you have no moral right to hate him for he is your brother.** We all must **admit** that we **have not conquered every evil thought.** It is therefore **logical** that the **Torah** is **not** in **Shemot 23:4-5** legislating for an **ideal world, where people do not hate each other,** but considers that **people go through phases where their brother may in fact be their "enemy".** Thus it is **hoped** that this little deed of **working together with your**

“enemy” (Shemot 23:5) would **eventually** lead to the **removal of the hatred**, and **reconciliation** with your **brother** in accordance with **scriptural demand** (Vayikra 19:17).

Many **principles of moral conduct** can be learned from these verses. His **behavior towards you** must not be a **yardstick for your behavior towards him**. “You must **not take vengeance nor bear a grudge**” states the **Torah**:

Vayikra 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am אלהים'.

Torah teaches us how to discipline our instincts. Yeshua also spoke of your “enemy”:

*Matthew 5:43 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
⁴⁴ 'But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*

The **goal** is always to **restore the relationship with your brother**. The **first part of verse 43** (love your neighbor) is a **Torah command** specifically found in **Vayikra 19:18**:

Vayikra 19:18 ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am אלהים'.

The **second part of Matthew 5:43** (hate your enemy) is **not a Biblical quote**, but the kind of **inaccurate addition** to the Scriptures that **Yeshua condemned the Pharisees** for in **Matthew 15:9**:

Matthew 15:9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "

Yeshua was echoing **Isaiah’s words**:

Isaiah 29:13 Adonai says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

Okay, let’s get back to the parasha. In **Shemot 23**, suddenly in the midst of all these **mishpatim יהוה** speaks about **His Angel**:

Shemot 23:20 "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared."²¹ "Beware of Him and obey His voice (kol - קול); do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him."²² "But if you indeed obey His voice (kol - קול) and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

First, let’s focus on the word translated as “voice” (kol - קול). Our parasha last week often referred to the “voice” of **יהוה** on **Mount Sinai**:

Shemot 19:5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice (kol - קול) and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

Shemot 20:18 Now all the people witnessed the voices (kol - קול), the lightning flashes, the voice (kol - קול) of the shofar, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

In these contexts the “voice” (kol - קוֹל) is synonymous with the Word of יהוה. To listen (shema) to His voice (kol - קוֹל) is to display obedience. Prophetically, we will return to the “voice” in end times:

Devarim 4:30 "When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to יהוה your Elohim and obey His voice (kol - קוֹל)..."

Now let's get back to our “angel” in Shemot 23. In Hebrew, “angel” is translated from the word malak (מַלְאָךְ). It can also be translated as “messenger.” The passage tells us that the children of Israel were to “shema” (hear and obey) His voice. We are also told that the Almighty's Name is in Him; and if they are rebellious, the “messenger/angel” will not forgive them. In response to their obedience, this “messenger/angel” will also protect them from their enemies. This is no ordinary angel! Angels do not have the authority to forgive sin. This “angel/messenger” is not said to merely act “in the Name of Elohim,” but it says that “His Name is in Him.” All the implications point to this malak being divine. Was it the pre-incarnate Yeshua? This thought may help us to make sense of what happens a little later when Moshe, Aharon, and others were able to “see Elohim”:

Shemot 24:9 Then Moshe went up, also Aharon, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,¹⁰ and they saw the Elohim of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw Elohim, and they ate and drank.

Shemot 24 gives many details surrounding the confirmation of the covenant. Yonatan Grossman draws a conclusion from the numerous literary parallels between Shemot 24 and the story of the binding of Isaac. I will use his insights and add in the connection to Messiah. First the parallels:

- A group of people gather at the side of a mountain; a select few ascend, while the rest stay below. They are commanded to wait the return of those who ascend:
 - *Shemot 24:14* And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you..."
 - *Bereshith 22:5* And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."
- In both stories, the phrase “from a distance” is used:
 - *Shemot 24:1* Now He said to Moshe, "Come up to יהוה, you and Aharon, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from a distance (מִרְחֹק).
 - *Bereshith 22:4* Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place from a distance (מִרְחֹק).
- In both stories, an altar is built:
 - *Shemot 24:4* And Moshe wrote all the words of יהוה. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - *Bereshith 22:9* Then they came to the place of which Elohim had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.
- An “early in the morning” time is mentioned in both:

- **Shemot 24:4** And Moshe wrote all the words of יהוה. **And he rose early in the morning** (בִּבְקֵר (וַיִּשְׁכֶּם)), and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- **Bereshith 22:3** So Abraham rose early in the morning (וַיִּשְׁכֶּם בִּבְקֵר), and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which Elohim had told him.
- In **Shemot**, the Presence of יהוה appeared as a **consuming** (אֵשׁ) fire. In **Bereshith**, the root of the word for **knife** (כַּנִּיף) is (אֵשׁ).
 - **Shemot 24:17** The sight of the glory of יהוה was like a **consuming** (אֵשׁ) fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.
 - **Bereshith 22:6** So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the **fire** in his hand, and a **knife** (כַּנִּיף), and the two of them went together.
- **On Mount Sinai** it reads that יהוה did not “**raise His hands against**” the leaders and in **Bereshith** we read a **similar phrase**:
 - **Shemot 24:11** But on the nobles of the children of Israel **He did not lay His hand** (שֵׁלַח יָדוֹ לָאֵל). So they saw Elohim, and they ate and drank.
 - **Bereshith 22:12** And He said, “**Do not lay your hand** (אַל-תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ) on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear Elohim, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

It is clear that the **Torah** is **making a comparison** between these two events. **The Torah wants the reader to remember the sacrifice of Isaac when reading of the ratification of the covenant.** Or we could have said...**the Torah wants the reader to remember the sacrifice of Yeshua when coming into Torah!** We must **never forget Yeshua**, our “**first love**”:

Revelation 2:4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

Now let's dig further into another of the verses in **Shemot 24**:

Shemot 24:5 Then he sent **young men** (na'arim - נְעָרִים) of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to יהוה.

Who were these **young men** (na'arim - נְעָרִים)? Many of the commentators believe these were the **first-born sons** who were the **priests of יהוה** since the **Levites had not yet replaced them**. The **problem** with this thought is that **no where else** do we find **na'arim** (נְעָרִים) to mean **first-born**.

These are the ways you find **na'ar** (singular) defined in the **Hebrew Scriptures**:

- As a **baby**:
 - **Shemot 2:6** And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the **baby** (na'ar - נֶעֱר) wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

- As a **youth**:
 - *Judges 8:14* And he caught a **young man** (na'ar - נַעַר) of the men of Succoth and interrogated him...
- As a **servant** or a **slave**:
 - *Bereshith 41:12* "Now there was a **Hebrew youth** (na'ar - נַעַר) with us there, a **servant** ...
- As a **man of war**:
 - *1 Samuel 30:17* Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred **youth** (na'ar - נַעַר) who rode on camels and fled.

This is absolutely **amazing!** These different **pictures** of a **na'ar** tell the story of **Yeshua!!** He came as a **baby**, then we next see Him as a **youth** in the Temple, then he becomes a **servant** (Philippians 2:7), and He will return as a **man of war!** The **Torah** is **all about Him**, we just need to dig! And I might add that we also need to come together with our **Jewish teachers** who are able to show us these **amazing parallels** so that all we need to do is place **Yeshua** in the text! The **Rambam** offers another **insight** into these **na'arim**. He suggests that they were the **youth of Israel** who had **not tasted of sin!** There's **another picture** of our **Messiah!**

The question is also asked as to why these **na'arim** are **chosen** to **represent the entire congregation** of **Israel** in such a **profound moment**. In light of the **parallels** that we saw between the **binding of Isaac** and the **ratifying of the covenant**, it is suggested that just as **Abraham** as an **individual** was commanded to **sacrifice his son**, so too all of **Israel as a congregation** was required to **offer their sons (their na'arim)** to the **Almighty** that **sacrifices** might be **made for them**. This is another **powerful example** of the **substitution principle**.

Well there is a **contrast** pointed out between the **two events**. At the **binding of Isaac**, the **main emotion** is **fear**:

Bereshith 22:12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you **fear Elohim**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

On **Mount Sinai**, the people were **filled with joy** and even **partook of a feast**. The **sacrifices** made are out of **love** and **jubilation**:

Shemot 24:11 ...So they saw Elohim, and **they ate and drank**.

Shemot 24:5 Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who **offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen** to יהוה.

The **opposite emotions** in these events portray **two different types of encounters** with the **Almighty**. **Isaac** is an **individual** and the picture is of **complete submission** through **feelings of sacrifice, pain, and sorrow**. He is a **shadow of Yeshua**. On **Mount Sinai**, however, **each person** has this **awesome experience** and **personal encounter** with יהוה. Because of what happened on the **Mountain with Isaac**, the **children of Israel** are able to **respond joyfully** on **Mount Sinai**. Beloved, we also have this **choice!**

Isaac's life is an **offering** to יהוה, but in the **covenant ceremony on the mountain**, יהוה is **extending an outstretched hand to mankind**. He is **meeting us** here on **earth**. His **Word** will **descend** to even **mundane human life** through the **giving of His mishpatim**. He is **making an offer** to **Israel**. Their response is **burnt offerings and peace offerings** (Romans 12:1, Ephesians 2:14) made by the **na'arim**.

Let me finish with a quote from **Rabbi Yonatan Grossman**. To my knowledge he is **not a believer in Yeshua the Messiah**, but what he writes is **all about Him**:

“Possibly, in order for people **to see God** and His glory, **one must sacrifice one’s own life**, because ‘man cannot see Me and live’ (Shemot 33:20). **When man requests to see the vision of the Lord, it is required of man to sacrifice of himself:** ‘And you must redeem every first-born among your sons. None shall appear before me empty-handed’ (Shemot 34:20).”

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Messiah; it is no longer I who live, but Messiah lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of Yah, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Selah...think about it.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle