

02-14-26 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – *Mishphatim* (judgments)
Torah Portion; Exodus 21:1-24
Haftarah: Jeremiah 34:8-22, 33:25-26
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Heb 5:11-14

Demonic Deception – Part 3 – Not All Deception is Demonic

**Central question of this message: When is it permissible and even
righteous to deceive?**

This parasha *Mishphatim* which means “Judgments.” Some translations render it as “ordinances.” Its name comes from the fifth word in the English and the second word in the original Hebrew.

Ex 21:1-3

21 "Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before
them. 2 If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six
years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man
without payment. 3 If he comes alone, he shall go out alone;
if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with
him.

21:1 ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם: 21:1
 Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them.
428 9999 4941 834 7760 6440

2 כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עִבְרִי שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים יַעֲבֹד 2
 If thou buy an servant, Hebrew six years he shall serve:
3588 7069 5650 5680 8337 8141 5647

וּבִשְׁבַעַת יָצָא לְחֶפְשִׁי חֲנָם: 3
 and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.
7637 3318 2670 2600

3 אִם־בִּגְפוֹ יָבֹא אִשְׁתּוֹ בְּגִפּוֹ יֵצֵא אִם־בְּעַל אִשָּׁה 3
 If by himself, he came in by himself, he shall go out if were married,
518 1610 935 1610 1610 3318 518 1167 802

הִוא וְיָצָאָה אִשְׁתּוֹ עִמּוֹ: 4
 he then shall go out with him. his wife
1931 3318 802 5973

This parasha immediately follows the one in which the famous “Ten Commandments” are first given. This week’s parasha is loaded-up with additional commandments. And the giving of these many commandments will be continued in all the subsequent parashiot – and then repeated and elaborated upon in the book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy).

Although you might not find a logical break between the “big ten” and the remainder of G-d’s instructions which preceded the “Ten” and those that follow, the normative church has over the centuries very clearly established a theological wall around the “Ten.” If you ask the average church-goer how many commandments there are, he will likely immediately respond, “Ten.”

That is the response because modern normative church theology has determined that the remaining 603 are “done away with” by their interpretation of the writings of Paul. They are certain the other commandments are nullified...of course, with the notable exception of the command to “tithe” which is misinterpreted in its application for purposes of supporting the various church ministries, and since pastors find insufficient support for this fundraising in the “New Testament.”

Before I get into the main theme of the message, I wish to elaborate on how the Jewish people have classified the various commands and judgments of G-d that have been given. This way, when you see some of these terms used in Scripture, you will be able to associate them with a particular class of commandments.

The overarching category of commands is simply “Torah” which does not actually mean “law” but rather “instruction.” The root of the word for “teacher” in Hebrew is *moreh*. Paul used a clever word-play to illustrate a point using this very association.

Gal 3:23-25

23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law (Torah), being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law (Torah) has become our tutor (moreh) to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (moreh).

Sadly, this passage has been cited often as justification that the Torah was done away with by Messiah. But, when considered carefully, it appears that it teaches quite the opposite.

Being “in custody under the law (Torah)” tells us that our violation of G-d’s instructions for holiness causes us to be imprisoned by sin. That is consistent with the statement by John that “sin is lawlessness (being against the instructions of Torah)” 1 John 3:4.

Being “shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed” indicates that until the coming atonement sacrifice of Yeshua, our slavery to sin was merely covered by the annual atonement sacrifice, not cleansed by a better sacrifice that is eternal. Hebrews 10:11-14.

When Paul says “the Torah has become our moreh” he is saying that Torah speaks instruction as a schoolmaster would, showing us the truth of

the coming Messiah. It is for this reason that all the first followers of Yeshua had no need of a “New Testament” for such body of writing did not exist at all during their lives. They had all the proof they needed from the Torah and the Prophets of the Messiah. And once we have seen that Yeshua is the Messiah, and have confessed that He is One with G-d, then we are perfected in the faith that our ancestors had without seeing Him.

When Paul says, “But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (moreh)” this cannot reasonably be interpreted to mean that there was no such thing as faith before Yeshua. If that were the case, then all that we know of the patriarchs – in particular Abraham – would be false. The author of Hebrews identifies (as our people had already done long before) Abraham as the “father of the faithful.” Noah had faith in his understanding of G-d, as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So did all the prophets, and certainly King David. It was faith in G-d, and the truth of His Word, that caused so many of our people to identify Yeshua as the coming Messiah.

Paul’s statement cannot reasonably be interpreted to suggest that Torah was abolished. Firstly, if it was abolished, then sin was also abolished, and since sin no longer exists, we need not conform our lives to any holy standards any longer. Further, if sin is abolished, then there was no need for Yeshua to die as the atonement.

Another easy example is the simple instruction we receive in our schools. Our tutors and teachers show us how to read and write. Once we graduate from school, should we abandon reading and writing? How about mathematics? How could we calculate how many dollars to pay for any object for sale, or expect any change in return? How about higher learning about physics. If you disregard physics, then we cannot design airplanes or space vehicles. We could not have motors in our cars, nor could we have brakes that make them stop once moving. The schooling and training required for becoming an aircraft pilot is extensive, and has a number of increasingly difficult levels. Would we wish for airline pilots to discard all their schooling and training after getting their license? How about surgeons? The other examples are endless.

What we learn in secular schools allows us to use that learning to great effect in living our lives in a productive way in an ordered society. What we have learned in Torah allows us to use that learning to great effect in living our lives in holiness in this age.

In Paul's other letters, he is clear that Torah's commandments still apply to the lives of believers in Yeshua. If we interpret this passage as saying that Torah is abolished, then Paul becomes either a hypocrite or a liar, and at least he is not consistent with even his own writings in the same (and other) letters.

The choice to me is clear. If for no other reason than for consistency sake, we must interpret Paul's words consistently with his other words, and consistent with Yeshua's teachings and life as well.

Paul suggests that Torah was our schoolmaster, and gave us the basics of a holy life that we can now live. Once we have graduated from Torah school, as it were, we don't need to go back to school so much as to practice and perfect what we have learned. We are to move beyond the milk of the word

We can look at the life of Yeshua, as recorded in the gospels, and see the higher levels of holy living – set out before us in the life of Yeshua – so that we can progress beyond what we learned in Torah school.

Just like any higher discipline of professions, there should be a “continuing education” component. That is why we should continue reading the Torah weekly, and seeing new insights to our lives. And this is why we have among us teachers who help us understand those more troublesome passages, as we grow in faith.

And the author of Hebrews speaks to the same dynamic of growth.

Heb 5:11-14

11 Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

So, the concept is for us to learn well in Torah school, then graduate to the higher levels of understanding and application which lead us to live a life of holiness that forms a good testimony to those in the world around us.

Categories of the Commandments

Mitzvot – This is the overarching term for all commands found in Torah. When you accomplish one of the commands of Torah in a proper way and with the proper heart, it is said of you “you have a mitzvah.” This is a Jewish way of saying that this thing you have done (or refrained from

doing) is credited to you in the books of heaven. Revelation 14:13, 20:12-13.

Under the umbrella of mitzvot are three subcategories: *Mishphatim*, *Chukim*, and *Eidot*.

Mishphatim – these are called “rational laws” because the reasoning behind them is obvious. Prohibitions against murder, theft, and idolatry are examples.

Chukim – these are decrees that seem to defy our rational explanations. Much of what happened during the first Passover falls into this category. The prohibitions against mixing wool and linen is one of these. The laws surrounding the Red Heifer are also in this category. These commands are such that the human intellect, left to its own devices, would not have thought of such things. However, once we do them, we are sometimes able to start to understand some of the basis for them.

Eidot – An *edah* is a “testimony.” These commandments commemorate or testify to key events in Jewish history, such as Shabbat (remembrance of creation), Passover (remembrance of the Exodus), and the mezuzah (which is affixed to the doorways as a remembrance of G-d’s presence and His authority over our lives and homes).

In Torah, it seems that the command is to “do” *chukim*, which suggests obedience despite lack of understanding. We are to “guard” *mishphatim*, which emphasizes preservation of them in purity, and not polluting them with our own personal preferences.

As we mature in our understanding of a G-dly life, we will find ourselves moving some commands we first considered as unexplainable *chukim* into the categories which contain human rationally-explainable instructions. So, you will find as you study the Sages, there is some disagreement between them on which commandments fit into which categories. That is to be expected.

Now, onto the main part of the message for today...

One of the commands found in our parasha today is to avoid falsehood.

Ex 23:1-3

23 "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. 2 You shall not follow a multitude in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice; 3 nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his dispute.

Although this passage is certainly applicable to judges and to matters of dispute in the Biblical court system, it illustrates a deeper universal precept as well – we are as a people to be honest and known for our integrity. That lifestyle is a witness to the world of who our G-d is.

But then there is an obvious question which is also important – “Is it ever permitted to be deceitful?” There are instances when it is not only permitted to be deceitful, but it is an obligation to do so. Hence, not all deceit is evil or demon-influenced. Let’s explore this a bit.

An example is cited by Sages of an example of when it is appropriate to deceive. And it is a deception done by the Almighty Himself. It was a deception by omission.

Gen 18:10-15

And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. **12 And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"** 13 And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, '**Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?**' 14 "Is anything too

difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

The report given to Abraham about what Sarah said was abridged to exclude the reference to Abraham's age. Why? The Sages have concluded that it was restated in this manner to avoid hurting the feelings of Abraham by reporting Sarah's exact words.¹

During the Egyptian captivity, the midwives gave false reports to Pharaoh's officers.

Ex 1:15-21

15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah, and the other was named Puah; 16 and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and let the

¹ Tractate Yevamot 65b

boys live?" 19 And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous, and they give birth before the midwife can get to them." 20 So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. 21 And it came about because the midwives feared God, that He established households for them.

The midwives gave false reports to Pharaoh. And it was right to do so. Our Sages have agreed that it is permitted to deceive when that is necessary to thwart a plan which is going against G-d's commands. And since murder of children is a grievous sin, the midwives were not only justified, but were rewarded, in deceiving a murderous Pharaoh, and preventing his evil plan from coming about.

We are familiar with the stories of Anne Frank, Oscar Schindler, and King Christian X of Denmark. But there are many others who you might not know who rescued Jews as well.

Raoul Wallenberg (Sweden): Issued protective passports and housed thousands in diplomatic buildings in Budapest, saving an estimated 100,000 Jews.

Chiune Sugihara (Japan): As a diplomat in Lithuania, issued transit visas to 6,000 Jews, defying orders to help them escape.

Feng-Shan Ho (China): Issued visas to 2,000 Austrian Jews from his post in Vienna, enabling their escape to Shanghai.

Irena Sendler (Poland): A social worker who smuggled 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto using false documents and hidden routes.

Aristides de Sousa Mendes (Portugal): Defied his government's orders to issue over 30,000 visas, including 12,000 to Jews, helping them flee Nazi-occupied France.

Charles Lutz (Switzerland): As vice-consul in Budapest, used protective letters to save over 62,000 Hungarian Jews by exploiting loopholes in Nazi agreements.

Hugh O'Flaherty (Ireland): An Irish priest who hid 4,000 Jews and Allied soldiers in Rome using Vatican protection and underground networks.

Giorgio Perlasca (Italy): Posing as a Spanish diplomat, issued fake passports and sheltered over 5,000 Jews in Budapest.

Dimitar Peshev (Bulgaria): A government official who stopped the deportation of 48,000 Bulgarian Jews, leading to their survival.

Princess Alice of Greece: Sheltered Jewish refugees in Athens and was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

Let me tell you now the story of another Jewish person, who became a master of holy deception, saving many Jewish children.

He was born to Ann Werzberg and Charles Mangel, a kosher butcher, in the city of Strasbourg on the Rhine, on March 22, 1923.

At age five, he was inspired by seeing the acting talents of Charlie Chaplain and Buster Keaton in silent films. He would have loved to become an actor, but it seemed that the plans of Hitler stood in his way.

He was only fifteen when the Nazis invaded France. The Jews of Strasbourg fled, and he and his older brother Limoges changed their name to avoid being identified as Jewish, and joined the French Underground. He and his brother forged identity cards to keep other Frenchmen from

being forced to work in the German factories. He changed his name as well.

He did use his false identity and his acting skills to pretend to be a Boy Scout director, as he gathered-up all the children from a Jewish orphanage. He told them he was taking them on a hiking vacation in the Alps. They didn't know that they would finish this field trip safely in Switzerland.

To keep these children quiet and entertained on this difficult journey he would act-out for them scenes, silently. He needed to be quiet, and they needed to be quiet, if this mission were to succeed. If they were discovered, they would all be shot. But he succeeded in saving them all.

Later, Paris was liberated in 1944, and he joined the French Army, serving in adjoining units with American GIs.

Soon, there was another turning-point in his life, just as the war was winding down. He finally got an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Charlie Chaplain, the great silent-film actor. Let's hear him tell about it in a few of his own words.

“We were already at peace in December 1945, but we were still mobilized. I went to Frankfurt where there was the Sixth

Army of General Patton, and I met Captain Parker. He said to me, ‘Young man, what will you do later?’ I said, ...you know, [Charlie] Chaplin, [Buster] Keaton, I want to make theater without speaking.’”

Captain Parker asked him to demonstrate. He obliged. Parker thought his actions clever enough, and asked him to then go on stage to entertain the American troops, some 3,000 of them.

This young soldier had lost his father at Auschwitz, and he wept for so many Americans who died to set his country free. So he had no reason to be happy. But his joyful performance was uplifting for the troops, who expressed their gratitude with abundant applause.

This young man never spoke of his experiences during the war ...until he was called to the podium at the University of Michigan in 2001 to receive the Raoul Wallenberg Medal.

And it was at that time that this man finally broke his lifelong silence and spoke for the better part of an hour about those dark days.

He told how he'd left the army, and developed a trademark craft in the field of entertainment. The truth is that every time you see someone else perform it... you immediately think of him.

In fact, those who perform like him often simply mimic him. But even more, they dress like him, and even try to look as much like him as they possibly can.

You probably already have a picture of him in your mind. Young Mr. Mangel entertained those Jewish orphans, American troops, and then hundreds of thousands of people all over the world.

This brave Jew, who saved so many lives, whose life was full of pain and trauma, made others laugh as he performed some 300 times a year for some sixty years.

The man who had no reason to smile, eventually became well known for his bright smile, outlined in bright red lipstick.

He kept the false name he adopted during the war for the rest of his days. He started his acting career with it, and so he never seemed to have a good reason to change it back.



In 2007, on Yom Kippur, the world lost a treasure when Marcel Marceau died. He was laid to rest in his beloved Paris.

Next month the man known as the Master of Silence would have been 103.

He received the Raul Wallenberg medal. You can see the award ceremony, and his remarkable speech at:

<https://youtu.be/zGJR4GRQA3g>

Not all deception is evil, nor is it all demon-influenced. The challenge for us today is to know when we are being deceived by evil, or when we are giving evil deception to others,... or when we are acting in holiness, as those holy ones have done before us. Listen closely and the Spirit will guide us.