

WAR & PEACE WITHIN JUDAISM WORKSHEETS

WAR WITHIN JUDAISM

Source 1: *Devarim*, Chapter 20

- א ב-י תצא למלחמה על-איבך וראית סוס ורכב עם רב ממך לא תירא מהם כי-יהוה אלהיך עמך המעלך מארץ מצרים:
- ב והיה כקרבכם אל-המלחמה ונגש הכהן ודבר אל-העם:
- ג ואמר אלהם שמע ישראל אתם קרבים היום למלחמה על-איביכם אל-יורך לבבכם אל-תיראו ואל-תחפזו ואל-תערצו מפניהם:
- ד כי יהוה אלהיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם-איביכם להושיע אתכם:
- ה ודברו השטרים אל-העם לאמר מי-האיש אשר בנה בית-חדש ולא חנכו ילך וישב לביתו פן-ימות במלחמה ואיש אחר יחנכנו:
- ו ומי-האיש אשר נטע פרם ולא חללו ילך וישב לביתו פן-ימות במלחמה ואיש אחר יחללנו:
- ז ומי-האיש אשר ארש אשה ולא לקחה ילך וישב לביתו פן-ימות במלחמה ואיש אחר יקחנה:
- ח ויספו השטרים לדבר אל-העם ואמרו מי-האיש הירא ורך הלבב ילך וישב לביתו ולא ימס את-לבב אחיו כלבבו:
- ט והיה ככלת השטרים לדבר אל-העם ופקדו שרי צבאות בראש העם:
- י ב-י תקרב אל-עיר להלחם עליה וקראת אליה לשלום:
- יא והיה אם-שלום תענך ופתחה לך והיה כל-העם הנמצא-בה יהיו לך למס ועבדוך:
- יב ואם-לא תשלים עמך ועשתה עמך מלחמה וצרת עליה:
- יג ונתנה יהוה אלהיך בידך והכית את-כל-זכורה לפי-חרב:
- יד רק הנשים והטף והבהמה וכל אשר יהיה בעיר כל-שללה תבז לך ואכלת את-שלל איביך אשר נתן יהוה אלהיך לך:
- טו פן תעשה לכל-הערים הרחוקת ממך מאד אשר לא-מערי הגוים-האלה הנה:
- ז רק מערי העמים האלה אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך נחלה לא תחיה כל-נשמה:
- יז ב-י-החרם תחרימם החתי והאמרי הפנעני והפרזי החוי והיבוסי כאשר צוך יהוה אלהיך:
- יח למען אשר לא-ילמדו אתכם לעשות ככל תועבתם אשר עשו לאלהיהם וחסאתם ליהוה אלהיכם:
- יט ב-י תצור אל-עיר ימים רבים להלחם עליה לתפשה לא-תשחית את-עצה לנדה עליו גרזן כי ממנו תאכל ואתו לא תכרת כי האדם עץ השדה לבא מפניך במצור:
- כ רק עץ אשר-תדע כי לא-עץ מאכל הוא אתו תשחית וכרת ובנית מצור על-העיר אשר-הוא עשה עמך מלחמה עד רדתה:

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1. *When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses, and chariots, and a people more numerous than you, be not afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.*
2. *And it shall be, when you have come near the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people,*
3. *And shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day to battle against your enemies; let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, nor be you terrified because of them;*
4. *For the Lord your God is he who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.*
5. *And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, What man is there who has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicates it.*
6. *And what man is he who has planted a vineyard, and has not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eats of it.*
7. *And what man is there who has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man takes her.*
8. *And the officers shall speak further to the people, and they shall say, What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest his brothers' heart faint as well as his heart.*
9. *And it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall appoint captains of the armies to lead the people.*
10. *When you come near a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it.*
11. *And it shall be, if it gives you answer of peace, and opens to you, then it shall be, that all the people that are found in it shall be tributaries to you, and they shall serve you.*
12. *And if it will make no peace with you, but will make war against you, then you shall besiege it;*
13. *And when the Lord your God has delivered it into your hands, you shall strike its every male with the edge of the sword;*
14. *But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, all the plunder from it, shall you take for yourself; and you shall eat the plunder of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you.*
15. *Thus shall you do to all the cities which are very far off from you, which are not of the cities of these nations.*
16. *But of the cities of these people, which the Lord your God does give you for an inheritance, you shall not keep alive anything that breathes;*
17. *But you shall completely destroy them: the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord your God has commanded you;*
18. *That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done to their gods; so should you sin against the Lord your God.*
19. *When you shall besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by forcing an ax against them; for you may eat of them, and you shall not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a man that it should be besieged by you?*
20. *Only the trees which you know are not trees for food, you shall destroy and cut them down; and you shall build siege works against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.*

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Source 2. Sefer HaChinuch – 425 (Parashat Va'Etchanan)

Mitzvah 425: The Mitzvah of Killing out the Seven Nations - To put to death the Seven Nations that held our land before we captured it from them – these being the Canaanite, Amorite, Hittite, Hivite, Perizzite and Jebusite – and to eliminate them wherever we may find them. For it is stated about them “you shall utterly destroy them” (Devarim 7:2), and the Mitzvah was reiterated in Sidrat Shoftim since it is stated there “for you shall utterly destroy them” (Devarim 20:17).

At the root of the precept lies the reason that these Seven Nations are the ones that started to perform all kinds of idol worship, and every abomination to the Lord, which He detests. Therefore, since they were a main (root) element of idolatry and its first foundation, we were commanded about them to extirpate and eliminate them from under heaven, that they not be remembered or recalled in the land of the living. And in this precept of ours a benefit will result for us: we will eliminate their remembrance from the world, and thus we will not learn from their actions. It is, moreover, for us to learn a moral lesson from this – that we should not turn towards idol-worship. For when we pursue every man in this evil family [of nations] to kill him, because they occupied themselves with idolatry, the thought will not arise in the heart of any man to do acts like theirs under any circumstances.

Source 3. Rambam Laws of Kings 6:1

אין עושין מלחמה עם אדם בעולם עד שקוראין לו שלום. אחד מלחמת הרשות, ואחד מלחמת מצוה, שנאמר: “כי תקרב אל עיר להלחם עליה, וקראת אליה לשלום.” אם השלימו וקבלו שבע מצות שנצטוו בני נח עליהן – אין הורגין מהן נשמה, והרי הן למס, שנאמר: “יהיו לך למס ועבדוך.”

1. War, whether a *milchemet hareshut* (voluntary war) or *milchemet mitzvah* (Divinely commanded war), should not be waged against anybody until he is offered the opportunity of peace as it says “when you approach a city to wage war against it, you must propose a peaceful settlement” (Devarim 20:10).
2. If [the enemy] accepts the offer of peace and commits itself to the fulfillment of the Seven Mitzvot that were commanded to Noah’s descendants, none of them should be killed. Rather they should be subjugated as it says: “They shall be your subjects and serve you” (Devarim 20:11).

Source 4. Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 56a

תנו רבנן: שבע מצות נצטוו בני נח: דינין, וברכת השם, עבודה זרה, גילוי עריות, ושפיכות דמים, וגזל, ואבר מן החי.

Our Rabbis have taught: Seven Mitzvot have been commanded to the ‘sons of Noah’ and they are: 1) Establishing Law Courts (to uphold other laws); 2) Blaspheming; 3) Idol Worship; 4) Sexual Immorality; 5) Murder; 6) Theft; 7) Eating a limb from a live animal (cruelty to animals)

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Some Questions to Consider:

Source 1

Part 1 – verses 1-4 – The role of God and religion in warfare

1. Why do you think it is the *kohen* that is addressing the people on this matter, and why is he speaking about God and the Exodus in the context of war?

Part 2 – verses 5-9 – Those not fit for war

2. Who is speaking to the people now? What do you think their role is? Why doesn't the *kohen* continue with this topic?
3. Which categories of people are exempt from conscription? Why do you think this is?
4. Do you think that a conscientious objector is included in any of these categories? If so, which one? If not, do you think they were also exempt? Do you think there was such a thing as a conscientious objector in biblical warfare?

Part 3 – verses 10-18 – Peace treaties and the Seven Canaanite Nations

5. Why do you think the Israelite army is commanded to subjugate a people that have made a peace treaty with them?
6. What do you think about the ethics of the advice given for a city that has not made a peace treaty with Israel? Is this policy internationally acceptable in contemporary warfare?
7. Why do you think that the army must destroy **all** inhabitants of a city of one of the seven Canaanite nations? (The text suggests a reason – what do you think of this reason?) Would this be internationally acceptable in contemporary warfare?

Part 4 – verses 19-20 – War and the environment

8. Why do you think the laws of protecting the environment are found in the context of war and not a normal situation?
9. This source seems to value trees above human life when it asks rhetorically “Is the tree of the field a man that it should be besieged by you”. What message do you think this has for us?

Source 2

10. What is the first and foremost reason that we have a *mitzvah* to destroy the seven Canaanite nations?
11. The *Sefer Hachinuch* hints at two moral justifications for this *mitzvah*. What are they and what do you think about them?
12. Does this justify the destruction of a whole people though?

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Sources 3 - 4

13. What do you think the difference between a *milchemet reshut* and *milchemet mitzvah* is, and do you think this makes a difference to the ethics of war?
14. Source 4 lists the basic laws of humanity (The Seven Mitzvot of the Sons of Noah) that Rambam states must be an integral part of a peace treaty. If you had to list the basic laws of society, would they resemble this list? Are there any others that you would include?
15. Why do you think Rambam places acceptance of the seven mitzvot of the sons of Noah as a fundamental condition of any peace treaty with Israel?
16. Why does the acceptance of these laws exempt us from the instruction to destroy these nations? Use *Sefer Hachinuch*'s rationale for the mitzvah in your answer).
17. What do you think one must do if the enemy does not want to commit to ethical monotheism (i.e. these seven laws)?
18. Why is it necessary to subjugate an enemy if they have signed a peace treaty and agree to be ethical monotheists?