**Deuteronomy Chapter 27:1-10 דְּבָרִים**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **א** וַיְצַו מֹשֶׁה וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶת-הָעָם לֵאמֹר:  שָׁמֹר, אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם, הַיּוֹם. | **1** And Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying: 'Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. |
| **ב**  וְהָיָה, בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תַּעַבְרוּ אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ--וַהֲקֵמֹתָ לְךָ אֲבָנִים גְּדֹלוֹת, וְשַׂדְתָּ אֹתָם בַּשִּׂיד. | **2** And it will be - on the day when you shall pass over the Jordan, into the land which the LORD your God has given you - that you shall set up great stones for yourselves, and plaster them with plaster. |
| **ג**  וְכָתַבְתָּ עֲלֵיהֶן, אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת--בְּעָבְרֶךָ:  לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר תָּבֹא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ, אֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבַשׁ, כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-אֲבֹתֶיךָ, לָךְ. | **3** And you will write on them all the words of this law, when you have passed over [the river]; that you may go into the land which the LORD your God has given you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you. |
| **ד**  וְהָיָה, בְּעָבְרְכֶם אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן, תָּקִימוּ אֶת-הָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם, בְּהַר עֵיבָל; וְשַׂדְתָּ אוֹתָם, בַּשִּׂיד. | **4** And it shall be, when you have passed over the Jordan, that you will set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and you shalt plaster them with plaster. |
| **ה**  וּבָנִיתָ שָּׁם מִזְבֵּחַ, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:  מִזְבַּח אֲבָנִים, לֹא-תָנִיף עֲלֵיהֶם בַּרְזֶל. | **5** And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shalt not lift up any iron tools [in making] them. |
| **ו**  אֲבָנִים שְׁלֵמוֹת תִּבְנֶה, אֶת-מִזְבַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ; וְהַעֲלִיתָ עָלָיו עוֹלֹת, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ. | **6** You will build the altar of the LORD your God out of unhewn stones; and you shall offer burnt-offerings on them to the LORD your God. |
| **ז**  וְזָבַחְתָּ שְׁלָמִים, וְאָכַלְתָּ שָּׁם; וְשָׂמַחְתָּ, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ. | **7** And you shall sacrifice peace-offerings, and eat there; and you will rejoice before the LORD your God. |
| **ח**  וְכָתַבְתָּ עַל-הָאֲבָנִים, אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת--בַּאֵר הֵיטֵב. | **8** And you will write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly. |
| **ט**  וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם, אֶל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר:  הַסְכֵּת וּשְׁמַע, יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִהְיֵיתָ לְעָם, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ. | **9** And Moses and the priests the Levites spoke to all Israel, saying: 'Keep silence, and hear, O Israel; this day you have become a people to the LORD your God. |
| **י**  וְשָׁמַעְתָּ, בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ; וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-מִצְו‍ֹתָו וְאֶת-חֻקָּיו, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם. | **10** You shall listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do His commandments and His statutes, which I command you this day.' |

**Leading Idea: Civic life: establishing civic norms to guide a society**

Society is regulated in different ways – for instance we can speak of civic norms (moral and cultural), rules and habits and rituals. In this passage several norms are described and laws are written out ‘plainly’ in public view on the hilltop. Rituals take place (the way the alter is built), and l norms established (eating together, Thinking about what it means to ‘become a people’ – learning to act together in the public sphere, requires us to think about the ways norms, rules and habits play out in our own lives.

**Moral Norms** are those things we do because we think it is somehow ‘right’ to do them they express values that we try to live by (for instance showing respect to others, care, not starting a fight). We might consider ourselves more fully human if we follow them, or we might think they express values that are important to make society (living with others in community) possible.

**Cultural Norms** are those things we do because acting within these parameters is socially acceptable way to behave. They help society to function smoothly and enable us to ‘fit in’ to the world around us (for instance, how short a dress can be before it is too short to wear in public, whether to shake hands or give a person a hug when you meet them or say goodbye, whether it is ok to yell across a shop when you want to get the attention of a friend on the other side). In the case of cultural norms, we might fit into society better by following them, but this doesn’t say they are right (it might be a social norm to get drunk at a party, and we fit in better if we do it, but this doesn’t make it right). In general you are not breaking any law if you go against one of these norms, but they establish guidelines for our interactions.

**Rules** are things that are legislated by some authority (this might be government, religion, parents, or even imposed by ourselves on ourselves ( where I am the authority behind the rule) – for instance: “I have a rule that I don’t drink alcohol before 5:00pm”). In some cases, rules don’t have to have any moral purpose behind them, they are simply put in place for the sake of efficiency or convenience. In other cases rules are seen as a way of formally encoding and enforcing norms (the rule ‘don’t steal’ and law that punishes people who do, is because we have a moral norm by which we think taking what is not ours is wrong).In this way, rules guide us to be a virtuous society. Rules can also create norms or values (For some Jews, halakhah is seen to create values in this way. for instance, the laws of Shabbat create the value of sacred time, rather than encoding a pre-existing value). The creation of civic values through rules can also serve political ends. for instance, in the Soviet era, it was the law to inform on your neighbor if you saw them acting in ways that weren’t consistent with communism, and it was a rule that served the authorities, but it also then became a value people internalized – a way of expressing the importance of the State over the importance of individuals. People came to regard informing on others as a moral duty.

**Habits** are repeated actions – not all habits relate to norms or laws – for instance, I might have the habit of getting out of bed on the left side – it is just something that I have done often enough that it seems natural to continue doing it that way.

**Rituals** are one way of translating or encoding norms in actions. Because they communicate underlying meanings and values rituals carry symbolic meaning. Rituals can become habits – something we do without a second thought, in which case sometimes the significance of the action can get lost. They become merely a habit.

**Discussion Plan: Setting Civic Norms:**

*Are these actions within the bounds of our civic (societal) norms or are they socially unacceptable? Why do you think these might be socially acceptable/unacceptable?*

* + 1. Not raking the leaves on your own lawn
    2. Leaving rubbish on the front porch all week
    3. Swapping babies at the hospital – you want a girl (but had a boy), they want a boy (but had a girl) – so you agree to swap
    4. Talking about someone behind their back
    5. Not helping a friend with their homework if they ask for your help
    6. Being grounded by your parents
    7. Not sending out thank you notes when you receive presents
    8. Not offering your seat when you notice an elderly person standing on the bus
    9. Refusing to do something your parents ask you because you don’t feel like it
    10. Refusing to do something your parents ask you because you think it is wrong
    11. Avoiding a friend when you are angry at them
    12. Parents giving a child a slap to punish them
    13. Parents giving their child a slap as they reach for the hot stove

**Discussion Plan: Norms and Rules in Plain View ps-ms additions for hs version are in red**

Are there societal norms and/or rules that govern how we act in the following situations – if so, how do we come to know about them? Is it anyone’s responsibility to make sure you know about them? How do we learn how to follow them? In each case, if there is a norm or rule - do you always follow it? Is there somewhere we can find the procedures to follow written out? Are they in plain language? Are they in clear view?

* How to behave in class
* What to do at a red traffic light
* Who has right-of-way at an intersection where there are no road signs.
* How to properly wait your turn at the post office
* How to cross a road safely
* How to behave when you visit a friend in their home
* What counts as suitable clothing to wear to school
* Your rights as a citizen
* Who has priority seating on a bus
* How to behave at a funeral
* What counts as a ‘suitable’ present for a birthday.
* How to make up with a friend after a fight
* How much tzeddakah to give
* Whether you can wear jewelry to school

***Activity:*** *Each person writes down one rule or norm that guides either the way society functions. Put all the slips into a hat. Mix them up and have each student draw one out. In pairs try to answer the following questions in relation to the norm or rule you drew out of the hat.*

1. how do we come to know about them?
2. Is it anyone’s responsibility to make sure you know about them?
3. How do we learn how to follow them?
4. In each case, if there is a norm or rule - do you always follow it?

Make up a short skit that communicates what the norm is and includes your responses to questions a-d.

OR

Prepare a post that that communicates what the norm is and includes your responses to questions a-d.

**Discussion: Norms and rules in our own institution - ps**

*What norms, rules, habits and rituals do you see around you in your school or synagogue – to what extent do you think they necessary for the school/synagogue to function? In what ways do they convey its values?*

**Discussion: Norms and rules in our own institution – ms-hs**

*What norms, rules, habits and rituals do you see around you in your school or synagogue – to what extent do you think they necessary for the school/synagogue to function? In what ways do they convey its values? Are there any that you think go against the school or synagogue’s stated values?*

**Discussion: Norms and rules in our own institution – adult**

*What norms, rules, habits and rituals do you see around you in your work place, home and/or synagogue – to what extent do you think they necessary for the institution to function? In what ways do they convey its values? Are there any that you think go against the institutions’s stated values?*

**Establishing new civic norms – MS-HS**.

Do you think the following civic, or societal, norms were in place 30 years ago? If not, how do you think they came about? Who put them in place? In what ways are they moral or cultural norms? If they are moral norms, what values do they express?

* Facebook etiquette
* Expecting there to be a security check at the entrance to schools
* Sharing the bill when going out on a date
* Swapping clothes with a friend
* Lighting candles at the sight of a tragedy
* Considering it wrong to hit children
* Having recycling bins in public areas
* Having service learning programs in place in schools
* Judging work in terms of productivity (rather than satisfaction or gainful employment)

**Leading Idea: How are form and meaning connected?**

How are form and meaning connected? In this passage we are told of two purposively built objects in which the ‘how’ of their construction seems to be connected to the ‘what’. That is, their meaning is captured, or given expression through, the way they are constructed. There is the alter for peace-offerings that is to be made of unhewn stone on which no iron has been used, and ‘great stones’ that are to be erected at Mount Ebal, they are to be plastered and then have the words of law written ‘plainly’ on them.

In regard to the stones, there is one tradition that sees the plastering of these ‘great stones’ occurring in multiple layers. This reading is offered because of the seeming repetition of this instruction in the text. Here the text is not seen as a repetition, but rather, as two sets of instructions to be done one after the other. First the stones are plastered and covered with the exact words of law. Then the stones are to be plastered over the first writing, and then the law is written a second time in ‘plain’ words for everyone to see. If we were to see the construction happening this way, what might be the meaning that is being conveyed in this multilayered construction?

Providing an opportunity to discuss the ways in which meaning and form might be connected in objects in the student’s our own environment may lead students to a richer discussion of the connections between form and meaning in this text.

For iron is created to shorten man's days, and the altar is created to lengthen man's days: what shortens may not rightly be lifted up against what lengthens. (**Mishna, Middot 3:4**)

 Rashi’s grandson Rashbam offers a different interpretation. He quotes Isaiah 44:12-13: The craftsman in iron, with his tools, Works it over charcoal, and fashions it by hammering…He forms it with scraping tools, marking it out with a compass. He gives it a human form….

(See Martin Lokhshin (ed.), Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus (Atlanta, 1997), pp. 222, and note 42 ad loc., for a discussion of the Rashbam’s view.)

*Unhewn stones*: ‘whole’ or ‘peaceful’ stones, the adjective שלמות being of the same root as שלום, ‘peace’. The Alter, whose purpose is the forgiveness of sin, can only fulfill its mission when peace and brotherhood reign in Israel. Rabbi J.H. Hertz Commentary, p.862 (quoting Mekhilta of R. Yishmael, - a passage  in the name of R. Johanan ben Zakkai)

**Exercise: Form and Meaning**

If you wanted to capture the meaning conveyed by an object in the way you constructed it, how would you go about:

* Making a sign to remind people to recycle
* Making Challah for Shabbat
* Designing a synagogue
* Baking or icing a cake for a wedding
* Making a notice board for student notices in your school
* Creating an artwork to be placed in the school foyer to mark the beginning of the school year.
* Designing your school entrance

**Discussion Plan: Inventing New Rituals**

1. Do you have any rituals that are specific to your family? If so, what are they and how did they come about?
2. Do you have a bedtime ritual? A homework ritual?
3. Do you have any rituals in your classroom or school? If so, what are they and how did they come about?
4. Is there a difference between habits and rituals?
5. Do rituals involve emotions? actions? reasons? (something else?)
6. If I develop a way of doing something that only I know about, can I call it a ritual?
7. Do rituals need to be connected to a religion?
8. Can rituals be empowering? If so, in what ways?
9. Does a ritual need to be a shared understanding between people?
10. Can any repeated practice become a ritual?
11. Can we create new religious rituals?
12. Could the same ritual be practiced in two different religions?
13. Are rituals important to you?
14. Do you think rituals ought to be important? Why / Why not?
15. Do you think human beings need rituals?

**Activity: Form and meaning – creating ritual**

In small groups – decide on a value that you all think is important. Create an action or a ritual that conveys this value to those taking part in it. Keep in mind that you will be leading the rest of the students through this action/ ritual, so keep it manageable given the time and resources you have available.

**Leading idea: Stating it plainly**

What does writing ‘very plainly’, or ‘very clearly’, mean?  It might mean writing on the plaster with clear lettering, in a way that can be read from afar –  or it might mean ‘clearly’ in the sense of  ‘easily understood’ in uncomplicated, plain language. Writing law in a public space for everyone to say could mean either or both of these meanings of ‘plainly’.

Laws are often written in complicate language – this is as true for our own legal system as it might have been for Moses. Do we have a responsiblity to communicate laws guiding our society in language that everyone can understand? The instructions given here state that the law is to be written clearly and plainly. The Rabbinic tradition interpreted this to mean that it should be translated into the spoken language of the people hearing the text.

The  discussion plan ‘Knowing how to act’ explores where in the children’s own world civic norms and rules are posted ‘plainly’ and asks how such public behaviors are meant to be learnt – who has the responibility for making sure people know how to follow them? whose authority lies behind them?

*Very Plainly*: The Talmud notes ‘Very Plainly’ So that the words of the Law could be easily read and understood ‘In 70 languages’. Translation enabled the words to be understood by those unable to read the Hebrew original. The words ‘*baer hetev*’, demanding that the words on the stones be lucidly explained,  gave rise to the school of *Sopherim*, the Scribes, whose office it was to read Torah distinctly, giving the sense, causing the people to understood the reading (Nehamiah VIII, 8). In time this activity resulted in the various *Targumim*[translations into other languages]. Rabbi J.H. Hertz Commentary

 “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people… and when he opened it all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered Amen,Amen lifting  up their hands. They bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Yeshua and Bani [and others and the Levites] explained the Teaching  to the people, while the people stood in their places. They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving  the sense, so they understood the reading”.Nehemiah 8:6-8

*Very Plainly*: The Talmud notes ‘Very Plainly’ So that the words of the Law could be easily read and understood ‘In 70 languages’. They welcomed any serious attempt to make the words known and understood by those unable to read the Hebrew original. The words ‘*baer hetev*’, demanding that the words on the stones be lucidly explained, gave rise to the school of *Sopherim*, the Scribes, whose office it was to read Torah distinctly, giving the sense, causing the people to understood the reading (Nehamiah VIII, 8). In time this activity resulted in the various *Targumim* [translations into other languages].

“And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people… and when he opened it all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered Amen,Amen lifting up their hands. They bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Yeshua and Bani [and others and the Levites] explained the Teaching to the people, while the people stood in their places. They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving the sense, so they understood the reading”.

**Nehemiah 8:6-8**

**Leading Idea: How do we make the meaning of an occasion stick?**

Make a poster v’s make a poster and light a candle

Ways ritual captures/embodies meaning – Ritual - Miriam

Ceremony, event

**Blessings and curses 27:11**

**Consequences / punishment for our relationship to the land**

* שמע – 27:9 “Keep silence and Hear, O Israel”
  + Hearing
    - Physically (It registers in your ears)
    - Hearing as Understanding
    - It is taken to heart
    - It is accepted as a commandment/instruction (something to be acted upon)
    - Connection between listening/hearing/ acting
      * + Other instances of שמע / hearing

Rivka – Toldot – overhears bereshit 27:5

Bereshit 27:34;

* Bikkurim Giving thanks (haven’t developed this)**KI TAVO**

1. Goes back to question of meaning of ritual – ways ritual embodies/captures meaning