

Lesson 30 – Structure of Mishpatim Section – Perakim 19-26

Objective:

For students to connect each law in this section to one of the commandments and then try to figure out their order. They will be introduced again to the principle of association of ideas and get practice looking for associations of different types.

Background:

Since there are so many laws in this section, time does not allow a thorough study of each one and so in future lessons, only selected laws will be discussed in-depth. This lesson will provide an opportunity to at least read, process, and become somewhat familiar with every law in the section.

We have seen that the beginning of the Mishpatim section is actually another expansion of Commandment 5. So, the expansion of Commandment 6 actually begins with Perek 19. Based on what we have seen in the Hukim section we would expect an expansion of each of the last five commandments in order, allowing for digressions, expansions on expansions, and multiple expansions of a commandment in different places. We will find all of these elements in the Mishpatim section with one important exception. Commandments 9 and 10 do not have their own separate section of elaboration. This is because they are so similar to commandments 6-8. Remember that there were different ways to split the commandments into ten, one of them being based on the parashiot setumot. In this break down, Commandment 10 has two parts: 10a don't covet your friend's wife; 10b don't covet his property. These two are exactly parallel to the commandments not to commit adultery or steal, respectively. Any action that would be considered adulterous in some form would also violate coveting, and similarly with stealing. Commandment 9, not to lie, is also related to the others since lying in court can cause the innocent defendant to either be killed or lose money wrongfully, depending on the type of case. Therefore, commandments 6 and 9 are expounded in one section; commandments 7 and 10a in the next; and commandments 8 and 10b in the last.

Activity:

1. Give out the worksheet and have students fill it out in pairs. Since this worksheet may take more than one class, you may want to assign only half of it, review that part, and continue with the rest in the next session. Students don't all have to have exactly the same answers but they should be more or less the same. The discussion about where each one goes is more important than an exact categorization.

Structure of Mishpatim Section: Perekim 19 to 26									
Read the pesukim for each case in the Mishpatim section. Give a title to that paragraph. Then indicate which commandment this case relates to, if any. For example, case 1 is an extension of commandment 5, so write a 5 in the Honor Parents column. If a case relates to more than one commandment then indicate all connections. If a connection is only indirect or unsure then write the number in parenthesis.									
Case #	Pesukim	Topic	Honor Parents 5	Killing 6	Adultery 7	Stealing 8	False Witness 9	Covet Wife 10a	Covet Property 10b
1	16:18-18:22	Four Leadership Groups	5						
2	19:1-13								
3	19:14								
4	19:15-21								
5	20:1-20								
6	21:1-9								
7	21:10-14								
8	21:15-17								
9	21:18-21								
10	21:22-23								
11	22:1-3								
12	22:4								
13	22:5								
14	22:6-7								
15	22:8-9								
16	22:10-11								
17	22:12								
18	22:13-21								
19	22:22								
20	22:23-27								
21	22:28-29								
22	23:1								
23	23:2								
24	23:3								
25	23:4-9								
26	23:10-15								
27	23:16-17								
28	23:18-19								
29	23:20-21								
30	23:22-24								
31	23:25-26								
32	24:1-4								
33	24:5								
34	24:6								
35	24:7								
36	24:8-9								
37	24:10-13								
38	24:14-15								
39	24:16								
40	24:17-18								
41	24:19-22								
42	25:1-3								
43	25:4								
44	25:5-10								
45	25:11-12								
46	25:13-16								
47	25:17-19								
48	26:1-11								
49	26:12-15								

[L30 Perek 19-26 - Mishpatim Structure - Worksheet.xls](#)

2. See if students can find any pattern. They should be able to notice the cluster of Commandment 6 laws at the beginning, 7 in the middle, and 8 at the end. Explain how Commandments 9, 10a, and 10b, are expanded together with 6, 7, and 8, respectively. Now circle any laws that seem out of place. See if anyone has any ideas why there are many laws in the wrong section. Remind them of the principle of association that was used to connect some of the laws in the Hukim section. A

Structure of Mishpatim Section: Perek 19 to 26									
Case #	Pesukim	Topic	Honor Parents 5	Killing 6	Adultery 7	Stealing 8	False Witness 9	Covet Wife 10a	Covet Property 10b
1	16:18-18:22	Four Leadership Groups	5						
2	19:1-13	Asylum Cities		6					
3	19:14	Boundary Markers				8			10b
4	19:15-21	Witnesses		[6]			9		
5	20:1-20	War		6					
6	21:1-9	Unknown Killer		6					
7	21:10-14	Captive Girl		[6]	7			[10a]	
8	21:15-17	Hated Son			[7]	8			
9	21:18-21	Rebelious Son	5	[6]					
10	21:22-23	Hanging	[5]	6					
11	22:1-3	Retrun Lost Item				8			
12	22:4	Help Animal		[6]					
13	22:5	Cross-dressing			7				
14	22:6-7	Nest	5	6					
15	22:8-9	Fence		6					
16	22:10-11	Kilaim			[7]				
17	22:12	Gedilim			[7]			[10a]	
18	22:13-21	Betulim			7		[9]		
19	22:22	Adultery-married			7			10a	
20	22:23-27	Engaged			7			10a	
21	22:28-29	Not Engaged			7				
22	23:1	Stepmother			7			10a	
23	23:2	Crushed Privates			[7]				
24	23:3	Mamzer			7				
25	23:4-9	Foreign nations			[7]				
26	23:10-15	Holy Camp			7				
27	23:16-17	Runaway Slave				[8]			
28	23:18-19	Prostitute			7				
29	23:20-21	Interest				8			
30	23:22-24	Vows				8			
31	23:25-26	Friends Fields				8			10b
32	24:1-4	Divorce			7			[10a]	
33	24:5	New Wife			7				
34	24:6	Millstone		[6]		8			
35	24:7	Kidnapping		[6]		8			
36	24:8-9	Leprosy		[6]					
37	24:10-13	Collateral				8			10b
38	24:14-15	Timely Wages				8			
39	24:16	Transgenerational Punishment		6					
40	24:17-18	Justice-Collateral				8			
41	24:19-22	Poor				8			
42	25:1-3	Limit on Flogging		6					
43	25:4	Muzzle Ox				8			
44	25:5-10	Yibbim		[6]	7				
45	25:11-12	Intervention in Fight			[7]				
46	25:13-16	Honest Weights				8			
47	25:17-19	Amalek		6					
48	26:1-11	First Fruit				8			
49	26:12-15	Tithe				8			

[L30 Perek 19-26 - Mishpatim Structure - Summary Chart.xls](#)

3. Now go back and analyze each paragraph that does not seem to fit in the text. For each one, give the class a chance to find the associative link. Some of them are quite apparent but you may need to drop hints for the others. The goal is not for students to memorize every link, but rather to get a good sense for how these links work. The process of looking for the links will also force them to read each section very carefully which is a goal itself. The following is a color-coded text summarizing all of the word links in this chapter.

Order of Laws in Mishpatim Section: Debarim 19-26

9&6 ל' א תרצח	=	ול' א תענה ברעך עד שוא:
10a&7 ול' א תנאף	=	ול' א תחמ' ד אשת רעך
10b&8 ול' א תגנב	=	ול' א תתאנה בית רעך שדהו ועבדו ונאמתו שורו ונמ' ר'ו נכ' ל אשר לרעך:

Killing .9&6

Homicide (1

יט

א כִּי-יִכְרֹת יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי, אֶת-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי, נָתַן לְךָ אֶת-אַרְצָם; וּיְשַׁבְתָּ בְּעָרֵיהֶם וּבְבִתְיֵיהֶם. ב שְׁלוֹשׁ עָרִים, תִּבְדִּיל לְךָ: בְּתוֹךְ אַרְצְךָ--אֲשֶׁר יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי, נָתַן לְךָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ. ג תִּכְוִן לְךָ, הַדֶּרֶךְ, וְשַׁלַּשְׁתָּ אֶת-גְּבוּל אַרְצְךָ, אֲשֶׁר יִנְחִילְךָ יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי; וְהָיָה, לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה כָּל-רֹצֵחַ. ד וְזֶה דְבַר הַרְצָח, אֲשֶׁר-יָנוֹס שָׁמָּה וְחָי: אֲשֶׁר יִכֶּה אֶת-רַעְהוּ בְּבַלִּי-דַעַת, וְהוּא לֹא-שָׂנֵא לוֹ מִתְּמֹל שְׁלֹשׁ. ה וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא אֶת-רַעְהוּ בִיעָר, לְחַטֵּב עֵצִים, וְנִדְחָה יָדוֹ בְּגִזְזוֹ לְכָרֹת הָעֵץ, וְנָשַׁל הַבְּרֹזֶל מִן-הָעֵץ וּמָצָא אֶת-רַעְהוּ וְנָמַת: הוּא, יָנוֹס אֶל-אֶחָת הָעָרִים-הָאֵלֶּה--וְחָי. ו פֶּן-יִרְדֹּף גֹּאֵל הַדָּם אַחֲרֵי הַרְצָח, כִּי-יָחַס לְבָבוֹ, וְהִשְׁיִגוֹ כִּי-יִרְבֶּה הַדֶּרֶךְ, וְהִכְהוּ נַפְשׁ; וְלוֹ, אֵינִי מִשְׁפֹּט-מֹות, כִּי לֹא שָׂנֵא הוּא לוֹ, מִתְּמֹל שְׁלֹשׁ. ז עַל-כֵּן אֲנִכִּי מְצַוְנָה, לֵאמֹר: שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים, תִּבְדִּיל לְךָ. ח וְאִם-יִרְחִיב יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי, אֶת-גְּבוּלְךָ, בְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע, לְאַבְתִּיךָ; וְנָתַן לְךָ אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר לְתֵת לְאַבְתִּיךָ. ט כִּי-תִשְׁמֹר אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ, אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי מְצַוְנָה הַיּוֹם, לֵאמֹר אֶת-יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי וְלִלְכֹת בְּדַרְכָּיו, כָּל-הַיָּמִים--וְיִסַּפֵּת לְךָ עוֹד שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים, עַל הַשְּׁלֹשׁ הָאֵלֶּה. י וְלֹא יִשְׁפֹךְ, דָּם נָקִי, בְּקֶרֶב אַרְצְךָ, אֲשֶׁר יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי נָתַן לְךָ נַחְלָה; וְהָיָה עֲלֵיךְ, דְּמַיִם. {פ}

יא **וכי-יהיה איש**, שָׂנֵא לְרַעְהוּ, וְאָרַב לוֹ וְקָם עָלָיו, וְהִכְהוּ נַפְשׁ וְנָמַת; וְנָס, אֶל-אֶחָת הָעָרִים הָאֵל. יב וְשָׁלְחוּ זָקְנֵי עִירוֹ, וְלָקְחוּ אֹתוֹ מִשָּׁם; וְנָתְנוּ אֹתוֹ, בְּיַד גֹּאֵל הַדָּם--וְנָמַת. יג **לא-תחוס עיניך**, עָלָיו; וּבְעָרְתָּ **דָם-הנקי מישראל**, וְטוֹב לְךָ. {ס}

יד **לא תסגי גבול רעך**, אֲשֶׁר גְּבֹלוֹ רֵאשֻׁנִים--בְּנַחֲלֹתְךָ, אֲשֶׁר תִּנְחַל, בְּאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי נָתַן לְךָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ. {ס}

טו¹ **לא-יקום עד אחד באיש**, לְכָל-עוֹן וְלְכָל-חַטָּאת, בְּכָל-חַטָּא, אֲשֶׁר יַחְטָא: עַל-פִּי שְׁנֵי עֵדִים, אוֹ עַל-פִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה עֵדִים--יָקוּם דָּבָר. טז כִּי-יָקוּם עַד-חָמֵס, בְּאִישׁ, לַעֲנוֹת בּוֹ, סָרְהָ. יז וְעַמְדוֹ שְׁנֵי-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-לָהֶם הַרִיב, לִפְנֵי יָד וְד, לִפְנֵי הַכְּהֵנִים וְהַשֹּׁפְטִים, אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם. יח וְדָרְשׁוּ הַשֹּׁפְטִים, הַיֵּטִב; וְהִנֵּה עַד-שֶׁקֶר הָעֵד, שֶׁקֶר עָנָה בְּאֲחִיו. יט וְעִשִׂיתֶם לוֹ, בְּאֲשֶׁר זָמַם לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאֲחִיו; וּבְעָרְתָּ הָרַע, מִקֶּרְבְּךָ. כ וְהַנְּשָׂאִים, יִשְׁמְעוּ וְיִרְאוּ; וְלֹא-יִסְפוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד, בְּדָבַר הָרַע הַזֶּה--בְּקֶרְבְּךָ. כא **ולא תחוס, עיניך**: נַפְשׁ בְּנַפְשׁ, עוֹן בְּעוֹן שׁוֹ בְּשׁוֹ, יָד בְּיָד, רֶגֶל בְּרֶגֶל. {ס}

War (2

כ

א **כי-תצא למלחמה על-אי-בדך**, וְרֵאִיתָ סוֹס וְרֶכֶב עִם רַב מִמֶּנּוּ--לֹא תִירָא, מֵהֶם: כִּי-יָדוֹד א-לֵהינִי עִמָּךְ, הַפְּעֹלֶךָ מֵאַרְץ מִצְרָיִם. ב וְהָיָה, בְּקֶרְבְּכֶם אֶל-הַמִּלְחָמָה; וְנִגַּשׁ הַכְּהֵן, וְדָבַר אֶל-הָעָם. ג וְאָמַר אֲלֵהֶם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, אַתֶּם קָרַבְתֶּם הַיּוֹם לְמִלְחָמָה עַל-אֵיבֵיכֶם; אֶל-יָרֵךְ לְבַבְכֶם, אֶל-תִּירָאוּ וְאֶל-תַּחְפוּזוֹ וְאֶל-תַּעֲרֹצוֹ--מִפְּנֵיהֶם. ד כִּי יָדוֹד א-לֵהיכֶם, הַהֶלֶךְ עִמָּכֶם--לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם עִם-אֵיבֵיכֶם, לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם. ה וְדָבְרוּ הַשֹּׁטְרִים, אֶל-הָעָם לֵאמֹר, מִי-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר **בנה בית-חדש** וְלֹא חָנְכוֹ, יֵלֶךְ וְיִשָּׁב לְבֵיתוֹ: פֶּן-יָמוּת, בַּמִּלְחָמָה, וְאִישׁ אַחֵר, יִחַנְכֶנּוּ. ו וּמִי-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נָטַע כָּרֶם, וְלֹא חָלְלוֹ--יֵלֶךְ, וְיִשָּׁב לְבֵיתוֹ: פֶּן-יָמוּת, בַּמִּלְחָמָה, וְאִישׁ אַחֵר, יִחַלְלֵנוּ. ז וּמִי-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-אַרְשׁ אִשָּׁה, וְלֹא לָקַחָהּ--יֵלֶךְ, וְיִשָּׁב לְבֵיתוֹ: פֶּן-יָמוּת, בַּמִּלְחָמָה, וְאִישׁ אַחֵר, יִקַּחָהּ. ח וְיִסְפוּ הַשֹּׁטְרִים, לְדַבֵּר אֶל-הָעָם, וְאָמְרוּ מִי-הָאִישׁ הַיָּרֵא וְרַךְ הַלֵּבָב, יֵלֶךְ וְיִשָּׁב לְבֵיתוֹ; וְלֹא יָמַס אֶת-לֵבָב אֲחִיו, כְּלָבָבוֹ. ט וְהָיָה כָּכֹלֵת הַשֹּׁטְרִים, לְדַבֵּר אֶל-הָעָם; וּפְקֻדוֹ שָׂרֵי צְבָאוֹת, בְּרֵאשׁ הָעָם. {ס}

י כִּי-תִקְרַב **אל-עיר, להלחם עליה**--וְקִרְאתָ אֵלֶיהָ, לְשָׁלוֹם. יא וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁלוֹם תַּעֲנֶךָ, וּפְתַחָהּ לְךָ: וְהָיָה כָּל-הָעָם הַנִּמְצָא-בָּהּ, יִהְיוּ לְךָ לְמַס--וְיַעֲבֹדוּךָ. יב וְאִם-לֹא תִשְׁלִים עִמָּךְ, וְעִשְׂתָּה עִמָּךְ מִלְחָמָה--וְצָרְתָּ,

¹ The law requiring two witnesses is also connected to the law of asylum cities in Num 35:30. There is much discussion there as well of the borders of Israel and of each tribe (Num 34) and the importance of not letting one tribe take from the land of another (Num 36).

A Detailed Explanation of the Placement of Each Law in the Mishpatim Section: Expansion of Commandments 6 and 9 - Killing

1) The first two perakim of the Mishpatim section discuss the four leadership groups. The first group is the judges who are directly responsible for applying the laws. Kings, priests, and prophets are then discussed both as a tangent to the first type of leadership and also because all are necessary for maintaining a just and stable society. This entire section is an introduction to the specific laws to follow and at the same time also expands Commandment 5 – just as one must honor parents one must also respect other types of authority.

2-3) The first law of the Mishpatim section is about the asylum city and the difference between the unintentional and intentional killers. This expands commandment 6. This law mentions the borders – גבל - of the land for each asylum city (19:3,8). Using the principle of association of ideas, the next law is about changing the border marker – גבול - to encroach on a neighbor's land. This is properly a commandment 8 law (and 10b since any stealing is also coveting a field) but is placed here because of the same word is repeated from the previous section.

4) The next case prohibits being a false witness which places into the commandment 9 category. In the most extreme case, a false witness can wrongfully cause the defendant to be killed נפש בנפש. (For example, in 1 Kings 21 Izebel has two people testify against Nabot and have him killed.) In such a case, it would also constitute indirect murder – commandment 6. This commandment is placed here because it can be an extension of commandment 6, and because it shares the phrases ובערת הרעץ/דם נקי and לא תחוס עיניך. This is the only substantial extension of commandment 9 in the entire Mishpatim section so perhaps we should consider 6 and 9 as a pair which are treated together. This would explain why there is no separate expansion of commandment 9 after commandment 8.

The law requiring two witnesses is also connected to the law of asylum cities in Num 35:30. There is much discussion there as well of the borders of Israel and of each tribe (Num 34) and the importance of not letting one tribe take from the land of another (Num 36).

5) All three paragraphs in Perek 20 deal with war and proceed in chronological order. The first is about what the soldiers are told before the war, the second is about whether or not to offer peace just before the battle begins, and the third is about how to treat the trees during battle. A fourth paragraph about war is case 7 which legislated behavior after the war. Permission to go to war is an exception to the commandment not to murder and so all this is under commandment 6.

6-7) The case of the unknown killer is clearly a variation of a murder case and belongs in this section. One reason it interrupts the four cases of war and precedes the captive woman law is because of an interesting word connection between אדמה and שדה in 21:1 and האדם and השדה in 20:19. The captive women case is here because it is part of the laws of war. However, it also falls under commandments 7 and 10a since she may even be married. The connection to commandment 7 may be another reason to place it after the unknown killer so that the captive women case will be closer to the adultery section.

8) The hated son case by itself is an example of stealing by withholding from the son of the hated wife what is rightfully his as the first-born. There is also a hint of adultery in this unhappy polygamous marriage. This case connects to the end of the previous case

which mentioned the case where the soldier does not like the captive woman just as this husband does not like one wife.

9-10) The rebellious son is the classic violation of commandment 5 but is placed here because of the opening words **כִּי יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ** which it shares with the previous case as well as the next case (and 19:11). This is also related to commandment 6 since the son is killed by the townspeople. Next comes a law about how to treat someone who is killed by the court and hung on display. The connection to commandment 6 is apparent and there is also an allusion to the explanation of commandment 5 given in Debarim 14 which connects human dignity with our status as God's children.

11-12) Next comes a law about a lost animal that strayed off the path – **נִדְחִים**. This is properly a commandment 8 law but is here because the word **נִדְחִים** has the same meaning as **סוֹרֵר** from 21:18. These two words are interchangeable as seen is their usage in 4:19, 30:17 which both use the first and 11:16, 11:28 which both use the second in the same context. This is followed by another law about animals. In both cases, there is a chance that the animal could die if not helped and so there is an indirect connection to commandment 6. In fact, this case uses the word **נִפְלִים** which in an upcoming case (22:8) refers to falling off a roof to one's death. Also, these two laws foreshadow the case of the birds nest which is more closely connected to commandment 6.

13) Any sexual impropriety falls nearest to commandment 7, including cross-dressing. This law is placed here because of the mention of clothing here **שְׂמַלְתָּ** and in the last-but-one case **לְשַׂמְלָתוֹ** (22:3).

14) Next comes another animal law of taking young birds together with the mother. The phrase **לִמְעַן יִיטֵב לְךָ וְהֵאָרַכְתָּ יָמֶיךָ** reminds us of commandment 5 to respect the mother child relationship. But, the phrase **לֹא תִקַּח הָאֵם עַל הַבָּנִים** makes it sound like we are going to destroy both of them (as the phrase is used in Gen 32:11). This law would then be similar to Lev 22:28 and could be classified as a commandment 6 law relating to cruel killing of animals.

15) The final law in the commandment 6 section is a clear case of taking responsibility to prevent someone from falling to his death because of your negligence. The words **תְּבַנֶּה** remind us of **בָּנֵה בַיִת הַדֶּשׁ** earlier in this section (20:5). There are many other phrases as well that connect various laws in this section that are not adjacent as shown in the color coded text.

Expansion of Comanments 7 and 10a – Adultery, Coveting Wife

16-17) Prohibited mixtures of plants and animals are similar to the prohibited mixing of people involved in adulterous relationships. Gedilim also extends commandment 7 as the parallel in Numbers 15:39 emphasizes, **וְלֹא תִתְּרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם זֹנִים, אַחֲרֵיהֶם**. The word **כִּנְיָ** seems to have a sexual connotation as in Deut 23:1 and 27:20. Since this law requires a safeguard for modesty it falls under 10a as well. Violation of 10a is a first step leading to violation of 7, just as violation of 10b leads to violation of 8. Therefore, any law that acts as a precautionary safeguard for sexual impropriety can fall under commandment 10a.

18-21) The next four cases form a unit which directly address different variations of adulterous relationships. In the first, a man claims his new wife has had previous experience. This also relates to commandment 9 if it is a false accusation. The next three move from most severe to least severe: classic adultery with a married woman, adultery with an engaged women, and sex with a single women.

22-25) Just as adultery is a prohibited relationship, the next few laws list other prohibited relationships, specifically with a stepmother, one with crushed privates, Mamzer, and Ammonites. Connected with the last is a prohibition not to hate Edomites and Egyptians who one may marry after three generations.

26) This law requires the army camp to be holy, keeping away from “all evil things.” Purifying oneself from nocturnal emission and keeping the camp clean of excrement. The paragraph ends with – לא יראה בך ערות דבר. This probably alludes to the licentious behavior usually common in most armies and clearly connects to commandment 7 which can include all sexually inappropriate behavior.

27) The case of the runaway slave does not fit neatly into any category but might be a derivative of commandment 8 since this is an exception to the law of returning a lost item. The reason for the placement of this law here is not clear. Perhaps after detailing all of the things one must keep out of the camp, the runaway slave comes an example of someone one must keep inside, עמך ישב בקרבך, and not kicked out.

28-31) The prohibition of prostitution clearly falls under commandment 7. The next law prohibiting interest on a loan properly belongs to commandment 8 since charging interest is like taking what is not yours. But it is placed here because the word נשך, literally bite, connects to the mention of כלב, dog (a euphemism for homosexual prostitution), in the previous section. The next law of paying pledges to the Bet Mikdash, another example of stealing by not paying what you owe, also picks up on the prostitution section where one may not pay pledges with money received for prostitution. The next laws about taking limited stalks from a friend’s field are also a commandment 8 extension but are placed here because of the similarity between their openings כי תבא and the openings of previous laws לא יבא (2,3,4,11) and לא תביא (19). These three cases (29-31) are all commandment 8 laws that somehow relate to case 28. This group of commandment 8 laws at the end of the commandment 7 section begins a transition to the next section.

32-33) The last two laws in the commandment 7 section deal with remarriage and treatment of a new wife and both begin with the same words, כי יקח איש. The first provides another sexual prohibition. The section dealing with sexual improprieties artfully ends with a presentation of the ideal happy marriage.

Extension of Commandments 8 and 10b – Stealing and Coveting Property

34-36) The first law of this section prohibits taking a millstone, the basis of one’s livelihood, as collateral. This directly relates to commandment 8 since this constitutes wrongly taking what belongs to someone else. It also indirectly relates to commandment 6 since the person can die if he has no livelihood, as the word נפש indicates. The word נפש prompts the next law about kidnapping – an extreme form of stealing that also borders on killing since one is taking a person and not just property. The reason for the placement of the next law about leprosy is not apparent. Leprosy is compared to death in Num 12:12 and so it may be a third case in this sub-group of laws that border on death. Also, this is the first of four laws in the stealing section that command to remember - זכור - something about Egypt. Rashi explains that this is a hint to Lashon Hara which at least helps place the law into the realm of לחבירו. Perhaps there is a further connection between invasion of privacy caused by Lashon Hara and invasion of privacy in the next law not to enter a debtor’s house.

37-39) After multiple digressions, the next law returns to the subject of taking collateral which opened this section. This and the next case about timely payment of wages both

fall squarely into commandment 8. They both use sunset as a time limit and the second mentions נפש once again. The next law prohibits improper punishment by killing one person for the sins of another – an extension of commandment 6. It is placed here because the mention of the word חטא at the end of v 15 prompts another with the same word – איש בחטאו יומת.

40-41) Once again, after multiple digressions, the next law returns to the subject of taking collateral. The laws through the end of this chapter require special care for the poor, not taking the clothing of a widow as collateral, and giving grain to the poor. In both cases we are reminded to remember being slaves in Egypt. Withholding charity is an extension of stealing.

42-45) The limit on flogging is closest to commandment 6 since over-flogging can cause death. This law may be related to the hitting of the olive-trees in v 20. The next law not to muzzle an ox extends commandment 8 since the animal deserves to eat while he works. The law of Yibbim is a case where one is allowed and even obligated to take his sister-in-law as a wife and so is an exception to commandment 7. It also relates to commandment 6 because by refusing to perform Yibbim, he allows the brother's name to be erased. It is placed in this section because of the word connections to the flogging case – both have ונגשו/ונגשו and אחיך. The next case also mentions אחיו as well as יחדו and is placed here even though it is indirectly a commandment 7 law since someone else's wife intervenes in a fight by grabbing his privates.

46-49) Honest weights is an obvious case of commandment 7. Wiping the remembrance of Amalek – תמחה את זכר – connects to wiping the name of the deceased brother – ולא ימחה שמו in v 6. The last sentence of the previous law says that God hates all unrighteousness and Amalek is the quintessential example of unrighteousness. Withholding from a priest, Levi, or poor person, the first fruit and tithe which the Torah legislates should be given to them would be an act of stealing and another extension of commandment 8. The final words of the landowner in v 15 – ארץ זבת חלב ודבש – parallel the same words in the opening of the Mitzvot section in 6:3 thus forming an envelope around the entire elaboration of the Decalogue.

4. Discuss how the order of laws in Debarim is different than what we would expect from a modern textbook. Why does the Torah use this method?

a. Even though the Torah was written down, most people did not have access to a Torah scroll either because they were illiterate or because it was very expensive to own one. Therefore, the Torah was often learned by heart. These associative links parallel the way our brains remember information and so they serve as mnemonic devices. This method or arrangement was widespread in the ancient world and is also found in the Mishnah and Talmud.

b. Many of the stronger associations also create subsections around a theme (such as laws concerning animals in 22:1-10) other than the ten commandments; this allows more flexibility to have independent thematic units without disrupting the overall structure of expansion of the ten commandments.