

PARSHAT RE'EH: JEWISH SLAVERY

This guide corresponds to the video: [The Strange Laws Of Jewish Slavery](#)

TEACHER'S GUIDE



POINTS TO PAUSE



DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 1:01 Why is the promise that the Israelites will leave Egypt with great wealth important? How is it meant serve as a conciliation to Abraham? After terrible subjugation for hundreds of years, who cares about gifts?
- 2:27 Why would God make it such that the Egyptians would *happily* hand over their wealth? Does it matter how the wealth is obtained, as long as the Israelites leave Egypt with it all? Why not have the people raid the Egyptian homes during the plague of Darkness? Why the need for enemy compliance?
- 6:30 Let's take a step back. If the servant is really meant to battle the Stockholm Syndrome – the feeling of sympathy, connection, and comfort that he/she feels for and with the master – how is gift-giving meant to accomplish that?
- 7:59 Let's consider this question: Why does the Torah command a psychological state? It seems that the Torah rarely does that. Who cares *how* the master gives the gifts, as long as he gives them? (Naturally, this will take us right back to the question of why the Egyptians needed to give away their wealth happily.)



FROM PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE

While Jewish servitude is not something that we encounter today, the larger message of these laws is quite relevant. Rabbi Fohrman mentioned that the exodus from Egypt is meant to serve as a source for developing empathy towards others. (*Teachers: You can take this opportunity to have a broader discussion about the nature and value of empathy.*) In other words, God expects us to treat others a certain way because we know how it feels to be in that same position. The command to regularly recall the exodus, then, is not just about expressing gratitude to God, but about cultivating empathy towards others.

The problem is this: we – all of us – have *not* experienced the exodus first-hand. How, then, is it meant to serves as a source of empathy for us? We don't know how it feels to have been in Egypt. Is God really limiting the ability to cultivate empathy only to those who have *actually* experienced precisely what someone else is experiencing? Interestingly, most of the generation to whom these laws of servitude will apply did not experience the Exodus first-hand either. If so, what is God trying to convey? **Practically, how can we ever cultivate empathy without having experienced the thing itself? How can we feel *with* others if we don't know what we should be feeling?**

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STUDENT GUIDE

Instructions: In the graphic organizer, categorize the flow of the laws in Deuteronomy 15:12-18 into three sections, at least as they appear at a cursory glance. Include the verse numbers and the section title (which you will create). In the second organizer, simply jot down your thoughts to the guiding questions as you watch the video. Sources can be found on the next page.

SECTION 1

- Verses: _____
- Title/Topic: _____



SECTION 2

Verses: _____
Title/Topic: _____



SECTION 3

Verses: _____
Title/Topic: _____

Why is Section 3 really in its proper order/place?

Why must the master give gifts to his servant upon the complete of his/her service?

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GENESIS 15

יג וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם, יָדַע תְּדַע כִּי-גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וְעַבְדוּם, וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם--אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת, שָׁנָה. **13** And He said unto Abram: 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

יד וְגַם אֶת-הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ, דָּן אֲנִי; וְאַחֲרֵי-כֵן יֵצְאוּ, בְּרֶכֶשׂ גָּדוֹל. **14** and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

EXODUS 3

כא וְנָתַתִּי אֶת-חַוֵּן הָעַם-הַזֶּה, בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם; וְהָיָה כִּי תֵלְכוּן, לֹא תֵלְכוּ רִיקָם. **21** And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. And it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty;

כב וְשָׂאֵלָה אִשָּׁה מִשְׁכַּנְתָּהּ וּמִגֵּרַת בֵּיתָהּ, כְּלֵי-כֶסֶף וְכְלֵי זָהָב וְשִׁמְלֹת; וְשַׂמְתָּם, עַל-בְּנֵיכֶם וְעַל-בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם, וְנָצַלְתֶּם, אֶת-מִצְרַיִם. **22** but every woman shall ask of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.'

DEUTERONOMY 15

יב כִּי-יִמְכַר לְךָ אַחִיךָ הָעֵבֶרִי, אוֹ הָעֵבֶרְיָה--וְעַבְדְּךָ, שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים; וּבִשְׁנָה, הַשְּׁבִיעִית, תִּשְׁלַחְנוּ חֲפָשִׁי, מֵעִמָּךְ. **12** If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, he shall serve thee six years; and in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

יג וְכִי-תִשְׁלַחְנוּ חֲפָשִׁי, מֵעִמָּךְ--לֹא תִשְׁלַחְנוּ, רִיקָם. **13** And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty;

יד הֲעֲנִיךָ תַעֲנִיךָ, לוֹ, מִצֹּאֲנֶךָ, וּמִגֵּרְךָ וּמִיִּקְבֶּךָ: אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְתָתֶן-לוֹ. **14** thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy winepress; of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.

טו וְזָכַרְתָּ, כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וַיִּפְדֶּךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ; עַל-כֵּן אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ, אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה--הַיּוֹם. **15** And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing to-day.

טז וְהָיָה כִּי-יֹאמֶר אֵלֶיךָ, לֹא אֵצֵא מֵעִמָּךְ: כִּי אֶהְבֶּדְךָ וְאֶת-בֵּיתְךָ, כִּי-טוֹב לוֹ עִמָּךְ. **16** And it shall be, if he say unto thee: 'I will not go out from thee'; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he fareth well with thee;

יז וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת-הַמַּרְצֵעַ, וְנָתַתָּהּ בְּאָזְנוֹ וּבַדְלַת, וְהָיָה לְךָ, עֶבֶד עוֹלָם; וְאִף לְאִמְתְּךָ, תַעֲשֶׂה-כֵן. **17** then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear and into the door, and he shall be thy bondman for ever. And also unto thy bondwoman thou shalt do likewise.

יח לֹא-יִקְשֶׁה בְּעֵינֶיךָ, בְּשִׁלְחַךָ אֹתוֹ חֲפָשִׁי מֵעִמָּךְ--כִּי מִשְׁנֵה שְׂכָר שְׂכִיר, עַבְדְּךָ שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים; וּבֵרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תַעֲשֶׂה. **18** It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years; and the LORD thy God will bless thee in all that thou doest.

