



Sukkat Shalom
B'nei Noach

Torah Reflections: Conversations on the Weekly Parsha
Parshat Re'eh 5784 : Mercy

Integrating Torah into one's life through reflection and conversation can be an incredibly fun and engaging experience. It's a journey of discovery, where ancient wisdom and timeless teachings come to life in our daily experiences. Through reflection, we have the opportunity to dive deep into the rich tapestry of Torah, extracting profound insights and lessons that resonate with our modern lives. The joy lies in the 'aha' moments, those instances when a Torah verse or story suddenly connects with our personal challenges, aspirations, and values. And when we engage in conversations about Torah with others, it becomes an interactive exploration, where diverse perspectives and interpretations enhance our understanding. These dialogues often spark excitement and intellectual curiosity, making the learning process both enjoyable and fulfilling. Torah becomes a vibrant and dynamic part of our lives, offering not just guidance but also a source of endless fascination, connection, and growth.

NOTE: Don't feel obligated to go through every source or answer all the questions—unless you want to. Even one source, or one question will give you plenty of material for discussion and meditation. Enjoy this!

Some thoughts from the parsha

In this week's Torah portion, we encounter the commandment against eating the limb of a live animal, known as *eiver min hachai*. This commandment was given to Noah after the flood, adding to the six commandments already given to Adam and Eve. While Adam and Eve were initially prohibited from eating meat, Noah and his descendants were permitted to consume it, with the restriction of *eiver min hachai* to instill a sense of compassion by avoiding cruelty.

The Rambam highlights that the commandments were transmitted through two main channels: individual transmission to select people and the completion of the Torah through Moses. The repetition of this commandment in the Torah underscores its importance in guiding humanity toward compassion. The Sefer HaChinuch emphasizes that refraining from cruelty, as seen in the prohibition against *eiver min hachai*, is crucial to developing a compassionate character.

This principle extends to other mitzvot, like the prohibition against muzzling an ox while it threshes, which also aims to cultivate compassion. If we must show compassion toward animals, how much more so should we show it toward other humans, who are made in the image of G-d.

However, compassion must be applied wisely, as the Midrash warns against misplaced mercy. King Saul's error in sparing Agag, the Amalekite king, illustrates how misguided compassion can lead to greater suffering, as his descendant Haman almost succeeded in annihilating the Jews of Persia. While justice must be served, cruelty as a personal trait should never be cultivated, even in the pursuit of justice. But neither should misplaced compassion hamper true justice.

Now, reflect upon the following questions

1. How does the prohibition of *eiver min hachai* resonate with your understanding of compassion and cruelty in daily life?
2. In what ways can the balance between compassion and justice be challenging to maintain in personal relationships or community decisions?



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3. How might the example of King Saul's misplaced mercy influence your own approach to decisions that require balancing kindness and firmness?
4. What are some practical ways you can cultivate compassion in your life, especially towards those who may be difficult to show kindness to?
5. How can reflecting on the intrinsic value of all living beings, as taught through this mitzvah, impact your interactions with both animals and other humans?