

Text Study

And they shall beat their swords into
plowshares^b
And their spears into pruning hooks:
Nation shall not take up
Sword against nation;
They shall never again know war.

וְהִכְיָה לְעַמִּים רְבִים
וְכָתְלוּ חַרְבוֹתָם לְאֵתִים
וְחַנִּיתוֹתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמְרוֹת
לֹא-יִשָּׂא גּוֹי
אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב
וְלֹא-יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה: פ

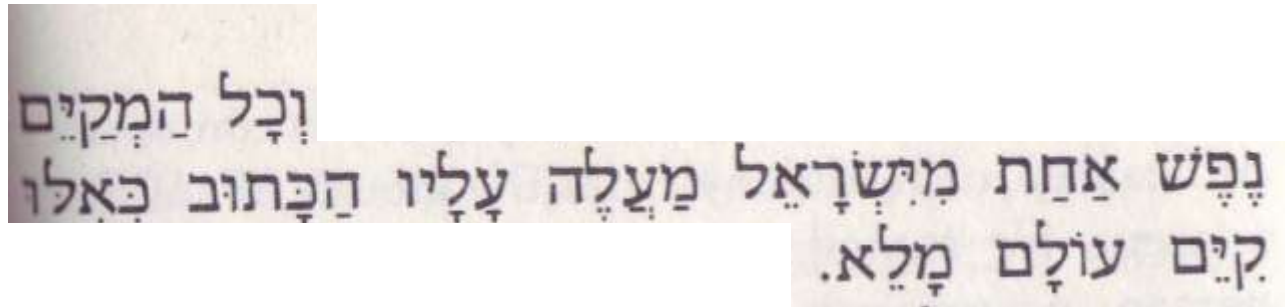
- *Isaiah 2:4*

Conversation starters:

- What are today's swords?
- How can we turn weapons of destruction into tools for the greater good of humanity?
- Can we, as a society, redirect anger and aggression into a more noble cause?

I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. – **Mahatma Gandhi**

Text Study



*He who takes one life, it is as though he has destroyed the universe, and he who saves one life, it is as though he has saved the universe. - **Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5***

Conversation Starters:

- What effect does gun violence have on the universe?
- Whose responsibility is it to prevent gun violence, and is desisting from violence itself enough?
- Can one passively save the universe?
- What might this reading teach us about the ethical importance of sensible gun violence prevention measures?

"Each time a man or woman stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, they send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those tiny ripples can build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." – **Robert Kennedy**

Text Study

saw how good it was. 26] God now said, "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness; and let them hold sway over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, over the beasts, over all the earth, over all that creeps upon the earth." 27] So God created the human beings in [the divine] image, creating [them] in the image of God, creating them male and female. 28] God then blessed them, and

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְהִי בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּבְבְהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הַרְמֵשׁ הֶרְמֵשׁ
עַל-הָאָרֶץ: 27 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם
בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּעֵלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר
וּתְקֵהָ בָרָא אֹתָם: 28 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים

Genesis 1:26-27

Conversation Starters:

- Is the taking of human life an attack on God?
- What does God give human beings sway over? Does God grant humans sway over other humans?
- If there is that of God within each of us, how might we cater our discussion of gun violence prevention and caring for the mentally ill without stigmatizing those in need?

"Non-cooperation with evil is a sacred duty." - **Mahatma Gandhi**

Text Study

your kin fairly. 16] Do not deal basely with members of your people. Do not profit by the blood of your fellow [Israelite]: I am the Eternal.

17] You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kin but incur no guilt on their account. 18] You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against members of your people. Love your fellow [Israelite] as yourself: I am the Eternal.

עֲמִיתְךָ: 16 לֹא־תִלְךָ רֵכִיל בְּעַמִּיךָ לֹא
תַעֲמֹד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:
17 לֹא־תִשְׂנֵא אֶת־אֲחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ הִוְכַח
תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חָטָא:
18 לֹא־תִקֵּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ
וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

– *Leviticus 19:16-18*

Conversation Starters:

- What might this reading teach us about the need to privilege human life over the corporate interests of weapons manufacturers?
- Is gun violence a form of hate? And is hate ever justified?
- Look at the commandment to “not take vengeance or bear a grudge against members of your people.” Does gun violence violate this?

“Gun Control? We need bullet control! I think every bullet should cost \$5,000. Because if a bullet cost \$5,000, we wouldn't have any innocent bystanders.” – **Chris Rock**

Text Study

Mishnah 3. He used to say: Despise no man,²³² and deem nothing impossible, for there is not a man that has not his hour,²³³ and there is not a thing that has not its place.²³⁴

משנה ג. הוא הָיָה אוֹמֵר: אַל תִּהְיֶה בּוֹ לְכֹל אָדָם, וְאַל תִּהְיֶה מִפְּלִיג
לְכֹל דְּבָר, שְׂאִין לָךְ אָדָם שְׂאִין לוֹ שְׂעָה, וְאִין לָךְ דְּבָר שְׂאִין לוֹ מְקוֹם.

Pirke Avot 4:3

Conversation Starters:

- Do we ever treat others unjustly because we are too busy to care?
- How might our own activity affect the attitudes of others?
- Might we be ignoring the clues sent out by those in need of help?
- Can we, as a society, treat others more fairly and welcome all more fully into our communities?

“Gun control laws safeguard liberty, rather than restrict it... Democracy can only flourish when the government is permitted to protect its citizens from harm.” – **Jeffrey Sinensky**

Text Study

Mishnah 15. Rabbi Eleazar of Modin¹⁷⁸ (Modiim) said: He who profanes sacred objects,¹⁷⁹ and despises the Festivals,¹⁷⁸ and puts his fellow man to shame in public,¹⁷⁹ and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father,¹⁸⁰ and he who interprets the Torah not in accordance with the Halakah,¹⁸¹ even though he possesses a knowledge of the Torah and good deeds, he has no share in the world to come.

משנה טו. רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר: המחלל את הקדשים, והמבזה את המועדות, והמלביין פני חברו ברבים, והמפר בריתו של אברהם אבינו, והמגלה פנים בתורה שלא כהלכה, אף על פי שיש בידו תורה ומעשים טובים, אין לו חלק לעולם הבא.

Conversation Starters:

- What place does one who dehumanizes another human being have in the world to come?
- Can we view gun violence as the public shaming of a fellow human?

Every act of love is a work of peace, no matter how small. – **Mother Theresa**