

## MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

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## TORAH LAW EDUCATIONAL COURSE

## The 613 Mitzvot of Yahweh

Bereishit • Shemot • Vayikra • Bamidbar • Devarim | The Tanakh Writings

## LESSON 11

Negative Laws #171 &amp; #172

## Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:22-23 — Homosexual Acts and Bestiality

לֹא תִשְׁכַּב אֶת-זָכָר / תְּבַל הוּא

*Lo tishkav et-zachar / Tevel hu***"You shall not lie with a man as with a woman — it is a to'evah. / It is perversion."***The Torah's Definition, the Three-Religion Witness, the Medical Confirmation, and the Covenant Mercy of Return***Four Spheres: Individual • Community • Nation • World****Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone**

Standard: Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses

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## SECTION I — THE HEBREW TEXTS

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### Law #171 — Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:22

**וְאֶת-זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הוּא**

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is a to'evah."

### Law #172 — Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:23

**וּבְכָל-בְּהֵמָה לֹא-תִתֵּן שְׁכִבְתְּךָ לְטִמְאָה-בָּהּ וְאִשָּׁה לֹא-תַעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה תִבָּל הוּא**

"And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it; neither shall any woman give herself to an animal — it is tevel (perversion)."

## SECTION II — PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS

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### Law #171 — Three Key Terms

**שָׁכַב (Shakav, H7901):** BDB: "to lie down" — the Torah's specific term for sexual intercourse in the arayot context. **The Sexuality Household Study found on [www.miqdashbethel.org](http://www.miqdashbethel.org)** (Section 31) establishes: "*Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:22 prohibits the specific act of one man penetrating another man sexually. The prohibition is on the specific act of anal penetration of one man by another — not on attraction, orientation, or internal emotional experience. The Torah regulates behavior, not identity.*"

**מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה (mishkevei ishah):** "The lyings of a woman" — the plural construct of **מִשְׁכָּב (mishkav, H4904)** ("lying, bed; sexual cohabitation") + **אִשָּׁה** ("woman"). This phrase designates the specific sexual position and act associated with intercourse between male and female — vaginal penetration. The verse prohibits a male from performing this act with another male. The anatomical specificity is the Torah's own.

**תוֹעֵבָה (To'evah, H8441):** BDB: "a disgusting thing, an abomination." HALOT: "abomination, abhorrence." Gesenius: "an abomination, a disgusting thing, that which is an object of loathing." The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: "*The word toevah means something disgusting, morally abhorrent — a designation the Torah reserves for acts that violate the fundamental covenant design of the created order.*" Used throughout Devarim for moral covenant violations (child sacrifice — Devarim 12:31; unjust weights — Devarim 25:16; the remarriage abuse of Devarim 24:4 — Lesson 02). This is not exclusively a cultic term — it is a moral-covenant term. The capital penalty is stated in Vayikra 20:13.

**The Anatomical Basis of the Prohibition:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"The anatomical basis is Beresheet (Genesis) 2:24: the one-flesh covenant is the joining of male and female in vaginal union. Two men cannot become **echad basar**. The act two men can perform sexually — anal intercourse — is placed under **toevah** because it violates the covenant design of the human body and produces the measurable physical harm the medical evidence documents."*

## Law #172 — The Key Term

**תָּבַל (Tevel, H8397):** BDB: "confusion, mixture, perversion." HALOT: "perversion." The Sexuality Household Study (Section 34) states: *"The Hebrew word **tevel** means confusion, mixture, perversion — the improper mixing of what Yahweh has placed in separate categories. Bestiality confuses the boundary Yahweh established between humans (made in the image of Elohim — Beresheet (Genesis) 1:27) and animals (created as distinct beings under human dominion — Beresheet (Genesis) 1:28)." Both sexes are explicitly named in Vayikra 18:23 — the prohibition applies equally to men and women. The capital penalty for both the person and the animal is stated in Vayikra 20:15-16.*

## SECTION III — ACT VS. ORIENTATION — THE TORAH'S PRECISE STANDARD

The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) establishes this as the Miqdash Bethel position: *"The prohibition is on the specific act of anal penetration of one man by another — not on attraction, orientation, or internal emotional experience. The Torah regulates behavior, not identity. A man who experiences attraction to other men but does not act on that attraction has not violated the Torah of Yahweh. The Torah regulates behavior, not internal states. A man who struggles with same-sex attraction and chooses to remain celibate or to pursue covenant marriage with a woman is living within the Torah's framework — the same framework that requires every unmarried person to manage their sexual drives within covenant boundaries."*

This distinction matters because: every person is created in the image of **Yahweh** (Bereishit 1:27). The to'evah designation applies to the **act** — not to the person's existence or experience of attraction. **Yahweh's** covenant law governs covenant behavior. **Yahweh's** covenant love encompasses every person He created.

### D. The Covenant Mercy of Yahweh — Sincere Repentance

Even where the Torah states the judgment of death, the covenant mercy of Yahweh is always extended to a person who sincerely repents. This is not a contradiction of the law — it is a covenant truth that runs through the entire Tanakh and must be stated plainly in every study.

**Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:21-23** establishes this directly: ***"But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord Yahweh, 'rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"***

This is the covenant position of **Yahweh** Himself — not a weakening of the law, but the full covenant framework. The death penalty is the Torah's declaration of the **gravity** of the sin. Yahweh's mercy through genuine repentance is the Torah's declaration of His **covenant character.** Both are true simultaneously. The Hoshea narrative is the clearest demonstration: **Yahweh** pursued covenant restoration with Yisra'el after centuries of spiritual adultery — not because the sin was less serious, but because His covenant love is greater than His judgment, for those who genuinely return.

The Sexuality Household Study (Section 46) states: *"Yahweh's covenant with Yisra'el did not end when Yisra'el committed adultery against Him — spiritually, repeatedly, across centuries. Yahweh pursued covenant restoration through every prophet He sent. The word to every person in covenant community who has violated the to'evah*

violations of Vayikra 18:22-23 is the same word Yahweh gave through Hoshea: return. The door of covenant restoration is the same door that stands open before Yisra'el in every prophetic book. **What Yahweh requires is not performance — it is the sincere turning of the heart, the genuine abandonment of the covenant violation, and the humble return to the covenant structure He designed.** That is Yahweh's covenant: judgment is real, mercy is greater, and repentance is the bridge between the two.

**Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:23 — JPS 1985**

***"Is it My desire that a wicked person shall die? — says the Lord Yahweh. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live."***

Witness: Yahweh's own stated desire — not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. The judgment of the law establishes the gravity. The mercy of Yahweh through repentance establishes the covenant character. Both stand together in every lesson of this course.

## SECTION IV — TWO/THREE WITNESS CORROBORATION

Reference	Teaching / Witness
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 18:22</b>	Primary text — Law #171. To'evah designation. First witness.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 20:13</b>	"If a man lies with a man as with a woman, both of them have committed a to'evah. They shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them." Capital penalty stated explicitly. Second witness — the strongest possible Written Torah confirmation.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 18:23</b>	Primary text — Law #172. Tevel designation. Both sexes explicitly named. Third witness.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 20:15-16</b>	Capital penalties for bestiality — both the person and the animal are killed. Confirms the absolute gravity of Law #172.
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 2:24</b>	One-flesh covenant (basar echad) — male-female vaginal union. Two men cannot become echad basar. The creation-level anatomical basis for Law #171.
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 1:27</b>	Humanity created zakar u'nekevah — male and female. The creation-level distinction that Law #171 protects. Every person is an image-bearer of Yahweh regardless of their struggles or violations.
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 19:1-25</b>	The Sodom narrative — the historical event in the Tanakh most directly associated with male homosexual intercourse. The covenant consequence at the national level.
<b>CDC / WHO Data — Sexuality Household Study Sec. 31</b>	MSM bear 43% of all US syphilis cases; 1 in 6 lifetime HIV risk for MSM vs. 1 in 524 for heterosexual men; receptive anal intercourse 13x more likely to transmit HIV than vaginal intercourse. Independent scientific witness confirming the to'evah designation under the Two/Three Witness standard.
<b>Yechezkel (Ez.) 18:21-23</b>	Yahweh's covenant mercy — the door of sincere repentance is always open even for those who have committed the to'evah violations. This is the same Yahweh who pursued Yisra'el through centuries of covenant betrayal.

## SECTION V — FOUR-SPHERE APPLICATION

Level	Sphere	Application	Torah Witness
INDIVIDUAL	The Act is Prohibited — Identity is Not	The Torah prohibits the specific sexual act. It does not prohibit same-sex attraction. The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: 'The prohibition is on the specific act... not on attraction, orientation, or internal emotional experience. The Torah regulates behavior, not identity.'	Vayikra 18:22; Bereishit 1:27
INDIVIDUAL	Every Person is an Image-Bearer	The Sexuality Household Study (Section 43) states: 'Every person is created in the image of Yahweh (Bereishit 1:27).' Every person — regardless of their struggles with same-sex attraction — is an image-bearer of Yahweh deserving of covenant dignity, pastoral care, and the full reach of Yahweh's covenant mercy.	Bereishit 1:27
INDIVIDUAL	The Covenant Standard Applies to All	The Torah requires every unmarried person — regardless of their experience of attraction — to manage their sexual drives within covenant boundaries. The person who experiences same-sex attraction and chooses covenant faithfulness (celibacy or covenant	Vayikra 18:22

		marriage) is living the same Torah standard as every other person.	
INDIVIDUAL	Law #172 — Absolute Prohibition	The prohibition on bestiality admits no exception. The tevel designation — confusion of categories — applies universally. Vayikra 20:15-16 confirms the capital consequence for both the person and the animal.	Vayikra 18:23; 20:15-16
INDIVIDUAL	Sincere Repentance — The Covenant Mercy of Yahweh	Even for the to'evah violations — even for acts designated with the most serious covenant language — Yahweh's covenant mercy is extended to sincere repentance. Yechezkel 18:21-23: Yahweh desires that the wicked turn and live. The to'evah establishes the gravity; Yahweh's mercy through genuine repentance establishes the covenant character.	Yechezkel 18:21-23; Hoshea 2:14-20
COMMUNITY	Uphold the Standard with Covenant Dignity	The covenant assembly upholds the Torah's standard — not with contempt for persons but with fidelity to Yahweh's covenant. The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) establishes the act-vs-orientation distinction that enables this bilateral approach: the act is to'evah; the person is an image-bearer.	Vayikra 18:22; Bereishit 1:27
COMMUNITY	Support the Person Struggling with	A person who experiences same-sex attraction and comes to	Bereishit 1:27; Vayikra 18:22

	Same-Sex Attraction	the covenant assembly seeking to live within the Torah's framework is to be supported — not rejected. The assembly provides the pastoral care of covenant community, the truth of Yahweh's covenant standard, and the covenant mercy available through genuine faithfulness.	
COMMUNITY	No Space for Contempt	The covenant assembly must make no space for contempt, mockery, or cruelty toward persons who struggle with same-sex attraction. Every such person is an image-bearer of Yahweh. Contempt toward image-bearers is contempt toward Yahweh.	Bereishit 1:27
NATION	National Policy — Yahweh's Standard	National law that legalizes and normalizes the specific acts prohibited in Vayikra 18:22 departs from Yahweh's covenant standard. Nations that do so take on covenant accountability for the departure. This does not mean covenant communities seek to criminalize attraction — the Torah's scope is the act, not the internal experience.	Vayikra 18:24-28
NATION	No Criminalization of Attraction	The Torah's prohibition is on the act — not on attraction or identity. National law that criminalizes same-sex	Bereishit 1:27; Vayikra 18:22

		attraction itself — rather than the prohibited act — goes beyond the Torah's scope and violates the covenant dignity of persons as image-bearers of Yahweh.	
WORLD	Medical Confirmation — World-Level Witness	The Sexuality Household Study (Section 41) establishes: 'The global STD crisis is not a random biological phenomenon. It is the measurable consequence of a civilization that systematically abandoned Yahweh's covenant sexual framework.' WHO and CDC data are world-level scientific witnesses confirming the to'evah designation.	Sexuality Household Study Secs. 31,41
WORLD	Land Covenant Consequences	Vayikra 18:24-28 — the land vomits out the nations for these acts. The Sexuality Household Study (Section 35) confirms these are 'covenant violations with land-level consequences.' Nations that normalize these violations face the covenant land-level consequences Yahweh specified.	Vayikra 18:24-28

## SECTION VI — THREE-RELIGION AUDIT

The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) provides the complete Three-Religion audit. The following presents it with full accuracy.

### Judaism on Law #171

**Upholds Torah:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"Orthodox and traditional Judaism upholds the Torah's prohibition on male homosexual intercourse on the basis of Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:22 and 20:13. The Talmud classifies it among the most serious of all prohibitions — one of the arayot that must be refused even under threat of death. The Rambam, Shulchan Aruch, and the mainstream of halakhic literature are unanimous."*

**Departs from Torah:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"Reform and Conservative Judaism have progressively moved to permit homosexual relationships and same-sex unions... These positions are rabbinic departures from the Torah text — the product of contemporary social pressure reinterpreting a plain prohibition. The Torah text has not changed. The rabbinic interpretation has."*

### Christianity on Law #171

**Upholds Torah — through the wrong authority:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"Christianity's prohibition is grounded primarily in Paul's letters — Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Timothy 1:10 — not in the Torah texts of Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:22 and 20:13. This means Christianity arrived at the right conclusion through the wrong authority for Miqdash Bethel's standard."*

**Departs from Torah:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"The departure of liberal Protestantism — the acceptance of same-sex relationships and ordination of openly homosexual clergy in denominations including the Episcopal Church, ELCA, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, and others since the 1990s — represents a full break with Torah's plain text. These denominations have not revised Torah. They have abandoned it in favor of contemporary cultural consensus."*

### Islam on Law #171

**Upholds Torah:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"The Islamic consensus across all four major schools of jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali) is that male homosexual intercourse is haram (forbidden) at the highest level. The hadith confirms the Quranic position: the Prophet is reported to have said, 'Cursed is the one who does what the people of Lut did' (Ahmad 1878, classed sahih by al-Albani). There is no Islamic school of jurisprudence — classical or medieval — that permitted male homosexual intercourse."*

**Where Islam departs:** The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) states: *"Islam grounds its prohibition in the Lut narrative, Quranic revelation, and hadith — not directly*

*in the Torah text of Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:22. For Miqdash Bethel, the Torah text governs. Islam's conclusion confirms the Torah. The difference in sourcing is noted for accuracy but does not undermine the convergence."*

### **Three-Religion Audit on Law #172**

The Sexuality Household Study (Section 34) states: *"This is one of the few sexual subjects on which all three traditions uphold the Torah without notable departure. Jewish law categorically prohibits bestiality as an extension of the arayot framework. Islam categorically prohibits it as a violation of natural order — the Prophet is reported to have said, 'Cursed is the one who has intercourse with an animal' (Ahmad 1878, classed sahih by al-Albani). Traditional Christianity categorically prohibits it as an abomination violating both natural law and the image of God in the person. All three traditions agree with Torah here."*

## STUDY REVIEW & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### Individual Level

1. The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) establishes that the Torah prohibits the specific act of male homosexual intercourse — not same-sex attraction. What is the covenant significance of this distinction? How does it reflect the Torah's consistent framework of regulating behavior rather than internal states?
2. Yechezkel 18:21-23 establishes Yahweh's covenant mercy for sincere repentance. A person who has committed the to'evah violations and genuinely repents stands before the same **Yahweh** who declared 'I desire that he turn and live.' What does sincere repentance require specifically — in terms of the act, the orientation, and the life within covenant boundaries?
3. The Sexuality Household Study (Section 31) documents that MSM bear 43% of US syphilis cases and have a 1 in 6 lifetime HIV risk vs. 1 in 524 for heterosexual men. How does this independent scientific confirmation function as a Two/Three Witness corroboration under the standard of Devarim 19:15?

### Community Level

4. A person who experiences same-sex attraction approaches covenant assembly leadership seeking guidance on living within the Torah's covenant framework. Using the act-vs-orientation distinction from the Sexuality Household Study (Section 31), how should the assembly counsel and support this person? What does the assembly provide — and what does it not impose?
5. The assembly simultaneously upholds the Torah's prohibition AND the covenant dignity of every person as an image-bearer of Yahweh (Bereishit 1:27). How does the assembly communicate both of these realities in its teaching and pastoral care — without compromising either?
6. A person who has actively participated in the acts prohibited by Law #171 comes to the assembly genuinely repenting. Using the Sexuality Household Study (Section 46) on the word to persons who have violated the covenant and the framework of Yechezkel 18:21-23, how does the assembly receive and walk with this person?

### National Level

7. Vayikra 18:24-28 states that the land vomited out the Canaanites for these acts. How should covenant communities understand this in relation to national policy — without claiming national enforcement authority that belongs to **Yahweh** and without treating every person who has committed the to'evah violations as beyond the reach of Yahweh's covenant mercy?

### World Level

8. The Sexuality Household Study (Section 34) states all three traditions uphold the bestiality prohibition without notable departure. What does this universal three-tradition consensus reveal about the creation-level covenant principle that **tevel** (confusion of categories) violates — and what does it communicate about Yahweh's universal moral standard for all humanity?
9. The convergence of the Torah (Vayikra 18:22), Islam (hadith on the people of Lut), and traditional Christianity (Romans 1:26-27) on the prohibition of Law #171 constitutes a three-tradition world witness. Using the Sexuality Household Study (Section 31), explain how this convergence functions under the Devarim 19:15 standard — and where each tradition's authority ultimately derives from in Miqdash Bethel's framework.

## SCRIPTURE INDEX — LESSON 11

Reference	Teaching / Witness
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 1:27</b>	Humanity created zakar u'nekevah. Every person is an image-bearer of Yahweh — including those who struggle with same-sex attraction.
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 1:28</b>	Human dominion over animals — the boundary tevel violates.
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 2:24</b>	One-flesh covenant (basar echad) — the anatomical basis for Law #171. Two men cannot become echad basar.
<b>Bereishit (Gen.) 19:1-25</b>	The Sodom narrative — the Tanakh's primary historical account of national-level covenant judgment for male homosexual intercourse.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 18:22</b>	Law #171 — primary text. To'evah designation.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 18:23</b>	Law #172 — primary text. Tevel designation. Both sexes explicitly named.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 18:24-28</b>	Land covenant consequences — the world-level application of these laws.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 20:13</b>	Capital penalty for Law #171 — both men shall be put to death.
<b>Vayikra (Lev.) 20:15-16</b>	Capital penalties for Law #172 — both the person and the animal.
<b>Devarim (Deut.) 23:18</b>	The qadesh (male cult prostitute) — the cultic context of Law #171.
<b>Yechezkel (Ez.) 18:21-23</b>	Yahweh's covenant mercy — the door of sincere repentance is always open. Even from to'evah. Even for these violations. Yahweh desires that the wicked turn and live.

**Hoshea (Hosea) 2:14-20**

The covenant pursuit of restoration — the mercy framework applied to those who genuinely return.

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***""Is it My desire that a wicked person shall die? — says the Lord Yahweh. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live.""***

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:23

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**Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone**

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**Next: Lesson 12 — Law #173 — Cross-Reference to Lesson 02 (Devarim 24:4)**