



War Rules

Greetings game creators! You are creating a game in which players build a world. However, just as war is a reality in our world so too war will be a reality in your game's world; and there must be ground rules for engaging in war. Your present task is to:

- Come up with a name for your game.
- Describe a basic goal of your game.
- Compose the rules, based on Jewish wisdom, that will govern war in the game.
- Design cover art for the game.

Below, you will find thousands of years of Jewish wisdom to help you develop the Rules of War for your new game. As you go through the various texts, ideas, commentaries, etc., keep in mind the following questions (and remember to ask critical questions of your own):

- What is the straightforward meaning of these words?
- What message is the person or text trying to convey? Is there another person or text that might say something different?
- When two people posit different approaches, how do I decide which approach is more appropriate?
- How might some of these ideas apply to different war situations?
- How do these ideas fit into an overall approach to war?

[Note: Some texts have been bolded for clarity; bolding is not in the original text.]

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 25:17 – 19	דברים כה: יז-יט
¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did to you on the way on your going out from Egypt	^{יז} זָכוֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם
¹⁸ That he encountered you on the way and attacked your stragglers, all who were lagging behind you; and you were tired and faint, and he did not fear God.	^{יח} אֲשֶׁר קָרַךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַיִּזְנֹב בְּךָ כְּלֵהַנְּחָשׁוּלִים אֲחֵרֶיךָ וְאִתָּה עֵינֶיךָ וַיִּגַע וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים:
¹⁹ So it shall be when YHVH your God gives you rest from all of your enemies around the land that YHVH your God gives to you as an inheritance to possess it, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens*. Do not forget.	^{יט} וְהָיָה בְּהֵנִיחַ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ מִכָּל-אֲבִיבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִי-אַלְהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחָה אֶת-זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:

*This is an instruction to wage war against Amalek.



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Bemidbar (Numbers) 10:9	במדבר י:ט
When you come in to war in your land against an enemy that attacks you, you shall sound the trumpets and you will be remembered before YHVH your God and you will be saved from your enemies.	וְכִי־תָבֹאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאַרְצְכֶם עַל־הַצָּר הַצָּר וְאֶתְכֶם וְהִרְעַתְם בְּחִצְצֹרוֹת וְנִזְכַּרְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְנִשְׁעַתֶּם מֵאֲיִבֵיכֶם :

Devarim 20:19 – 20	דברים כ:יט-כ
<p>¹⁹ When you lay siege to a city for many days to make war against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against [the trees]. Because from them you may eat, you may not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?</p> <p>²⁰ Only the tree that you know is not a food-bearing tree may you destroy and cut down and build siegeworks against the city that is waging war with you until it has been reduced.</p>	<p>^{יט} כִּי־תִצְוֶה אֶל־עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְסָּהּ לֹא־תִשְׁחִית אֶת־עֵצָהּ לְנֹדַח עָלֶיהָ גְרֵזוֹן כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל וְאִתּוֹ לֹא תִכְרֹת כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה לֵבֵא מִפְּנֵיךָ בַּמָּצוֹר :</p> <p>^כ רַק עֵץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְעַה כִּי־לֹא־עֵץ מֵאֲכָל הוּא אִתּוֹ תִשְׁחִית וְכָרְתָּ וּבְנִיתָ מָצוֹר עַל־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךָ מִלְחָמָה עַד רְדֹתָהּ :</p>

Mishnah Torah, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:10	משנה תורה הלכות מלכים ומלחמות ו:י
And not just trees. Rather anyone who breaks vessels, tears clothing, tears down a building, seals up a spring, or wastes food violates [the commandment of] “Do not destroy.”...	וְלֹא הָאֵילָנוֹת בְּלִבָּד. אֲלֵא כָּל הַמְּשֻׁבָּר כְּלִים. וְקוֹרַע בְּגָדִים. וְהוֹרֵס בְּנָיִן. וְסוֹתֵם מַעֲוֵן. וּמֵאֲבָד מֵאֲכָלוֹת דָּרָךְ הַשְּׁחָתָה. עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תִשְׁחִית. וְאֵינוֹ לוֹקֵה אֲלֵא מִכַּת מְרֻדוֹת מִדְּבָרֵיהֶם :

Vayikra Rabbah, Tzav 9	ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשת צו פרשה ט
Rabbi Yose HaGalili said, “Great is peace that even in a time of war it is law that one offers only peace first, [as it says in the Torah] ‘when you approach a city...’”	אמר ר' יוסי הגלילי גדול שלום שאפי' בשעת מלחמה אין פותחין אלא בשלום הה"ד (דברים כ) כי תקרב אל עיר וגו'

Mishnah Torah, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:1	משנה תורה הלכות מלכים ומלחמות ו:א
One does not make war with anyone in the world until they offer them peace, both a Discretionary War and War of <i>Mitzvah</i>	אין עושין מלחמה עם אדם בעולם עד שקוראין לו שלום. אַחַד מִלְחָמַת הַרְשׁוֹת וְאַחַד מִלְחָמַת מִצְוָה...



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Hasagot HaRamban on Rambam's <i>Sefer Hamitzvot</i>, Omitted Positive Commandments 5	השגות הרמב"ן לספר המצוות לרמב"ם שכחת העשין
The fifth <i>mitzvah</i> that we were commanded is, when we lay siege to a city, to leave one of the roads without a blockade; so that, if they want to flee, they will have a path to escape. For in this we learn to behave with mercy even with our enemies in a time of war...	מצוה חמישית שנצטוינו כשנצור על עיר להניח אחת מן הרוחות בלי מצור שאם ירצו לברוח יהיה להם דרך לנוס משם כי בזה נלמוד להתנהג בחמלה אפילו עם אויבינו בעת המלחמה...

R. Immanuel Jakobovits, "Rejoinders;" Tradition 4:2 (Spring 1962): 202
In view of this vital limitation of the law of self-defense, it would appear that a defensive war likely to endanger the survival of the attacking and the defending nations alike, if not indeed of the entire human race, can never be justified. <i>On the assumption, then, that the choice posed by a threatened nuclear attack would be either complete mutual destruction or surrender, only the second alternative may be morally vindicated.</i>

From the IDF Doctrine , retrieved January 6, 2020 At https://web.archive.org/web/20060430031938/http://www1.idf.il/dover/site/mainpage.asp?sl=EN&id=32	מהקוד האתי של צה"ל הוחזר 6 ינואר, 2020 https://web.archive.org/web/20060417190214/http://www1.idf.il/dover/site/mainpage.asp?sl=HE&id=32
Purity of Arms - The IDF servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war, and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.	טוהר הנשק - החייל ישתמש בנשקו ובכוחו לביצוע המשימה בלבד, אך ורק במידה הנדרשת לכך, וישמור על צלם אנוש אף בלחימה. החייל לא ישתמש בנשקו ובכוחו כדי לפגוע בבני אדם שאינם לוחמים ובשבויים, ויעשה כל שביכולתו למנוע פגיעה בחייהם, בגופם, בכבודם וברכושם.

Elliot Dorff, "Defensive War," <i>S'vara: A Journal of Philosophy, Law, and Judasim</i> 2:1
...[E]ven though the Talmud and codes do not directly connect communal self defense to the duty of either defending oneself or intervening on behalf of another, and even though one might argue that the latter duties do not establish the former, the Talmud does not question that a community must defend itself and even desecrate the Sabbath in the process. The codes not only endorse that right, but expand upon it. These sources also do not insist on the usual procedures required for engaging in other types of war when it is a matter of communal self defense.