



The Ten Commandments—Not Multiple Choice

Often, I hear people say, “Well, I am not all that religious, but I do keep the Ten Commandments.” At such times I’m tempted to say, “Really? You do know that The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice ...” I sometimes wonder if the people who glibly make that claim actually know what the Ten Commandments are . . .

Moses reviews the Big Ten in the Torah in Deuteronomy. Why not go through the list, so we can all get a better idea of how we score?

1) I am the L-rd thy G-d. Basically, this is the command to believe in one G-d. I have every confidence that we all get full marks on this one.

2) Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Okay, so you don’t make a habit of bowing down to that bust of the Buddha in your living room. The question is, should it be there in the first place? And isn’t it interesting that today we have all these “Idols” competitions being run around the world. Then, of course, there are all those well-established contemporary idols we tend to ogle and worship, celebrities like Brad Pitt, Madonna, Donald Trump, or even (Heaven protect me) Oprah.

3) Do not take the name of G-d in vain. This is not only about taking oaths or swearing in court. What about swearing in the street? How many choice four-letter words are in your vocabulary? And why drag G-d into those graphic expressions?

4) Observe the Shabbat day to keep it holy. Interestingly, the Ten Commandments appear twice in the Torah. In Exodus, the fourth Commandment begins with Zachor—Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. This week, we read Shamor—Observe the Sabbath day. “Remembering” is achieved through positive acts such as kiddush, candle-lighting, etc. “Observing” Shabbos, to guard it from any desecration, is the hard part. It may cramp our current lifestyles. That is where true commitment comes in.

5) Honor thy father and thy mother. Many people do indeed fulfill this mitzvah in exemplary fashion. I stand in admiration of sons, daughters, and often in-laws, who care for and tend to the needs of an aged parent or parent-in-law. They shlep, they cook, they humor and often tolerate irritable, cantankerous elders. This commandment seems to get more difficult as time progresses. Yet the Torah makes no distinctions based on age. It is our responsibility to look after our parents when they are dependent on us, as they looked after us when we were dependent on them.

6) Thou shalt not murder. Well done. Here’s another easy one to fulfill. I’m sure not one of you reading this ever murdered anyone. You thought of doing it, you almost did it, but, in the end, Jews are not the murdering type. We can safely tick another one.

7) Thou shalt not commit adultery. Umm ... Let’s move on the to next one.

8) Thou shalt not steal. Strictly speaking, this refers to kidnapping in particular. However, all stealing—including the white-collar methods—is included.

9) Thou shalt not bear false witness. How truthful are we? Even if we are not under oath, our word should be sacred. I remember hearing an old rabbi being introduced to a group of university students simply as a “man who never told a lie.” How many of us could make that claim?

10) Thou shalt not covet. Not easy either. Commentaries define this injunction as a prohibition on badgering someone, or conniving, to acquire—even legally—that which belongs to another. Go get your own. Why must it be his spouse, house or car?

There you have it. Did you score full marks? Did you pass, or are you in the forty-percent-or-less bracket? Worth working on, isn’t it? Hopefully, we can all improve our score, and one day claim with justification that we really do observe the Ten Commandments.

(by Yossy Goldman from www.chanad.org)



What Moshe Wanted

Our Parashah opens with Moshe retelling how he pleaded to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael. The Gemara (Sotah 14a) asks: Why did Moshe desire to enter Eretz Yisrael—did he long to eat its fruit or satiate himself from its goodness? The Gemara answers: So said Moshe, “Bnei Yisrael were commanded many Mitzvot that can only be performed in Eretz Yisrael. Let me enter the Land so that they will be performed through me.” [Until here from the Gemara]

R' Azariah Figo z"l (1579-1647; Italy) asks: Why does the Gemara wonder why Moshe wanted to enter Eretz Yisrael? Is the answer not obvious—he wanted to enter it because it is the Holy Land, which the Patriarchs and other holy Jews throughout history have longed to dwell in! Nevertheless, explains R' Figo, the Gemara asks this question because of the wording of Moshe's plea (3:25), “Let me now cross and see the good Land . . .” Moshe did not ask to dwell in the Land, only to see it. That is what led the Gemara to ask why Moshe wanted to enter the Land.

What, then, is the Gemara's answer? R' Figo explains: Notably, Moshe did not say, “Let me enter the Land so that I can perform its special Mitzvot.” Rather, he said, “Let me enter the Land so that the Mitzvot will be performed through me.” Moshe meant: Let me enter the Land so that I can encourage Bnei Yisrael to perform the agricultural Mitzvot and other commandments unique to the Land properly. It turns out that Moshe was not thinking at all of himself—only how to ensure that Bnei Yisrael continue to serve Hashem in the best possible way. (Binah La'ittim: Drush Heh Le'Shavuot)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

This week in Jewish History

Zohar Published (1558). First printing of the Zohar, the fundamental work of the Kabbalah (Jewish esoteric and mystical teachings), authored by the Talmudic sage, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai.

Passing of R. Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1944). Av 20 is the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1878-1944), in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was Chief Rabbi of Yekaterinoslav (currently Dnepropetrovsk), and was arrested and exiled to Kazakhstan by the Stalinist regime as a result of his work to preserve Jewish life in the Soviet Union.

(from www.chabad.org)

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the
Immediate and Extended Hettleman Families
on the sudden loss of **Mark Hettleman a"h**.
Shiva will take place through Wednesday Morning at 6605 Shelrick Place.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Kiddush this Shabbos is being sponsored by **R' Zishe and D'vora Zelman**
l'ilui nishmas their dear son **Mattisyahu Haleivi**
whose yahrtzeit is Motzei Shabbos. May his neshama have an aliyah.



DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 8/8 — 14 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat — Tu B'Av, 8/9 — 15 Av

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:40 a.m.
Minchah — 7:40 p.m.
Shkiah — 8:09 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:53 p.m.

Sunday, 8/10 — 16 Av

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Monday, 8/11 — 17 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Tuesday, 8/12 — 18 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Wednesday, 8/13 — 19 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.
Tanya Shiur: 2nd part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud
V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation
and the unity of Hashem — 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, 8/14 — 20 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Friday, 8/15 — 21 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 7:43 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.