INSPIRE

YISRO
10 COMMANDMENTS
20 SHEVAT - 15TH FEBRUARY 2020

The Most difficult Commandment

This is the week G- d gives the Torah to the Jewish people. The reading of the great revelation at Sinai occurs in this Parshah, and with it come of course the world-famous Ten Commandments.Which would you say is the most difficult of the Big Ten to keep? Would it be the first, the mitzvah to believe in G- d? Faith doesn't come as easy to our generation as it did in the days of our grandparents. Children with aged parents suffering ill health and who require much attention might argue that the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and mother," is the most difficult to properly fulfill. Still others would say that the fourth commandment, to keep Shabbat, cramps their lifestyle more than any other.While each has a valid point, personally I would cast my vote for the last one on the list—commandment number 10: Thou Shalt Not Covet."You shall not covet your friend's house; you shall not covet your friend's wife, or his field, servant, ox, donkey, or anything that belongs to your friend." Or in simple English: don't desire his beautiful home, stunning wife, dream job, nifty sports car, or anything else that is his.It's one thing not to steal the stuff; but not even to desire it? That's got to be the hardest of all. Really, now, isn't G- d being somewhat unreasonable with this one? Is He being realistic? Surely He doesn't think we're angels—He created us!So, allow me do what all good Jews do and try to answer a question with . . . another question. Why does the text of this commandment first list a variety of specifics—house, wife, field, servant, etc.—and then still find it necessary to add the generalization "and all that belongs to your friend"?One beautiful explanation offered by the rabbis is that this comes to teach us a very important lesson for life—a lesson which actually makes this difficult commandment much easier to carry out. What the Torah is saying is that if perchance you should cast your envious eye over your neighbor's fence, don't look only at the specifics. Remember to also look at the overall picture.Most of us tend to assume that the grass is greener on the other side. But we don't always consider the full picture, the whole package. So, he's got a great business and a very healthy balance sheet. But is he healthy? Is his family healthy? His wife looks great at his side when they're out together, but is she such a pleasure to live with at home? And if he should have health and wealth, does he have nachat from his children? Is there anybody who has it all?Every now and then, I find out something about someone whom I thought I knew well that reminds me of this lesson. A fellow who seemed to be on top of the world suddenly has the carpet pulled out from under his feet, and in an instant is himself in need. Another guy of whom I never really thought that highly turns out to be an amazing father, raising the most fantastic kids.As the Yiddish proverb goes, everybody has his own pekkel. We each carry a backpack through life, a parcel of problems, our own little bundle of tzoris. When we are young, we think that difficulties are for "other people." When we get older we realize that no one is immune. Nobody has it all.So, if you find yourself coveting your fellow's whatever, stop for a minute to consider whether you really want "all that is your fellow's." When we actually see with our own eyes what the other fellow's life is all about behind closed doors, what's really inside his backpack, we will feel grateful for our own lot in life and happily choose our very own pekkel, with all its inherent problems.There is a famous folk story about a group of villagers who formed a circle, and each individual opened his sack, revealing his most precious possessions for all to see. They walked around the circle of open sacks, and everyone had the opportunity to choose whichever one he wanted. In the end, each one chose his own.The Almighty is giving us good advice. Be wise enough to realize that you've got to look at the whole picture. When we do, this difficult commandment becomes more easily observable. Not only is it sinful to envy what other people have, it's foolish. Because life is a package deal.

LOUGHTON SHUL
MORE THAN A

Shabbos Times

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SHABBAT ENDS 6:05PM

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE
AT 7PM

SHABBOS MORNING

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The Weekly Question

Is G-D Religious?

The polls are mixed on that count. Recent surveys show that as much as 80-90% of Americans will say that they believe in G-d, but 40-50% will say they do not practice a religion.Indeed, if G-d is all-powerful and infinite, and religion is a set of laws and rituals and a list of things that one must or must not do, it would seem that G-d could hardly be described as "religious." Nor would it seem that being religious will bring a person closer to G-d. If G-d transcends all limitation and definition, why would the way to relate to G-d be to impose further restriction and definition on our already finite and constricted lives?Yet this paradox is not confined to the religious-spiritual aspect of the human experience. Throughout the ages, whenever man has endeavored to escape the bounds of the mundane and the everyday, he did so by submitting to a structured, even rigid, code of behavior.My favorite example for this is the discipline of music. There are just so many musical notes on the scale, and no one—not even the greatest musician—can create additional notes or subtract any. Anyone who wishes to play or compose music must conform to this absolute, immutable system.And yet, by submitting to this framework, the musician will create a piece of music that touches the deepest place in a person's heart---a place that cannot be described, much less the defined. By using this very precise, mathematical formula, the musician will create something that transports the listener to a place high above the confines and fetters of everyday life, high above the strictures of physics and mathematics.Imagine, then, a musical discipline whose laws are dictated by the inventor and creator of life---by the one who has intimate knowledge of life's every strength and every vulnerability, of its every potential and its every sensitivity.The only question remaining is: but why so many laws? Why must this discipline dictate how we are to wake and how we are to sleep, and virtually everything in between?Because life itself, in all its infinite complexity, is our instrument of connection with G-d. Every "scale" on its "range" must be exploited to achieve the optimum connection.Music being our metaphor, we cannot but quote the famous anecdote in which Archduke Ferdinand of Austria reputedly says to Mozart, "Beautiful music, but far too many notes." To which the composer replied, "Yes, your majesty, but not one more than necessary."

WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK - CHAYIM ARUCHIM

Rose Irene Mother Sarah bas Yitzchok 21 Shevat
White Gill Mother 21 Shevat
Blow Debby Father Moshe ben Yaakov 22 Shevat
Blow Pamela Husband Moshe ben Yaakov 22 Shevat
Diamond Howard Daughter Clara bas Hershel 22 Shevat
Teller Sally-Ann Father 22 Shevat
Green Gillian Morther Nita Abrahams (? hebrew name) 24 Shevat
Capal Barry Mother Chayah Sarah bas Binyamin 26 Shevat
Conway Connie Father Eliezer ben Yaakov 26 Shevat
Leigh Phillip Father Yosef ben Zaylig 27 Shevat
Leigh Ruth Brother Yashiya ben Yisroel Zev 27 Shevat
Tancer Jack Father 27 Shevat

A LITTLE HISTORY

Matzah Balls

These original matzah balls were called “kneydlekh” (also spelled knoedel or knaidel), and mostly the Germans, Austrians, and Alsatians used them in soup. Once Jews moved to Poland, they referred to them as knoedela. By the 1930s, the U.S. Manischewitz company began packaging the product with the name, “Alsatian feathery balls.” According to prominent Jewish cook Joan Nathan, U.S. comedians and vaudeville performers called them “matzah balls,” and the name stuck.

While Matzah Ball Soup is an asheknazi dish provided its European origins, Sephardic Jews have also added their own twist to recipes. Sephardic recipes for matzah ball soup add Middle Eastern flavors, such as chickpeas or saffron. If you’re curious, this Sephardic recipe for Matzah Ball Soup includes saffron and dried lemon.

FOOD FOR THE SOUL

For 26 generations, the letter alef stood and protested to the Creator, “I am the first of all the letters! Why did You create the world with ‘beit,’ letter number two?”Until G-d replied, “Tomorrow I will give the Torah, the purpose of all Creation, and I will give it beginning with you, the most supreme of all letters.”But why did He not create the world that way in the beginning?Because at first the Creation required a protective shell. If the light from beyond, boundless and all-embracing, were to enter, there would be no distinction between good and evil. All would be the same before such light, and nothing at all would matter.But when the Torah was given, the purpose of all things was revealed. When we know why we are here, boundless light can shine within each of us.With purpose, the big and the small, the day and the night, the good and the seeming ugly, all resonate in unison.

Parsha Summary

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, hears of the great miracles which G- d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.The children of Israel camp opposite Mount Sinai, where they are told that G- d has chosen them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G- d has spoken, we shall do."On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the Exodus, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai for the Giving of the Torah . G- d descends on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the shofar, and summons Moses to ascend.G- d proclaims the Ten Commandments, commanding the people of Israel to believe in G- d, not to worship idols or take G- d's name in vain, to keep the Shabbat, honor their parents, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, and not to bear false witness or covet another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the Torah from G- d and convey it to them.

Haftorah Summary

This week's haftorah discusses Isaiah's vision of the Heavenly Chariot (the merkavah), a revelation that was experienced by all the Israelites when G- d spoke the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai—an event recounted in this week's Torah reading.Isaiah perceives G- d sitting on a throne surrounded by angels. Isaiah vividly describes the angels and their behavior (in anthropomorphic terms). During the course of this vision, Isaiah volunteers to be G- d's emissary to transmit His message to the Israelites. He is immediately given a depressing prophecy regarding the exile the nation will suffer as punishment for their many sins—and the Land of Israel will be left empty and desolate, though there will be left a "trunk" of the Jewish people that eventually will regrow.

WHATS IN A NAME??

Male

Aryeh Leib The symbol of the Tribe of Judah, indicating strength and fearlessness. Often paired with its Yiddish translation, Leib. Yehudah took the lion as the symbol of his Tribe, and as Jerusalem became the capital of the Kingdom of Yehudah, the lion is the symbol of the City of Jerusalem. Biblical. Bereishit, 49:9. Leib is Yiddish for "lion," and as the symbol of the Tribe of Judah is a lion, Leib is used also together with the name Yehudah. See also Yehudah Leib. The family name Leibler derives from this form. From the early Yiddish forms Lowe and Lobl, there were derived the names Loew and Loebel—Lobel. In certain countries, Jews with the name Aryeh or Yehudah used other translations such as Leon and Leo. From these translations there developed the family names Leeman and Lehman. Not to be confused with the family name Leiman, a derivative of Lemu'eil

Female

Bruriah means "clarity of God." Bruriah was a great Torah scholar during Talmudic times, the wife of Rabbi Meir.

Breina Braune. Adjective: feminine brown colour.Into Lithuanian and White Russian Yiddish accent. One of the five female names referring to complexion, eyes or hair.

HUMOUR???

Sadie Weinstein's grandson and his wife are coming to visit her for the first time. So she is giving him the directions to her apartment."Come to the front door at 980 West Broadway. I am apartment number 450. At the front door, you'll see a big panel of buttons. With your elbow push button 32 to call me. I will buzz you in. Come inside, the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow hit 4 for the fourth floor. When you get out, I am on the left. With your elbow, hit my doorbell"."Bubbie," says Sadie's grandson David, "Why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow"?"You're coming empty handed"?

Riddle of the week

I am always in front of you, but you will never see me. What am I?

Answer to last weeks Riddle by Steven Gee

Age

STORY TIME

The first light had barely begun to erase the shadows from the sky. The young woman rose early today as every morning. She washed and hurriedly dressed, tossing on her cloak. She proceeded on her way, her attention taken up by thoughts of the future. Following the sound of melodious voices, she arrived at the House of Prayer, and took up her usual position outside. It was here she came every morning, to sit and allow the sounds to enter her and fill her soul.From the moment she knew there was life within her, her plan was clear. She would go every day to the House of Prayer and then to all the Houses of Study. Her child, though still unborn, would gradually come to know the sounds of the holy words of Torah.The chidings of her friends wouldn't stand in her way. "Where are you going so early, while it is still dark and cold?" When she would reply, "I am going to the House of Prayer, so that my baby can hear the holy words," they would look at her in surprise. No one could fathom her design; but to her it was perfectly clear.On this particular cold, winter day, she sat immersed in her own prayer to the One Above to bless her child with wisdom and the ability to toil in His Torah. She sat until the scholars emerged from their devotions. Shyly, she approached the first, "Please, bless my child with wisdom." The old man smiled at the young woman whose presence no longer surprised him. "May your child shine with the light of Torah," he replied. She then continued onto the various Houses of Study where she would sit beneath the open windows, the words of Torah permeating her essence.By the time the sun had risen to the highest point in the sky, she had made her way home to begin her day's work. The months passed; the sun rose later, the mornings were warm and sunny. The young woman still made her early morning rounds, but now she was accompanied by her small, new son, the apple of her eye, her precious treasure.She still visited both the Houses of Prayer and the Houses of Study, but now she propped up the small baby in his cradle which she carried from home. And from the early morning until the heat of the day had passed, the tiny baby sat, dozed, ate, and dozed again while the sacred melodies of Torah learning filled the air, enveloping him and filtering into his consciousness. The young mother was joyful with her lot and confident in the future of her small child, Yehoshua.Rabbi Yehoshua was tired. The road to Rome was long and difficult, especially in the dry season. But, praised be the Alm-ghty, his mission had met with success. His nerve-wracking debates with the vicious Hadrian had yielded the hoped for result - the severe decrees against the Jews had been rescinded. He could return home to Yavne in peace, with good news for his colleagues in the Sanhedrin and all his fellow Jews. Who could say what the evil Roman would come up with next time; now, at least, the Jews could breathe more easily, for a while. Rabbi Yehoshua was enjoying his repose. He had stopped to rest at an inn. He longed to return to the Holy Land, to resume learning Torah with his beloved comrades.He was thus immersed in reverie when he was interrupted by a young Roman gentlewoman who stood before him with a saucy look on her face. "So, you are the famous Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania," she said with a look of disdain."So, I am," answered Rabbi Yehoshua, for even in his humility he was aware that his fame extended even here, to Rome. His wisdom, though, was equalled by his penetrating insight and deep-felt love for his fellowman. His response to her was gentle, almost diffident: "What it is that troubles you, my daughter?""I have heard many tales recounting your wisdom," she replied, "but never would I have imagined that G-d would pick such an ugly vessel for his wisdom!"Rabbi Yehoshua smiled at the woman's easy insolence and rude, but honest description of his appearance; she was obviously a person of great wealth and position to possess such a haughty confidence at such a young age. "Tell me," he said, "does your father have old wine?""Of course. We have extensive cellars," the girl answered, a bit surprised at the question."Well," he continued, "how does your father store the wine?""In clay jugs, of course.""Why is that? Can't he afford to buy silver casks?" asked Rabbi Yehoshua, feigning surprise."Everyone knows that wine will spoil if it is stored in silver. Clay is the proper material for preserving wine.""You have your answer! The Creator of the World knows the proper receptacle for His wisdom, and thus has He created me! If you have a complaint, you must make it to my Creator!"The Roman woman was both embarrassed and impressed by Rabbi Yehoshua. She took her leave, murmuring apologies. But Rabbi Yehoshua was unperturbed by the encounter. He stood up to resume his journey home.The years accumulated greatness and honor, but Rabbi Yehoshua's aim never changed. One day, already an old man, he sat with his students exploring a question in the law. Was it incumbent upon the parents to bring their small children to hear the reading of the law? Rabbi Yehoshua related the story of how his mother would rise before dawn to sit beneath the open windows and allow her child to absorb the essence of the holy words. All his life, Rabbi Yehoshua continued, he recalled his mother with blessing, for it was she who instilled in him the holiness to which his soul became attached. Rabbi Yehoshua's comment sealed the halachic conclusion with his own beautiful truth.