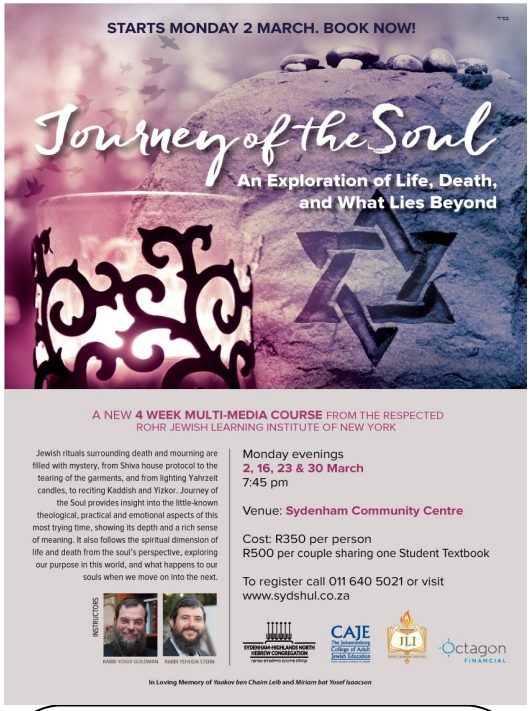
Live & Laugh

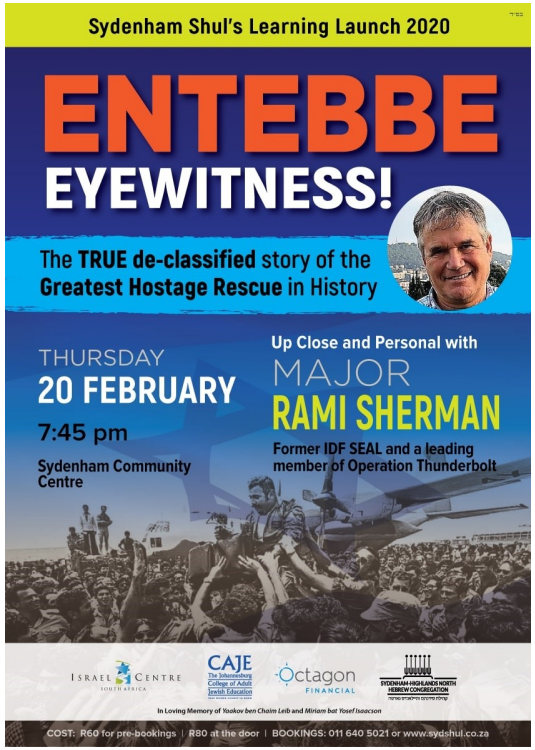
Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller?



Calendar

- Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl: 9:00 am
- Shul Brocha in the Seeff Hall sponsored by **Alan & Janice Leibowitz** in gratitude for happy occasions and **Myra Burlin** in honour of her husband's yahrzheit.
- **Smorgasbord of Shiurim**
- Mincha: 6:15 pm
- Shabbos Ends: 7:23 pm

- **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
- **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**
- Acknowledgements: Chabad.org,
- Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



בס"ד

75 Years Young!

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Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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The Most Difficult Commandment?

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

This is the week G-d gives the Torah to the Jewish people. The reading of the great Revelation at Sinai occurs in this Parsha and with it come, of course, the world famous Ten Commandments.

Which would you say is the most difficult of the Big 10 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 thy Father and Mother, is the most difficult. Still others would say that Number 4, keeping Shabbos, cramps their lifestyle more than any other.

While each has a valid point, personally I would cast my vote for the last commandment, Number 10, Thou Shalt Not Covet.

You shall not covet your friend's house; or his wife, servant, ox, donkey, or anything that belongs to your friend. Or in simple English, don't desire his beautiful home, stunning wife, super-efficient P.A., 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, is G-d not being somewhat unreasonable with this one? Is He being realistic? Surely our Commander-in-Chief doesn't think we are angels!

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, servant etc.) and then still find it necessary to add the generalization (and all that belongs to your friend)?

One beautiful explanation is that it is to teach us a very important lesson for life; a lesson which makes this difficult commandment much easier to live with. What the Torah is saying is that if perchance you should cast your envious eye over your neighbor's fence; don't only look at the specifics. Remember to also look at the overall picture.

Most people assume the grass to be 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? The attractive 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 *nachas* from his children? Is there actually anybody who has it all?

Every now and then I am reminded 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 who you never really thought that highly of turns out to be an amazing father, raising the most fantastic kids.

As the Yiddish proverb goes, everybody has his own little *pekkel*. We each carry a knapsack through life, a parcel of problems, our own little bundle of *tzorris.* When you are young, you think difficulties are for "other people". When you get older you realize no one is immune. Nobody has it all.

There is a famous folk story of a group of villagers who formed a circle and each individual opened his knapsack, revealing the contents for all to see. They walked around the circle of open parcels and everyone had the opportunity to choose whichever one he liked. In the end, each one chose… his own.

I believe it's more than just 'better the devil you know.' 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 knapsack, we feel grateful for our own lot in life and happily choose our very own *pekkel*, with all its in-built problems.

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 is foolish. Because life is a package deal.

Parsha Pointers

Yisro: Artscroll Chumash pg 394; Living Torah pg 345

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 administrating justice to the people.

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. 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, and not to murder, commit adultery, steal, 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.

Making Judaism Relevant

By: Rabbi Avraham Plotkin

Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned at Hebrew Sunday school.

"Well, Mom, our teacher told us how G-d sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?"

"Well, no, Mom. But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

One of the greatest challenges facing rabbis and teachers today is making the Torah relevant. Stories that happened thousands of years ago need to be explained in contemporary language; otherwise they become meaning less.

When G-d introduces himself for the first time to the Jewish people, when giving them the Ten Commandments, he says: "I am G-d, your G-d, who has taken you out of Egypt." Now if G-d was trying to give here His best credentials to His newly acquired nation, why would He choose to mention the exodus? Isn't the creation of the heavens and earth a far greater feat? Wouldn't that have been a far more awesome description?

Yet, while creation is a far superior feat, redemption from Egypt – to the people whom He was addressing – was contemporary and relevant. The G-d of creation is great, but very distant; the G-d of redemption is current, meaningful and alive.

One of the daily observances of the Jewish people, which constitutes an essential part of our prayers, is remembering the Exodus from Egypt. Every day of our lives. Why this obsession with an event that happened thousands of years ago? The answer is simple. By remembering the Exodus from Egypt we are celebrating the G-d of redemption.

And this G-d is personal, contemporary and relevant. After all, we all have our personal spiritual "Egypt" in our lives that with the help of G□d we can succeed in overcoming.

Every day there are miracles in our lives that need to be recognized. We need to see the hand of G□d in our lives. G-d takes us out of Egypt every day. The exodus is a live reoccurring experience that makes G-d a very relevant part of our lives!

10 Quick Lessons from the 10 Commandments

By: Chana Weisberg

It's the world's best-seller. It's also the most widely distributed book. Some guess it has sold millions, while others estimate it at closer to billions. It teaches morality and all the do's and don'ts. It can be understood on deep abstract levels as well as on the most practical, down-to-earth planes. It is celestial while also earthy. It gives practical guidance to living a higher life and is the best self-help book ever written.

It, of course, is the Bible.

And this week's Torah portion, Yitro, is when it all begins. As the Jewish people camp together around the mountain, the stage is set for the giving of the Torah. Even within the setting of this awe-inspiring drama, infinitely important lessons are embedded that can help us understand ourselves and our purpose in our world.

Here are 10 bite-sized nuggets of wisdom that we can apply to our lives from how, where and when the 10 commandments were given.

- G-d chose to give the Torah on an elevated mountain. You can elevate your life.
- A mountain is the same dirt as a plane, but has been raised. No matter how dirty your life appears, raise it and make of it a mountain.
- Mount Sinai was a low, unimposing mountain. The gateway to spiritual greatness is humility.
- The Torah was given on a mountain, not a valley. Humility must be complemented by self-assurance.
- The Jewish people were commanded to "make a boundary around the mountain." Limit self-assurance, so that it doesn't degenerate into arrogance.
- The Ten Commandments were addressed in singular to the whole of the Jewish people; if even one Jew was missing, the Torah could not have been given. You are essential.
- The Ten Commandments was said to individuals, tailored to each person's spiritual and psychological makeup. You have a unique role and mission.
- The Torah was given to one united people. Only external façades, bodies, separate us. Deep down we are one.
- The Jewish people were "facing the mountain" ready to receive G□d's word. If you focus on something higher, petty differences disintegrate.
- At Mount Sinai, heaven and the earth, spirituality and physicality touched for the first time. You can bring Divine consciousness into this finite physical world.

Sydenham Shul 24 Main Street, Rouxville, 2192.
Telephone: 640-5021, Fax: 485-2810
E-mail: sydshul@sydshul.co.za
Website: www.sydshul.co.za
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