

have been miraculously suspended in place.

Others teach that the writing was miraculously legible on each side—in other words, although the letters were engraved all the way through, they could nevertheless be read from right to left on both sides. Rabbeinu Bechayei explains that this is because the Torah can be understood on two levels, one revealed and one hidden.

Live & Laugh

Yankel was the manager of an up-market menswear store and was interviewing Abe for the recently advertised salesman role. Yankel looks at Abe's CV and notices that Abe has never worked in retail before.

Yankel says, "What a chutzpah, if you don't mind me saying. For someone with no retail experience, you are certainly asking for a high salary."

"Well I suppose I am," Abe replies, "but you must realise that the work is so much harder when you don't know what you're doing."

TIKKUN LAYL - Late Night Learning Programme

Sleepless in Sydenham!

10:30PM
"JEWISH MEDIA: RELIGIOUS, RESPONSIBLE, OR RELEVANT?"
Can Jewish Media Be Good? Can Good Media be Jewish?

A Panel Discussion featuring:
Howard Sackstein, Chairman, SA Jewish Report
David Saks, Editor, Jewish Affairs
Howard Feldman, Breakfast Show Host, Chai FM
Rabbi Yossy Goldman, Sydenham Shul

12:00am
J.C. IN THE TALMUD?
Origins of Christianity
Rabbi Yehuda Stern

1:00am
Did ALL the Nations Really say NO to the Ten Commandments?
Rabbi Eliezer Auerbach,
Lecturer in Talmud at Yeshiva College & Meivitz Shaarei Torah

2:00am
HOW TO CREATE A RELIGION 101:
Who wrote the Torah? Hashem or Fred, the charismatic cultist?
Dani Kedar

2:45am
HOW ODD OF G-D TO CHOOSE THE JEWS!
No, not odd, the Jews chose G-d! WHICH WAS IT?
Rabbi Levi Ulman

3:30am
LIFE IN OUTER SPACE: A Torah Perspective
Rabbi Mendel Teitelbaum

4:15 am
OPEN MIC! CLOSING SESSION
Refreshments throughout the night, Cheese Cake and Blintzes in the wee hours.

SYDENHAM HIGHLANDS NORTH HEBREW CONGREGATION

Calendar

SUN 20 May - 1st Day Yom Tov


- ◆ Shacharit: 8.30 a.m.; Shtibl 9.00 a.m.
- ◆ Hallel: 9.15 a.m.
- ◆ **Children's Bikkurim Parade & the Ten Commandments:** ± 9.45 am
- ◆ Duchening
- ◆ **Brocha Menu:** Lasagnas, Macaroni & Cheese, Cheesecake and Milk Tarts
- ◆ Mincha: After the Brocha
- ◆ Candle-lighting from a pre-lit flame not before 6.00 pm (Blessings for Yom Tov & Shehecheyanu)
- ◆ Full Yom Tov Service: 6.00 p.m.

MON 21 May - 2nd Day Yom Tov

- ◆ Shacharit: 8.30 a.m.; Shtibl 9:00 a.m.
- ◆ Hallel: 9.15 a.m.
- ◆ **Book of Ruth**
- ◆ **Yizkor:** approx 10.45 a.m.
- ◆ Duchening
- ◆ **Brocha Menu:** Lasagnas, Macaroni & Cheese, Cheesecake and Milk Tarts
- ◆ Mincha: 5.15 p.m.
- ◆ **Mini Shiurim** by Rabbinic Interns
- ◆ Yom Tov ends: 6.00 p.m.
- ◆ Havdallah: Wine only

SHAVUOT CHILDREN'S PROGRAM
 Sunday 9:30 am in the Big Shul
Bikkurim Parade & 10 Commandments
 Followed by:
The Land of Milk & Cookies
 in the Elk Hall

- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.ideal 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.

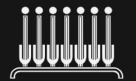


Good Yom Tov

SYDENHAM!

Published by the
 Sydenham Highlands North
 Hebrew Congregation
 Johannesburg, South Africa

20 & 21 May 2017 Shavuot 6 & 7 Sivan 5778



The Never-Ending Voice

By: *Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

The Ten Commandments are read in Shul every Shavuot. It is repeated in Deuteronomy as part of Moses' review of the last 40 years. There he describes how G-d spoke those words in a *mighty voice that did not end*. One of the explanations offered by Rashi is that Moses is contrasting G-d's voice with human voices. The finite voice of a human being, even a Pavarotti, will fade and falter. It cannot go on forever. But the voice of the Almighty did not end, did not weaken. It remained strong throughout.

Is this all the great prophet had to teach us about the voice of G-d? That it was a powerful baritone? That it resonated? Is the greatness of the Infinite One that he didn't suffer from shortness of breath, that He didn't need a few puffs of Ventolin? Is this a meaningful motivation for the Jews to accept the Torah?

Moses was the greatest of all prophets. He foresaw what no other prophet could see. Perhaps he saw his people becoming caught up in the civilization of ancient Greece, in the beauty, culture, philosophy and art of the day. And they might question, is Torah still relevant?

Perhaps he foresaw Jews empowered by the Industrial Revolution where they might have thought Torah to be somewhat backward. Or, maybe it was during the Russian Revolu-

tion where faith and religion were positively primitive.

Maybe Moses saw our own generation with space shuttles and satellites, teleprompters and technology. And he saw young people questioning whether Torah still speaks to them.

And so, Moses tells us that the voice that thundered from Sinai was no ordinary voice. The voice that proclaimed the Ten Commandments was a voice that was not only powerful at the time, but it did not end! And it still rings out, it still resonates, and it still speaks to each of us in every generation and in every part of the world.

Revolutions may come and go but revelation is eternal. The voice of Sinai continues to proclaim eternal truths that never become passé or irrelevant. *Honour Your Parents*, revere them; look after them in their old age. Never abandon them to some decrepit old age home. *Live moral lives*; do not tamper with the sacred fibre of family life, be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Dedicate one day every week and *keep that day holy*. Stop the madness. Turn your back on the rat race and rediscover your humanity and your children. *Don't be guilty of greed, envy, dishonesty or corruption.*

Are these ideas and values dated? Are these commandments tired, stale or irrelevant? On

the contrary. They speak to us now as perhaps never before. The G-dly voice has lost none of its strength, none of its majesty. The mortal voice of man declines and fades into oblivion. Politicians and spin-doctors come and go but the heavenly sound reverberates down the ages.

Moses knew what he was saying and whom he was talking to. Torah is truth and truth is forever. The voice of G-d shall never be stilled.

What Is Torah?

By Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

(tô'râ) תורה

root: יורה

Related words: instruction, הוראה, the guide מורה

What it means

If you are confused by usage of this word, you're probably on the right track. Grammatically, the word *torah* should mean any instruction, but in actual usage:

- The title **Torah** often refers specifically to the Five Books of Moses. A parchment scroll version of the Torah, carefully written by an expert scribe, is kept in the ark of the synagogue and taken out to be read during services.
- Torah can also refer to the entire **Written Torah**, meaning the entire canonized scripture.
- Torah can also refer to the above *plus* the **Oral Torah**, which includes:

o the compilation of laws and rulings known as Mishnah, along with other accepted compilations,

o the discussion and debate of that material, known as Talmud or Gemara,

o the stories and their lessons that are collected in the Talmud and Midrashic works,

o any other teaching that has been accepted by a long-term consensus of the observant Jewish community, because it is based firmly on some precedent, or because it has been demonstrated to emerge by accepted means from previous texts and opinions.

What's so special about it?

"If someone tells you there is wisdom among other peoples, believe him . . . If someone tells you there is Torah among other peoples, do not believe him . . ."

—Midrash

Torah, it seems, is distinct from what we generally call wisdom. Our sages go so far as to say that Torah precedes all existence, that it contains the blueprint for the cosmos, and that the very existence of the cosmos is contingent upon Torah.

Even the term "divine wisdom" is insufficient. Our universe, after all, is composed of divine wisdom. Our environment, our bodies and the very psyche with which we observe all of these are of unfathomable design. "How wondrous are Your works, O G-d," the Psalmist declares. "You made all of them with wisdom!" Yet the laws of nature are not the laws of Torah.

Human wisdom can be described as the ability to predict the outcomes of this wondrous design. We take note of its patterns and extrapolate into the future. We strive to know enough about *what is* to predict *what will be*—and therefore, *what could be* if we make informed choices. Nevertheless, *what should be* is decided by means that are not related to knowledge or wisdom.

For example, wisdom tells you that how you treat others is bound to come back to you. It's up to you to decide whether you want that coming back or not. Possessing property that doesn't belong to you might not be a good idea—for you or for the people around you.

It's up to you to decide whether or not to suffer the consequences for the sake of the immediate benefits.

Torah, on the other hand, doesn't simply inform, it *instructs*, "Don't steal." It's nice to know that respect of private property benefits you and the society in which you live, but that's not the reason you refrain from stealing. You don't steal because that is your Creator's will.

Torah as Oneness

A construction worker looks at a blueprint and sees a building; an architect listens to the builder and understands what he *really* wants. The Torah is like the architect—which is why studying it tells us not only *what is*, but *what should be*. Torah is the Creator sharing His innermost desire with us, the created.

The seed of Torah was planted with the experience at Sinai, recorded in the Five Books of Moses. But the voice of Sinai continues to be heard in each generation as students of the Torah unfold the DNA of that seed, discovering new meanings that were always meant, new applications that had always lay dormant. After all, the ultimate instruction is that which lifts the student to a vantage point from which he can discern his own evaluation, using the same tools as the teacher.

What's in it for us

When you immerse yourself in Torah, your goal is not simply to amass information, but to gain a sense of how the Creator of the Universe relates to His creations. To think in a G-dly way. It is a sharing of spirit, until the same preferences and desires breathe within the two of you. His thoughts are your thoughts and your thoughts are His. There is no comparable union to be found in any other wisdom.

What Did the Tablets Look Like?

By Rabbi Menachem Posner

Question:

I read in the Torah that Moses came down

from the mountain with two tablets of stone, but did not see anything about their size, shape, or what kind of stone they were made of. Can you shed some light?

Response:

The Dimensions:

Tradition tells us that they were thick square blocks of stone, six handbreadths tall, six handbreadths wide, and three handbreadths deep. In modern measurements, that is about 18" x 18" x 9". The sages of the Talmud demonstrate how tablets of this size—along with a few other relics—fit neatly into the Ark of the Covenant that Moses made as described in Exodus.

It is interesting to note that nowhere is there any mention of them having the rounded tops that are so common in the popular drawings of Moses and the tablets. This design appears to be the invention of non-Jewish artists.

The Material:

The tradition is that both sets of tablets were made of sapphire. After Moses broke the first set, G-d revealed a large deposit of sapphire under Moses' tent. Moses used some of the stone to carve the second tablets, and was permitted to keep the remainder.

The Writing:

The most common understanding is that the first five commandments were written on one tablet, and the other five commandments were on the second.

The Torah describes the writing as "inscribed from both their sides; on one side and on the other side they were inscribed."

This means that the inscription was engraved through and through. As such, the words were clearly legible on one side and written in mirror writing on the other. Now there are two Hebrew letters, the ך and the ם that are closed from all sides. The centres of these letters, Rav Chisda concludes, must

Sydenham Shul 24 Main Street, Rouxville, 2192.

Telephone: 640-5021, Fax: 485-2810

E-mail: sydshul@sydshul.co.za

Website: www.sydshul.co.za

www.facebook.com/sydenhamshul