

Parsha Plug: Parshat Yitro

Shemot 20:1-18	שמות כ:א-יח
<p>1 God spoke all these words, saying: 2 "I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 You shall not have the gods of others in My presence. 4 You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness which is in the heavens above, which is on the earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth. 5 You shall neither prostrate yourself before them nor worship them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a zealous God, Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, 6 and perform loving kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments. 7 You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain. 8 Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. 9 Six days may you work and perform all your labor, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities. 11 For six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. 12 Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be lengthened on the land that the Lord, your God, is giving you. 13 You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 14 You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor." 15 And all the people saw the voices and the torches, the sound of the shofar, and the smoking mountain, and the people saw and trembled; so they stood from afar. 16 They said to Moshe, "You speak with us, and we will hear, but let God not speak with us lest we die." 17 But Moshe said to the people, "Fear not, for God has come in order to exalt you, and in order that His awe shall be upon your faces, so that you shall not sin." 18 The people remained far off, but Moshe drew near to the opaque darkness, where God was.</p>	<p>א וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים, אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאַמֵּר. ב אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עֲבָדִים: ג לֹא-יְהִיֶּה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, עַל-פָּנָי. ד לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל, וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה, אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמֶּעַל, וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת--וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם, מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ. ה לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם, וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם: כִּי אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, אֵל קַנָּא--פֶּקֶד עֵינַי אֶבֶת עַל-בְּנֵי עַל-שְׂלִשִׁים וְעַל-רַבְעִים, לְשֹׂאֵי. ו וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד, לְאֵלֶפֶים--לְאַהֲבִי, וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי. ז לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם-ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, לְשׁוֹאֵ: כִּי לֹא יִנְקָה ה', אֶת אִשְׁרֵי-יִשְׂאָ אֶת-שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוֹאֵ. ח זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, לְקַדְּשׁוֹ. ט שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד, וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֹאכֶתְךָ. י יוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי שַׁבַּת לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלֹאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְךָ עֹבֵדְךָ וְאִמְתְךָ וּבְהֵמַתְךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: יא כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה ה' אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ ה' אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: יב כִּבֹּד אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יָאָרְכּוּן יְמֵיךָ עַל-הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-הִיא אֱלֹקֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ: יג לֹא תִרְצַח: יד לֹא תִנְאַף: יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: יד לֹא תִגְנוֹב: יא לֹא תִעֲנֶה בְרֵעֶךָ עַד שִׁקְרָ: יז לֹא תִחַמֵּד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ לְאֶתְחַמֵּד אִשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְשׁוֹרְךָ וְחֹמְרוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: יח וְכָל-הָעַם רָאוּ אִים אֶת-הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת-הַלְפִידִם וְאֶת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת-הַהָר עָשָׂן וַיֵּרָא הָעָם וַיָּנֻעוּ וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ מֵרָחֵק: יט וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר-אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָה וְאַל-יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹקִים פֶּן-נָמוּת: כ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אַל-תִּירְאוּ כִּי לְבַעֲבוֹר נַפְוֹת אֲתֹכֶם בָּא הָאֱלֹקִים וּבַעֲבוֹר תִּהְיֶה יְרֵאתוֹ עַל-פָּנֵיכֶם לְבַלְתִּי תַחֲטְאוּ: כא וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעָם מֵרָחֵק וּמֹשֶׁה נִגַּשׁ אֶל-הָעַרְפֶּל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם הָאֱלֹקִים:</p>

Rabbi Menachem Posner based on Mechilta Yitro, The Ten Commandments on Chabad.org

Commandments 1 and 6: Every human is created in the image of G-d, so murder is an affront to the Creator. **Commandments 2 and 7:** When one worships a deity other than G-d, it is as akin to adultery. G-d is our loving spouse (and much more). **Commandments 3 and 8:** A person may feel that stealing is only between him and the victim, but it is also a crime against G-d, whose name will ultimately be taken falsely. **Commandments 4 and 9:** Through keeping Shabbat, we testify that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. When one

disregards Shabbat, he testifies falsely about the Divine origin of the universe. **Commandments 5 and 10:** The juxtaposition of jealousy and honoring parents tell us that one who lusts after that which is not his, will ultimately give birth to a child who curses his parents and honors others instead.

Ramban on Shemot 20:12

רמב"ן שמות כ:יב

Honor your father and mother: Here, all we are obligated in regarding the words of the Creator about Himself and His honor are completed, and He returns to command us concerning His creations.

כבד את אביך הנה השלים כל מה שאנו חייבין בדברי הבורא בעצמו ובכבודו, וחזר לצוות אותנו בעניני הנבראים.

Masechet Berachot 12a

מסכת ברכות יב.

The Gemara related (also Mishnah Tamid 5:1) that the priests in the Temple read the Ten Commandments, along with the sections of Shema, Vehaya Im Shamo'a, VaYomer, Emet Veyatziv, Avoda, and the priestly benediction. Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Even in the outlying areas, outside the Temple, they sought to recite the Ten Commandments in this manner, but they had already abolished recitation of the Ten Commandments due to the grievance of the heretics, (who argued that the entire Torah, with the exception of the Ten Commandments, did not emanate from God. If the Ten Commandments were recited daily, that would lend credence to their claim, so their recitation was removed from the daily prayers). This was also taught in a baraita that Rabbi Natan says: In the outlying areas, they sought to recite the Ten Commandments in this manner, but they had already abolished their recitation due to the grievance of the heretics. Rabba bar bar Hana thought to institute this in the city of Sura, but Rav H̄isda said to him: They already abolished them due to the grievance of the heretics. So too, Ameimar thought to institute this in the city of Neharde'a. Rav Ashi said to him: They already abolished them due to the grievance of the heretics.

וקורין עשרת הדברות שמע והיה אם שמוע ויאמר אמת ויציב ועבודה וברכת כהנים אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל אף בגבולין בקשו לקרות כן אלא שכבר בטלום מפני תרעומת המינין תניא נמי הכי רבי נתן אומר בגבולין בקשו לקרות כן אלא שכבר בטלום מפני תרעומת המינין רבה בר בר חנה סבר למקבעינהו בסורא אמר ליה רב חסדא כבר בטלום מפני תרעומת המינין אממר סבר למקבעינהו בנהרדעא אמר ליה רב אשי כבר בטלום מפני תרעומת המינין:

Chizkuni Shemot 20:1

חזקוני שמות כ:א

All these words:...At first, God uttered all these words as a single utterance at the same time, but Israel did not understand, so He spelled out each of the first two commandments separately word by word. The Israelites found it too overwhelming to listen to all of this without collapsing, and this is why they interrupted by asking Moshe to act as their go between (verse 16). According to the rabbis, the last eight commandments were each addressed to Israel one by one and relayed to the people by Moshe. This explains why the first two commandments were written in direct speech whereas parts of the remainder were written in indirect speech. According to Rashi's commentary, all

את כל הדברים האלה:...בתחלה אמרן הקב"ה בבת אחת ובדבור אחד ולא הבינו ישראל ומה שנשנו מלמד שחזר המפרש ופי' כל דבור ודבור בפני עצמו כדי שיבינו ישראל אנכי ולא יהיה לך חזר ופי' הקב"ה, ולא היה להם יכולת לסבול ולשמוע מפיו יותר, כד"א דבר אתה עמנו ונשמעה ואל ידבר עמנו אלקים פן נמות. וכן אמרו רבותינו אנכי ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמענום בא משה וחזר ופי' משם ואילך כל דבור ודבור בפני עצמו. ונראים הדברים שהרי מליצת דברות אנכי ולא יהיה לך משמע כאדם המדבר על עצמו, והשאר כאדם המדבר על אחרים. כדכתיב לא תשא את שם ה' אלקיך, ולא כתיב את שמי. כי ששת ימים עשה ה' ולא כתיב עשיתי וכן

of the commandments were spoken twice, once by God and once by Moshe.

השאר. ומה שפרש"י מלמד שחזר ופי' קאי אהקב"ה וקאי אמשה פי' כל אחד ואחד חזר ופירש חלקו מהדברות כמו שפי'.

Rav Alex Israel: *How to Divide the Ten Commandments*

The revelation at Sinai is THE encounter with God. It is there that we begin a covenant which has lasted to this day. It would make sense if that covenant were a true reflection of the realities of faith. In our relationships with God we experience something of a dialectic between the love and fear of God. At times we experience a fear, an apprehension about religion, and we run away, only to look back from a distance. At times we are attracted to God and all that is holy. We wish only to bask in the light of the Divine and connect with His path. This existential reality is also the story of the Revelation at Sinai. On one hand, there is a barrier to retain the excited crowds, there are demands to "see" God, to experience Him in a direct way. And then, there is the fright of His enormous power. Which way will we accept Torah? That is up to us. Will we relate to God in the first person or in the third person? Both options are possible - up close and at a distance. Maybe for us, in our lives, we have to aim at combining both sides - keeping both the magnitude of God in mind, while at the same time, wanting to gain a closeness to Him.

Mechilta DeRebbi Yishmael 19:2:7

מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל י"ט:ב:ז

And they encamped in the desert: The Torah was given openly, in a public place. For if it were given in Eretz Yisrael, they could say to the nations of the world: You have no portion in it. But it was given openly, in a public place, and all who want to take it may come and take it. I might think it was given at night; it is, therefore, written "And it was on the third day, when it was morning". I might think that it was given in silence; it is, therefore, written, "and there were thunders and lightnings." I might think that they did not hear the thunders; it is, therefore written, "And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings."

ויחנו במדבר. נתנה תורה דימוס פרהסיא במקום הפקר, שאלו נתנה בארץ ישראל, היו אומרים לאומות העולם אין להם חלק בה, לפיכך נתנה במדבר דימוס פרהסיא במקום הפקר, וכל הרוצה לקבל יבא ויקבל. יכול נתנה בלילה, ת"ל (שמות י"ט:ט"ז) ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר; יכול נתנה בשתיקה, ת"ל ויהי קולות וברקים; יכול לא היו שומעין את הקולות, ת"ל (שמות כ':ט"ו) וכל העם רואים את הקולות.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: *The Custom that Refused to Die- Yitro 5772*

Jews kept searching for ways of recreating that scene, by standing when they listened to [the Ten Commandments] from the Torah and by saying it privately after the end of the morning prayers. Despite the fact that they knew their acts could be misconstrued by heretics, they were too attached to that great epiphany – the only time in history God spoke to an entire people – to treat it like any other passage in the Torah. The honour given to the Ten Commandments was the custom that refused to die.

