"Open my eyes so that I may see the **wonders** of Your Torah"

בס"ד

Wonders

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of HaRav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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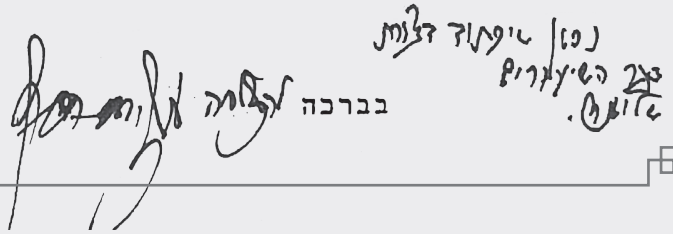
"To properly correspond the Ten Commandments with the sefirot, we must begin by understanding their structure in the Torah. As it turns out, structure-wise this is one of the most complex passages in the Torah..."

3 **Story:** Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz: Don't Give In

5 **Partzuf:** The Ten Commandments and the Sefirot

The Lubavitcher Rebbe to Rav Ginsburgh, Elul 5741

"…It would be proper to publish your classes in book form. With blessings for success…"



Wonders

An anthology from the shiurim and farbrengens
of Harav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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STORY

REBBE MORDECHAI OF LECHOVITZ: DON'T GIVE IN

Rabbi Mordechai Yoffe of Lechovitz was born in 5502 (1742) to Rabbi Noach Haparnas of Nesvizh (in Belarus). He was orphaned as a child. In his early years, Rebbe Mordechai was a disciple of Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, who once remarked that a third of the world stood upon his shoulders. Later, Rabbi Mordechai became the preeminent disciple of Rebbe Shlomo of Karlin. He would also travel together with his friend, Rebbe Asher of Stolin (the first) to Rebbe Baruch of Mezhibuzh. Rebbe Mordechai lived in Nesvizh until the passing of his Rebbe, Rebbe Shlomo of Karlin (on 22 Tamuz 5552-1792), when he began to lead his own congregation in Lechovitz, Lithuania. His chasidim numbered in the thousands. In 5559 (1799) Rebbe Mordechai was imprisoned by the Russian government, along with Rebbe Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the Alter Rebbe of Chabad) and Rebbe Asher of Stolin following accusations by those opposing Chasidut. He was released in Kislev of that year. Rebbe Mordechai was a close friend of Rebbe Avraham of Kalisk despite the fact that they never met in person. He was appointed by Rebbe Avraham to head the tzedakah fund for the poor of the Land of Israel run by Kollel Reissin. In this role, Rebbe Mordechai was very active in supporting the chasidic community in the Land of Israel. Rebbe Mordechai passed away on the 13th of Shevat 5570 (1810) while he was in Stolin for the wedding of his grandson, Rabbi Shlomo Chaim. Rebbe Mordechai's son, Rabbi Noach, succeeded him in leading his chasidic court.

One of the disciples of Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitch complained to him about his great poverty and impoverished livelihood. Rebbe Mordechai asked him what he had made his living from until now. The disciple replied that he had been selling honey to a priest. The Rebbe instructed him to go to this priest again to sell him honey, and not to settle for any price the priest might offer for the honey. The disciple did as he was told.

He went to the priest and brought him honey. The priest was very happy and gave him fifteen rubles, asking if this was enough. The disciple answered that it was not. The priest added more and asked if it was now enough, and the disciple answered that it was still not enough. This continued until the priest gave him eight hundred rubles, and then the disciple said that this was sufficient.

The disciple came to Rebbe Mordechai with joy, excited to relate the miracle. But the Rebbe did not greet him for three days. Afterwards, he said to him, "If you

had not settled with him, he would have given you all his possessions, and would have even sold himself as a slave to you. But you did not allow us to rule over the 'impure chariot.'"

Rebbe Mordechai's chasid thought he had made the deal of a lifetime selling honey worth fifteen rubles for eight hundred. But it turns out that his horizons were too limited. He was preoccupied with his own personal salvation and so settled for that amount. But the Rebbe saw a golden opportunity to acquire all the priest's possessions, and even the priest himself! Why would the Rebbe want to buy a priest? Rebbe Mordechai added that if the Jew had done this, "we would have ruled over the impure chariot." What does this mean?

In Rebbe Mordechai's eyes, the priest is not just a priest, and a Jew is certainly not just anyone. If the Jew had bought the priest, the entire realm of impurity would have submitted to Judaism and the spirit of impurity would have passed from the earth in pleasant and peaceful ways. From this we can learn that one should not agree to any compromise in matters of Judaism, even if the profits seem enormous. For this, we must think big and not be satisfied with a relatively small salvation. We must feel that the weight of the redemption rests entirely on our shoulders.

PARTZUF

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE SEFIROT

The most explicit instance of a model with ten elements in the Torah is the Ten Commandments. Though the English term "commandments" is not precise, the Torah explicitly mentions that "he [Moses] was there with God for forty days and forty nights… and he wrote down on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten words."[1] The phrase "the ten words" (עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים) has been translated by many as "the Ten commandments."

Clearly, it would make sense to correspond the Ten Commandments in our *parashah*, Yitro, with the ten *sefirot*. Before we begin discussing how to do this, let us look at a beautiful mathematical allusion to the propriety of this correspondence. The "filling" of "the ten words" (עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים) is **עין שין ריש תו הא דלת בית ריש יוד מם** whose value is 2868. Incredibly, this is the same as the sum of the names of all ten *sefirot*: "crown, wisdom, understanding, loving-kindness, might, beauty, victory, acknowledgment, foundation, kingdom" (**כֶּתֶר חָכְמָה בִּינָה חֶסֶד גְּבוּרָה תִּפְאֶרֶת נֶצַח הוֹד יְסוֹד מַלְכוּת**).

BUILDING THE STRUCTURE

To properly correspond the Ten Commandments with the *sefirot*, we must begin by understanding their structure in the Torah. As it turns out, structure-wise this is one of the most complex passages in the Torah and even identifying ten distinct elements is not so simple.

TEN PARAGRAPHS (PARSHIYOT)

Let us start by looking at the way in which the "ten words" referred to by the Torah itself appear in a Torah scroll. The Torah's text is divided both into verses and into paragraphs—*parashot*, both of which were given to Moses. In a Torah scroll, the end of a paragraph is marked by whitespace; outside the Torah scroll, the convention is to mark the end of paragraph with a letter **פ** or **ס**. The "ten words" referred to are thus:

1	(2) I am Havayah your God who has brought you out of the Land of Egypt, from a house of bondage. You shall have no other gods besides Me. (3) You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image or any likeness of what is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. (4) You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I am Havayah your God, I am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me. (5) But I show kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.	(ב) אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱ־לֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פָּנָי: (ג) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וַאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת וַאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: (ד) לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תָעָבְדֵם כִּי אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֹּקֵד עֲוֹן אָבֹת עַל בָּנִים עַל שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל רִבֵּעִים לְשֹׂנְאָי: (ה) וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לַאֲלָפִים לְאֹהֲבַי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי: **ס**
2	(6) You shall not swear falsely by the Name of your God, Havayah, for Havayah will not clear one who swears falsely by His Name.	(ו) לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ לַשָּׁוְא כִּי לֹא יְנַקֶּה הוי' אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא אֶת שְׁמוֹ לַשָּׁוְא: **פ**
3	(7) Remember the Sabbath day and sanctify it. (8) Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (9) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Havayah your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. (10) For in six days Havayah made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them and then rested on the seventh day; therefore, Havayah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.	(ז) זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: (ח) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלַאכְתֶּךָ: (ט) וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַהוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ: (י) כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה הוי' אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל כֵּן בֵּרַךְ הוי' אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: **ס**
4	(11) Honor your father and your mother so that you may long endure on the land that your God, Havayah, is giving you.	(יא) כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר הוי' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ: **ס**
5	(12) Do not murder.	(יב) לֹא תִרְצָח **ס**
6	Do not commit adultery.	לֹא תִנְאָף **ס**
7	Do not steal.	לֹא תִגְנֹב **ס**
8	Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.	לֹא תַעֲנֶה בְרֵעֲךָ עֵד שָׁקֶר: **ס**
9	(13) Do not covet your neighbor's house.	(יג) לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ **ס**
10	Do not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant or female servant, his ox, his donkey, or any of his possessions.	לֹא תַחְמֹד אֵשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדּוֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וַחֲמֹרוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: **פ**

Note that according to this authoritative division in the Torah scroll itself what are usually identified as the first and second commandments ("I am *Havayah* your God," and "You shall have no other gods") appear in the same "word"—meaning, in the same paragraph (*parshiyah*)—reflecting the sages' statement that these two commandments were heard directly from God. Moreover, only in these first two commandments does God appear as a first-person object, meaning that He is speaking about Himself. Everything else is written with a second-person object, "you." Also, the phrase, "I am *Havayah* your God" (אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ) appears twice in this paragraph, once in the first "commandment," and once in the second.

TWO TABLETS

The way the "ten words" or elements are colloquially identified can be seen in any representation of the two Tablets of the Covenant on which they were written found in every synagogue. The colloquial division presents 5 commandments on one tablet and 5 on the other and looks like this:

Left Tablet		Right Tablet	
לֹא תִרְצָח Do not murder	6	אָנֹכִי I am	1
לֹא תִנְאָף Do not commit adultery	7	לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ You shall have no	2
לֹא תִגְנֹב Do not steal	8	לֹא תִשָּׂא You shall not swear	3
לֹא תַעֲנֶה Do not bear	9	זָכוֹר Remember	4
לֹא תַחְמֹד Do not covet	10	כַּבֵּד Honor	5

LOWER CANTILLATION

A third way to divide the text into 10 follows the lead of the cantillation marks. Here we encounter a unique phenomenon that has no parallel: there are actually two different sets of cantillation marks for the text of the Ten Commandments. One is called the "lower" (טעם תחתון), the other is known as the "upper" (טעם עליון). In principle, when one reads the text in private, one would use the lower cantillation marks. When reading the text in public, the upper set of marks is used.[2]

According to most of the commentaries on the Masoretic text, the upper set of marks divides the Ten Commandments into 9 verses. But the lower set of cantillation marks divides the text into 13 verses[3]:

1	(2) I am Havayah your God who has brought you out of the Land of Egypt, from a house of bondage.	(ב) אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:
2	You shall have no other gods besides Me.	לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱ־לֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פָּנָי:
3	(3) You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image or any likeness of what is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth.	(ג) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וַאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת וַאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ:
4	(4) You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I am Havayah your God, I am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me.	(ד) לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תָעָבְדֵם כִּי אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֹּקֵד עֲוֹן אָבֹת עַל בָּנִים עַל שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל רִבֵּעִים לְשֹׂנְאָי:
5	(5) But I show kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.	(ה) וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לַאֲלָפִים לְאֹהֲבַי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי: ס
6	(6) You shall not swear falsely by the Name of your God, Havayah, for Havayah will not clear one who swears falsely by His Name.	(ו) לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ לַשָּׁוְא כִּי לֹא יְנַקֶּה הוי' אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא אֶת שְׁמוֹ לַשָּׁוְא: פ
7	(7) Remember the Sabbath day and sanctify it.	(ז) זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:
8	(8) Six days you shall labor and do all your work	(ח) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלַאכְתֶּךָ:
9	(9) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Havayah your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements.	(ט) וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַהוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ:
10	(10) For in six days Havayah made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them and then rested on the seventh day; therefore, Havayah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.	(י) כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה הוי' אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל כֵּן בֵּרַךְ הוי' אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: ס
11	(11) Honor your father and your mother so that you may long endure on the land that your God, Havayah, is giving you.	(יא) כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר הוי' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ: ס
12	(12) Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.	(יב) לֹא תִרְצָח ס לֹא תִנְאָף ס לֹא תִגְנֹב ס לֹא תַעֲנֶה בְרֵעֲךָ עֵד שָׁקֶר: ס
13	(13) Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant or female servant, his ox, his donkey, or any of his possessions.	(יג) לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ ס לֹא תַחְמֹד אֵשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדּוֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וַחֲמֹרוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: פ

HIGHER CANTILLATION

As noted, the higher set of cantillation marks divides the text into 9 parts:

1	(2) I am Havayah your God who has brought you out of the Land of Egypt, from a house of bondage. You shall have no other gods besides Me. (3) You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image or any likeness of what is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. (4) You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I am Havayah your God, I am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me. (5) But I show kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.	(ב) אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱ־לֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פָּנָי: (ג) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וַאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת וַאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: (ד) לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תָעָבְדֵם כִּי אָנֹכִי הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֹּקֵד עֲוֹן אָבֹת עַל בָּנִים עַל שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל רִבֵּעִים לְשֹׂנְאָי: (ה) וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לַאֲלָפִים לְאֹהֲבַי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי: ס
2	(6) You shall not swear falsely by the Name of your God, Havayah, for Havayah will not clear one who swears falsely by His Name.	(ו) לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם הוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ לַשָּׁוְא כִּי לֹא יְנַקֶּה הוי' אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא אֶת שְׁמוֹ לַשָּׁוְא: פ
3	(7) Remember the Sabbath day and sanctify it. (8) Six days you shall labor and do all your work (9) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Havayah your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. (10) For in six days Havayah made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them and then rested on the seventh day; therefore, Havayah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.	(ז) זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: (ח) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלַאכְתֶּךָ: (ט) וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַהוי' אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ: (י) כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה הוי' אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל כֵּן בֵּרַךְ הוי' אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: ס
4	(11) Honor your father and your mother so that you may long endure on the land that your God, Havayah, is giving you.	(יא) כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר הוי' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ: ס
5	(12) Do not murder.	(יב) לֹא תִרְצָח:
6	Do not commit adultery.	לֹא תִנְאָף:
7	Do not steal.	לֹא תִגְנֹב:
8	Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.	לֹא תַעֲנֶה בְרֵעֲךָ עֵד שָׁקֶר: ס
9	(13) Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant or female servant, his ox, his donkey, or any of his possessions.	(יג) לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ ס לֹא תַחְמֹד אֵשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדּוֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וַחֲמֹרוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: פ

THE TEN WORDS AND THE TEN SEFIROT

Now that we have seen the possible divisions of the text of the Ten Commandments, we can turn to corresponding its 10 elements to the *sefirot*. First, we need to focus our attention on the division based on the paragraphs, the first one we looked at, where the 10 parts were the "Ten Words." Next, we need to find a model of the ten *sefirot* that resembles the characteristics of the paragraph division. There are two specific characteristics we are searching for: 1) that the first two sefirot are as one paralleling the fact that the first "word" contains two commandments: "I am Havayah your God" and "You shall have no gods besides Me." 2) that the final two *sefirot*—foundation and kingdom—should be both distinct yet appear as one because "Do not covet your neighbor's house" and "Do not covet your neighbor's wife" appear in one verse that is divided into two paragraphs.

The model we are looking for is found in the very first source to mention the Ten Sefirot, *Sefer Yetzirah*—the Book of Formation—which states at the conclusion of its first chapter:

> These are the ten matterless *sefirot*. One is the Spirit of the Living God; Spirit from Spirit, and Water from Spirit, and Fire from Water; and the extremes Above and Below, East and West, North and South.

We are probably more familiar with the names of the *sefirot* being: crown, wisdom, understanding, etc. However, *Sefer Yetzirah* has its own unique naming scheme. According to the commentaries, *Sefer Yetzirah* divided the crown into two parts—the crown's interior and its exterior—and therefore its reckoning of the ten *sefirot* does not include either knowledge (*da'at*) or kingdom (*malchut*). In the *Zohar* and later Kabbalistic texts, the crown's interior is known as *Atik Yomin* and its exterior is known as *Arich Anpin*. Where is knowledge? There is a well-known principle that when the crown is enumerated, knowledge is not, and vice versa.

Thus, the *partzuf* of the *sefirot* in *Sefer Yetzirah* is:

Atik Yomin עַתִּיק יוֹמִין
One, the Spirit of the Living God

Arich Anpin אֲרִיךְ אַנְפִּין
Spirit from Spirit

understanding-binah בִּינָה
Fire from Water

wisdom-chochmah חָכְמָה
Water from Spirit

might-gevurah גְּבוּרָה
Extreme of North

loving-kindness-chessed חֶסֶד
Extreme of South

beauty-tiferet תִּפְאֶרֶת
Extreme of East

splendor-hod הוֹד
Extreme of Below

victory-netzach נֶצַח
Extreme of Above

foundation-yesod יְסוֹד
Extreme of West

What about kingdom? Generally speaking, kingdom can be included in foundation. This is captured in a model known as the *Heichalot*, or literally the Chambers. In this model, the lowest Chamber, known as the Chamber of the Sapphire Brick, corresponds to both Foundation and Kingdom together.

We are finally ready to present the full *partzuf* of the Ten Commandments as they correspond to the *sefirot*. Immediately after, we will explain each correspondence in detail.

Atik Yomin עַתִּיק יוֹמִין
I am Havayah your God

Arich Anpin אֲרִיךְ אַנְפִּין
You shall have no gods besides Me

understanding-binah בִּינָה
Remember the Sabbath day and sanctify it

wisdom-chochmah חָכְמָה
You shall not swear falsely by the Name of your God, Havayah

might-gevurah גְּבוּרָה
Do not murder

loving-kindness-chessed חֶסֶד
Honor your father and mother

beauty-tiferet תִּפְאֶרֶת
Do not commit adultery

splendor-hod הוֹד
Do not bear false witness

victory-netzach נֶצַח
Do not steal

foundation-yesod יְסוֹד
and
kingdom-malchut מַלְכוּת
Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife

ATIK YOMIN: "I AM HAVAYAH YOUR GOD"

Chasidic doctrine connects the three words that open the Ten Commandments, "I am Havayah your God," with God's self (עַצְמוּת), referred to as "I am who I am"[4] (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה)—that which is not even hinted to in any letter or any tag of a letter in the Torah. From here and down God is revealed a certain way and all these revelations are known as "Names." We will see that the secret of God's Name corresponds to the *sefirah* of wisdom in our *partzuf*. In any case, it is the interior part of the crown, *Atik Yomin*, that is compared

to God's self, since Atik literally means, "removed," and *Atik Yomin* refers to He who is "removed from days [of Creation]," suggesting that God is above and beyond His Creation. It is for this reason that the Ten Commandments do not start with a proclamation that God is the one who created heavens and earth, as in the Torah's beginning—because God's self is so far-removed and above Creation. About God's being we say, "His existence is dependent only on His self" (מְצִיאוּתוֹ מֵעַצְמוּתוֹ).

ARICH ANPIN: "YOU SHALL HAVE NO GODS BESIDES ME"

The prohibition of having a god "besides" God can be understood metaphorically as implying that there is no room for anything but God. This reflects the Zohar's statement that "there is no place void of Him"[5] (לֵית אֲתַר פָּנוּי מִנֵּהּ). This tenet of belief reminds us of one of the cornerstones of the Ba'al Shem Tov's thought, that there is no where empty of God. The expression "besides Me" (עַל פָּנַי) is based on the notion of "face" (פָּנִים), and *Arich Anpin* means "the long face." Both these expressions make use of the metaphor of space as being "a face." Thus, when the Torah says, "You shall have no gods besides Me," it is saying, "There is no room for any gods besides Me" because, indeed, there is no place void of Me.

WISDOM: YOU SHALL NOT SWEAR FALSELY BY MY NAME

Wisdom is associated with the secret of God's Name[6] (רָזָא דִּשְׁמָהּ). In contrast to the first two "commandments" that we heard directly from God's self, as it were, from here on out, we are receiving a revelation of God. In the early Kabbalah, "name" was used in place of "light," but both represent the manner in which something is revealed—not the way it is unto itself. Likewise, the World of Emanation is already a "world," a certain diminishing of the self, the *etzem*, as it is known in Hebrew and the *sefirah* of wisdom is the first revelation through which God is revealed throughout the World of Emanation.

The sages write[7] the words, "You shall not swear falsely by my Name" were spoken, all of reality shook. This was explained to anyone who was required to make a vow before a court of law, stressing that taking God's Name in vain is akin to disrupting the very foundations of Creation—the "Worlds" that God created and that reveal Him to us; "God founded the earth on wisdom."[8] Just as wisdom is at the source of creation, all of creation is rectified and reaches its intended state of rectification through wisdom, "they are all rectified by wisdom" (כֻּלָּם בְּחָכְמָה אִתְּבְּרִירוּ).

UNDERSTANDING: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY AND SANCTIFY IT

Shabbat represents a "taste of the World to Come" (מעין עולם הבא), a taste of the pleasure inherent in the future reality, represented by the *sefirah* of understanding. Although we tend to associate the holiness of Shabbat with wisdom—a state described by the sages as "Shabbat is already sanctified"[9] (מְקֻדָּשָׁא וְקַיְימָא), as explained in Chasidic teachings,[10] there is another aspect of Shabbat described by the verse, "the Children of Israel with guard the Shabbat, making the Shabbat"[11] (וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת)

אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת). This verse represents bringing the holiness of Shabbat instantiated from Above, from wisdom to understanding.

Likewise, during the time of the third meal, the light of the crown is brought to understanding and we can experience a taste of the World to Come, which is why the custom by many is not to eat at all (or to eat lightly) during this time, tasting from the World to Come when there will be no need to either eat or drink.[12] This commandment, as it corresponds to understanding, thus enables us to envision the future pleasure of the World to Come within our own reality specifically on Shabbat.

LOVING-KINDNESS: HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER

The Torah in general contains two commandments regarding one's treatment of one's parents: "Honor your father and mother" and "You shall each revere your mother and father."[13] This already demonstrates that honoring our parents is the complement to revering them. Since revering is a form of "awe" (יראה), honoring is a form of "love," the inner experience of the *sefirah* of loving-kindness.

The sages ask why the order of "father and mother" is different in these two verses and they conclude that the Torah stresses that the commandments require us to overcome our natural tendency. People are naturally inclined to revere their father more than their mother. Therefore, the Torah switches their order, emphasizing that we should revere our mother, not just our father. Likewise, our natural tendency is to honor or love our mother more than our father; the Torah emphasizes that we should honor our father as well.

The entire Torah is known as a "Torah of loving-kindness"[14] (תורת חסד). There are many explanations and examples regarding this principle. One of them is specifically related to this commandment. The sage Ulla teaches[15] that when the nations of the world heard the first four commandments, they said God was giving the Torah for His own sake: I am Havayah your God, You shall not have other gods, Do not take My Name in vain, and remember the Sabbath—that I created the world. But when God said, "Honor your father and your mother" they conceded that God was interested in the benefit of others and that He was giving the Torah as an act of loving-kindness. Thus, it is this commandment that serves as the demonstration of God's loving-kindness.

MIGHT: DO NOT MURDER

Right[16] represents loving-kindness and left represents might. Just as the commandment to honor our parents concludes the right tablet, stressing its connection with loving-kindness on the right, so the commandment to not shed blood opens the left tablet, connecting it with might. Prohibiting murder is meant to nullify Esau's tendency for bloodshed. Esau's excitement stems from blood, as Isaac blessed him, "You shall live by your sword."[17] The power of the sefirah of might is to block this tendency, as the sages say, "Who is brave? He who conquers his [evil] inclination."[18]

BEAUTY: DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

Adultery is directly related to the body's cravings and to physical

actions surrounding the body and the body (focusing on the torso) is the direct manifestation of the sefirah of beauty in the human form. As the *Tikkunei Zohar* states, "Beauty is the body" (תפארת גופא). Beauty is also tied with one's wife, following the verse, "He gives it the form of a person, like the beauty of man that dwells in his home."[19] Recall that Rabbi Yosei is quoted saying, "In all my days, I did not call my wife, 'my wife,' rather I called my wife, 'my home'" because she is the essence of the home.[20]

Prohibiting a relationship with another man's wife is thus a protection for the sefirah of beauty, for the body.

VICTORY: DO NOT STEAL

This prohibition is actually referring to kidnapping and enslavement, i.e., stealing a human being, or as it is known today, human trafficking. The sages learnt this from the fact that the other prohibitions surrounding this one lead to capital punishment and theft of objects (prohibited by a different verse[21]) is not punishable by death.

The reality of the world is such that usually the victims of human trafficking are children. A child is viewed as the extension of his father.[22] The *sefirah* of victory is also called eternity (*netzach*). Human beings cannot live eternally. Thus, our eternity, so to speak, is achieved through our children. When a human being's freedom is stolen, his or her role in the transmission of our eternal heritage is shattered and the person is broken of from his connection with eternity/victory.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS

Acknowledgment is about acknowledging the truth. Its inner experience is one of earnestness (תְּמִימוּת). This is blemished by falsehood and all the more so by stating falsehood in a court of law. Like the stealer of people's freedom, which is punishable by death, so the bearer of a false testimony can lead to the death of a defendant. Stressing the deep connection between victory and acknowledgment, one who lies during testimony is trying to steal something that does not belong to them.

FOUNDATION AND KINGDOM: DO NOT COVET

As we have explained, it was important for us to correspond the commandments to the sefirot in such a way that it would cover both coveting possessions and coveting one's wife. We already saw above (with regard to beauty and adultery) that one's wife is called one's home. Thus, coveting your neighbor's home is akin to coveting his wife. However, here the stress is on the physical dimension of life and one's home is the foundation of one's physical attachment and ability to live life in this world. What the Torah is telling us is that coveting stems from a sense that the owner of the object coveted is not entitled to it in this world; coveting uproots the foundation of other people's existence.

Of course, the ultimate and worst type of coveting is when one covets another person's wife, his figurative home.

Notes

1. Exodus 34:28.

2. For a full explanation of the rationale behind these two sets of cantillation marks, let us quote from *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (*Orach Chaim* 494:10-11):

> The reason for the two melodies is that the first [the higher set of cantillation marks] is structured according to the manner [in which the commandments] are written [in the Torah]. For each commandment is a separate section….
>
> The second melody [the lower set of cantillation marks] is structured according to the way [the Torah] is [generally] read… It is [always] forbidden to fully interrupt one's reading in the middle of this verse, even if one is reading [it] only as an individual. [The rationale is that] the division [of the] entire [Torah] into separate verses is a *halachah* transmitted to Moshe at [Mount] Sinai. It is forbidden to interrupt in a place where Moshe did not make an interruption at Sinai. Since it is forbidden to fully interrupt the reading between these four short sections ["Do not murder. Do not commit adultery…"], therefore even when they are read together, they should be read in a melody that joins them, making them a single verse. For in truth, they are a single verse, since there is no verse in the Torah that is shorter than three words….
>
> When [reading] communally as well, it is only forbidden to stop [in middle of those passages] because of people who enter or leave [in the middle of the reading], as stated in sec. 138. [otherwise, one may stop in the middle of a section.] Therefore, [these passages] are read in a melody that breaks [them] into several verses, for in fact, they are several verses when counting the [total] number of verses [in the Torah].
>
> On Shavu'ot, however, it is customary to read [the Ten Commandments] communally using the first melody, [i.e.,] to read each commandment as a single verse, [even when the commandment contains several verses or only part of a verse. The rationale is that since] the Ten Commandments were given on that day, we read them in the same manner they were given, each commandment constituting a distinct verse.
>
> There are some who follow the custom of always using the first melody when reading [the Ten Commandments] communally, even on Shabbat Parashat Yitro and Shabbat Parashat Va'etchanan. [According to this custom,] the second melody is only used when a person reads [the commandments] in private.

See also in length Y. Weinfeld's *Ta'amei HaMikra*, pp. 70-100.

3. Note that despite not having a separate verse number according to the Masoretic text, the phrase, "You shall have no other gods besides Me" is considered independent.

4. *Zohar* 1:167b and 3:11a.

5. *Tikkunei Zohar* 57 (91b).

6. *Zohar* 2: 217b.

7. *Tosefta Sotah* 7:2.

8. Proverbs 3:19.

9. *Beitzah* 17a.

10. See for instance the *ma'amar*, *Et Shabtotai Tishmoru* 5725.

11. Exodus 31:16.

12. Food will not be necessary to sustain life, but it will be possible to eat if someone gains pleasure from it.

13. Leviticus 19:3.

14. Proverbs 31:26.

15. *Kiddushin* 31a.

16. As well as south; see the *partzuf* of the *sefirot* in *Sefer Yetzirah* above.

17. Genesis 27:40.

18. *Avot* 4:1.

19. Isaiah 44:13.

20. *Shabbat* 118b.

21. Leviticus 19:11.

22. *Eiruvin* 70b. See *Tosafot* on *Yevamot* 3a *s.v. Mikmei*.

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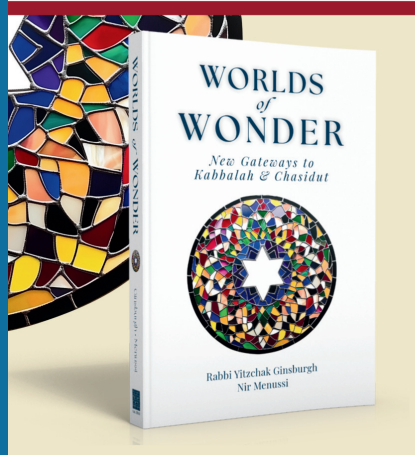
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