



## Shavuot: Accepting The Torah Between Man and Man #8 Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

The Ten Commandments were presented on two sides of the tablets of the law to teach us that the laws between man and Hashem and between man and man have a certain equality.

The first of the commandments between man and man is "*Lo tirtzach*," the prohibition of murder. According to halacha, murder is defined as premeditated killing out of hatred. The outcome does not render an act as murder, but the intention.

Our Sages compare humiliating someone to murder. The Maharal explains that humiliation belittles a person's divinity. The person ceases to see his own spirituality and significance. Similarly, causing someone to be killed, even if the person was destined die anyway, denigrates the value of life.

Additionally, a person needs to realize that his own life is precious. The Orchof Tzadikim writes that a person who does not value his life and dies as a consequence of his own negligence is more guilty than a murderer. Life is too precious to waste. On the other hand, saving a life is like saving the whole world, because the universe is more whole with that person's divine image.

Giving people a sense of significance is also giving them life. Being with a person in their time of brokenness, visiting the sick, comforting a mourner, and validating the good qualities in others, are ways of increasing the Divine light in this world. "*Lo tirtzach*" parallels "*Anochi Hashem*." This is because affirming someone's spirituality is akin to acknowledging Hashem.

The second commandment is "*Lo tinaf*," the prohibition of adultery. According to the Torah, a whole human being consists of man and woman together. Man's inborn desire is to provide. He does this by drawing down good and giving it to the woman who turns it into something of significance. A woman's innate need is to be valued. We have to ask ourselves which identity we want to project, our body or our soul. This, in effect, determines what one will wear. Clothing is a statement to the world how you want to be perceived. "*Lo tinaf*" parallels the commandment not to have other gods. Destroying the bond that makes one human, the bond between man and woman, is akin to idol worship.

The third commandment is "*Lo tignov*," the prohibition of kidnapping. Halachically, this is defined as taking someone against his will and holding him for ransom. Kidnapping reduces someone to a piece of merchandise, where one fails to see the Divine spark within the person. It parallels the commandment of "*Lo tisa*," not uttering Hashem's name in vain, because there is no way in which we find Hashem more readily than through recognizing the Divinity in a human being.

The fourth commandment is "*Lo Taane*," the prohibition of false testimony. This parallels the commandment of Shabbat. Shabbat is about stepping out of the picture in order to see the full picture. We cannot appreciate life if we never step out to see the Creator and the beauty of His world. Similarly, truth is so crucially important that if a person

cannot at least trust his own words, he is completely lost.

The last commandment is "*Lo tachmod*," the prohibition of coveting. There are two types of coveting. Sometimes people want something because others have it, not because they necessarily need it. Constant desire for self affirmation from the outside dooms one to jealousy, because a person will always find something that someone else has that he does not. The worst kind of coveting is thinking, "You have it, I want it and since I can't have it, I don't want you to have it either."

How does one uproot envy from his personality? The Ibn Ezra explains that just as it is clear to the country peasant that he will never marry the princess, we need to realize that we are all unique and are given exactly what we need to achieve our own specific mission in life.

This parallels honoring ones parents because both involve seeing Hashem's providence. The parents you were given were tailor made for you just as the objects you have were specifically meant for you.

The Ten Commandments are so huge in scope that our Sages tells us that the whole Torah comes from them. When Shavuot comes, the main thought we need to bear in mind is to work to make the Torah a part of us. By saying *naaseh v'nishma* sincerely in our hearts, we not only commit ourselves to learn, but to do and to make it part of ourselves, because this is the most important endeavor we can ever strive for.