

Plumbing the Depths of the Aseret HaDibrot

The Aseret HaDibrot appear twice in the Torah; you can see both versions here:

<https://www.sefaria.org.il/Exodus.20?lang=bi&aliyot=0> Sefer Shemot

<https://www.sefaria.org.il/Deuteronomy.5?lang=bi&aliyot=0> Sefer Devarim

Source 1: R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch

ל"עשרת הדיברות" אין קדושה או חשיבות גדולה יותר מכל מצוות התורה האחרות. הם אינן כל התורה ואינן קדושות יותר משאר המצוות. ה' בפירוש הכריז עליהן, שהן הקדמה והכנה גרידא לכל נתינת התורה העיקרית שתבוא לאחריהן: "הנה אנכי בא אליך וגוי בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם בך יאמינו לעולם" ... נאמר אפוא במפורש שתכלית ההתגלות בסיני לא הייתה אלא להכין את העם לקבלת כל שאר המצוות שתימסרנה להם על ידי משה; ולהוכיח להם מעל כל צל של ספק, על ידי מראה עיניהם ומשמע אזניהם שלהם, ש"דיבר ה' אל כל קהלכם" ... לכן יקבלו גם את כל יתר המצוות כדבר ה' ביד משה, ויקיימו אותן – לעולמי עד – באמונה איתנה. ואף על פי כן, עשרת הדיברות הם העקרונות הבסיסיים לכל שאר החוקים והמצוות.

Source 2a): Written on Two Tablets: Devarim 5:19

The LORD spoke those words—those and no more—to your whole congregation at the mountain, with a mighty voice out of the fire and the dense clouds. **He inscribed them on two tablets of stone, which He gave to me**

אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה דִּבֶּר ה' הַהֵן אֶל־
כָּל־קְהַלְכֶם בְּהַר מִתְּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ הַעֲנֹן
וְהָעַרְפֹּל קוֹל גָּדוֹל וְלֹא יִסָּף
וַיִּכְתְּבֵם עַל־שְׁנֵי לְחֹת אֲבָנִים
וַיִּתֵּנָם אֵלַי:

Source 2b) Shemot Ch. 34

The LORD said to Moses: "Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הַהֵן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פָּסַל־לְךָ שְׁנֵי
לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֵׁינִים וְכַתְּבֵתְי עֲלֵי־
הַלְּחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־
הַלְּחֹת הָרֵאשֵׁינִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ:

Source 3: Rav Alex Israel: The Ten Commandments, Structure and Significance

...look into the Torah text and you will see that the first five commandments are lengthy and take up 13 verses. In contrast, the last five are short succinct statements which are concisely contained in 2 simple verses. **This division is anything but symmetrical. One list is six times the length of the other! If they were to be written on two tablets, then one tablet would have to be far larger than the other, or the print much smaller!** At any rate they do not match at all! The 5:5 division has a striking imbalance to it. (Although this does not

invalidate this method of dividing the commandments, it requires us to work harder in justifying this way of structuring this list of ten commandments.)

Secondly, as we have seen, this division rests on a THEMATIC basis. The two lists of five commands are two sides of the religion according to the Ramban (Nachmanides). The Decalogue divides into themes; five Godly laws and five social laws (bein adam lamakom and bein adam lechavero). But this thematic division is far from self-evident for there would seem to be certain inconsistencies. In the first group of five - the God section - we have the command of respect for parents. Is this really a command directed to “the honour of The Creator”? This would seem to be a social law more than a command of belief! So does the thematic approach work? Maybe a 4:6 division would be better than a 5:5 division?

Source 4: Commentary of Ramban on Shemot Ch. 20

HONOR THY FATHER. Having finished all that we are obligated towards the Creator Himself and His glory, He turns now to command us about those matters which concern created beings. He begins with the father, for in relation to his offspring, he is akin to a creator, being partner with Him in the forming of the child. *Kiddushin 30 b*: “*There are three partners in man: the Holy One, blessed be He, his father and his mother.*” G-d is our first Father, and he who begets it [i.e., the child] is our last male parent. This is why He said in the Book of Deuteronomy, [*Honor thy father... as the Eternal thy G-d commanded thee*].⁴⁷² *Deuteronomy 5:16*. That is, “just as I have commanded you concerning My honor, so do I command you concerning the honor of those who have joined Me in your formation.”

...
Now since this commandment refers to creatures on the earth, He has designated its reward to be prolongation of life on earth which He will give us. But in the opinion of our Rabbis, *Ibid.*, *39b*. the purport of the verse is “*that thy days may be long and upon the Land.*” [It thus expresses two declarations]: He promises that our lives will be prolonged by observing this commandment — i.e., that G-d will fulfill our days in this world and they will be prolonged in the World to Come, which is unending — and that our dwelling will forever be on the good earth⁴⁷⁶ *A reference to eternal life*. which He will give us. And in the Book of Deuteronomy, He expressly stated it: *that thy day may be long, and that it may go well with thee, upon the Land which the Eternal thy G-d giveth thee. Deuteronomy 5:16*. Thus they are two promises.

(יב) כבד את אביך - הנה השלים כל מה שאנו חייבין בדברי הבורא בעצמו ובכבודו, וחזר לצוות אותנו בעניני הנבראים, והתחיל מן האב שהוא לתולדותיו כענין בורא משתתף ביצירה, כי השם אבינו הראשון, והמוליד אבינו האחרון, ולכך אמר במשנה תורה (דברים ה טז) כאשר צויתך בכבודי כן אנכי מצוך בכבוד המשתתף עמי ביצירתך. ...ויכנסו בכלל הכבוד דברים אחרים, כי בכל כבודו נצטוונו, ומפורשים הם בדברי רבותינו (קדושין לא ב), וכבר אמרו (שם ל ב) שהוקש כבודו לכבוד המקום:

וכאשר המצוה הזאת היא בתחתונים, כן נתן שכרה באריכות ימים בארץ אשר יתן לנו. ועל דעת רבותינו (קידושין לט ב) ענין הכתוב למען יאריכון ימך ועל האדמה, יבטיח כי במצוה הזאת יהיו כל ימותינו ארוכים, כי ימלא השם ימינו בעולם הזה, ויהיו ארוכים בעולם הבא שכלו ארוך, ותהיה ישיבתנו לעד על האדמה הטובה שיתן לנו, ובמשנה תורה (דברים ה טז) פירש למען יאריכון ימך ולמען ייטב לך על האדמה, והנה הם שתי הבטחות:

Source 5: Sefer HaChinuch – the Book of Torah Education

מצות כיבוד אב ואם - לכבד האב והאם, שנאמר (שמות כ יב) כבד את אביך ואת אמך וגוי'. ובא הפרוש (קדושין לא, ב) אי זהו כבוד, מאכיל ומשקה מלביש ומכסה מכניס ומוציא .

The commandment to honor father and mother: To honor father and mother, as it is stated (Exodus 20:12), "You shall honor your father and your mother." And the explanation (Kiddushin 31b) comes to [define it], "What does it mean to 'honor'? To feed, give drink, dress, bring in, and take out."

משרשי מצוה זו, שראוי לו לאדם שיכיר ויגמל חסד למי שעשה עמו טובה, ולא יהיה נבל ומתנכר וכפוי טובה שזו מדה רעה ומאוסה בתכלית לפני אלקים ואנשים. ושיתן אל לבו כי האב והאם הם סבת היותו בעולם, ועל כן באמת ראוי לו לעשות להם כל כבוד וכל תועלת שיוכל, כי הם הביאוהו לעולם, גם יגעו בו כמה יגיעות בקטנתו, וכשיקבע זאת המדה בנפשו יעלה ממנה להכיר טובת האל ברוך הוא שהוא סבתו וסבת כל אבותיו עד אדם הראשון, ושהוציאו לאויר העולם וספק צרכו כל ימיו והעמידו על מתכנתו ושלמות אבריו, ונתן בו נפש יודעת ומשכלת, שאלולי הנפש שחננו האל, יהיה כסוס כפרד אין הבין, ויעריך במחשבתו כמה וכמה ראוי להזהר בעבודתו ברוך הוא .

From the roots of this commandment is that it is fitting for a person to acknowledge and return kindness to people who were good to him, and not to be an ungrateful scoundrel, because that is a bad and repulsive attribute before God and people. And he should take to heart that the father and the mother are the cause of his being in the world; and hence it is truly fitting to honor them in every way and give every benefit he can to them, because they brought him to the world, and worked hard for him when he was little. And once he fixes this idea in his soul, he will move up from it to recognize the good of God, Blessed be He, who is his cause and the cause of all his ancestors until the first man (Adam), and that he took him out into the world's air, and fulfilled his needs every day, and made his body strong and able to stand, and gave him a mind that knows and learns - for without the mind that God granted him, he would be 'like a horse or a mule who does not understand.' And he should think at length about how very fitting it is to be careful in his worship of the Blessed be He.

Rav David Fohrman: The first five refer to vertical relationships; the last five to horizontal relationships

Rav Israel: Common elements of the first set:

- the use of ה' אלקיך
- the rationale of the mitzvah

Source 6: Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Zt"l: "To Thank before We Think"

... it also makes sense to see them as three groups of three. **The first three (one God, no other God, do not take God's name in vain) are about God, the Author and Authority of the laws. The second set (keep Shabbat, honour parents, do not murder) are about createdness. Shabbat reminds us of the birth of the universe. Our parents brought us into being. Murder is forbidden because we are all created in God's image (Gen. 9:6). The third three (don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness) are about the basic institutions of society: the sanctity of marriage, the integrity of private property, and the administration of justice. Lose any of these and freedom begins to crumble.** This structure serves to emphasize what a strange command the tenth is: "Do not be envious of your neighbor's house. Do not be envious of your neighbor's wife, his slave, his maid, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that is your neighbour's." At least on the surface this is different from all the other rules, which involve speech or action.[1] Envy, covetousness, desiring what someone else has, is an emotion, not a thought, a word or a deed. And surely we can't help our emotions. They used to be called the "passions", precisely because we are passive in relation to them. So how can envy be forbidden at all? Surely it only makes sense to command or forbid matters that are within our control. In any case, why should the occasional spasm of envy matter if it does not lead to anything harmful to other people?

Here, it seems to me, the Torah is conveying a series of fundamental truths we forget at our peril. **First, as we have been reminded by cognitive behavioural therapy, what we believe affects what we feel.**[2] Narcissists, for instance, are quick to take offence because they think other people are talking about or "dissing" (disrespecting) them, whereas often other people aren't interested in us at all. Their belief is false, but that does not stop them feeling angry and resentful. **Second, envy is one of the prime drivers of violence in society.** It is what led Iago to mislead Othello with tragic consequences. Closer to home it is what led Cain to murder Abel. It is what led Abraham and then Isaac to fear for their lives when famine forced them temporarily to leave home. They believe that, married as they are to attractive women, the local ruler will kill them so that they can take their wives into their harem. Most poignantly, envy lay at the heart of the hatred of the brothers for Joseph. They resented his special treatment at the hands of their father, the richly embroidered cloak he wore, and his dreams of becoming the ruler of them all. That is what led them to contemplate killing him and eventually to sell him as a slave.

Source 7: Commentary of R. Avraham Ibn Ezra

THOU SHALT NOT COVET. Many people are amazed at this commandment. They ask, how is it possible for a person not to covet in his heart all beautiful things that appear desirable to him? I will now give you a parable.²⁷⁶ *Which will aid you in understanding the commandment that prohibits coveting.* Note, a peasant of sound mind who sees a beautiful princess will not entertain any covetous thoughts about sleeping with her, for he knows that this is an impossibility. This peasant will not think like the insane who desire to sprout wings and fly to the sky, for it is impossible to do so. Now just as a man does not desire to sleep with his mother, although she be beautiful, because he has been trained from his childhood to know that she is prohibited to

לא תחמוד. אנשים רבים יתמהו על זאת המצוה. איך יהיה אדם שלא יחמוד דבר יפה בלבו כל מה שהוא נחמד למראה עיניו. ועתה אתן לך משל. דע כי איש כפרי שיש לו דעת נכונה והוא ראה בת מלך שהיא יפה לא יחמוד אותה בלבו שישכב עמה. כי ידע כי זה לא יתכן. ואל תחשוב זה הכפרי שהוא כאחד מן המשוגעים שיתאוה שיהיו לו כנפים לעוף השמים. ולא יתכן להיות כאשר אין אדם מתאוה לשכב עם אמו אע"פ שהיא יפה. כי הרגילוהו מנעוריו לדעת שהיא אסורה לו. ככה כל משכיל צריך שידע כי אשה יפה או ממון לא

him, so must every intelligent person know that a person does not acquire a beautiful woman or money because of his intelligence or wisdom, but only in accordance with what God has apportioned to him. Indeed, Koheleth states, *yet to a man that hath not labored therein shall he leave it for his portion (Eccles. 2:21)*. Furthermore, our sages taught, children, life, and sustenance are not dependent upon a person's merits but upon the stars.²⁷⁷ *Mo'ed Katan 28a*. The intelligent person will therefore neither desire nor covet. Once he knows that God has prohibited his neighbor's wife to him she will be more exalted in his eyes than the princess is in the eyes of the peasant. He will therefore be happy with his lot and will not allow his heart to covet and desire anything which is not his. For he knows that that which God did not want to give him, he cannot acquire by his own strength, thoughts, or schemes. He will therefore trust in his creator, that is, that his creator will sustain him and do what is right in His sight.

ימצאנו אדם בעבור חכמתו ודעתו. רק כאשר חלק לו השם. ואמר קהלת (לאשר) [ולאדם שלא עמל בו] יתננו חלקו. ואמרו חכמים בני חיי ומזוני לאו בזכותא תליא מלתא אלא במזלא. ובעבור זה המשכיל לא יתאוה ולא יחמוד. ואמר שידע שאשת רעהו אסרה השם לו יותר היא נשגבה בעיניו מבת מלך בלב הכפרי על כן הוא ישמח בחלקו ולא ישים אל לבו לחמוד ולהתאוות דבר שאינו שלו. כי ידע שהשם לא רצה לתת לו. לא יוכל לקחתו בכחו ובמחשבותיו ובתחבולותיו. על כן יבטח בבוראו שיכלכלנו ויעשה הטוב בעיניו. והנה נשלם פירוש עשרת הדברים

Source 8: Rambam, Laws of Robbery 1:9

9 Anyone who covets a servant, a maidservant, a house or utensils that belong to a colleague, or any other article that he can purchase from him and pressures him with friends and requests until he agrees to sell it to him, violates a negative commandment, even though he pays much money for it, as Exodus 20:14 states: "Do not covet."

The violation of this commandment is not punished by lashes, because it does not involve a deed. One does not violate this commandment until one actually takes the article he covets, as reflected by Deuteronomy 7:25: "Do not covet the gold and silver on these statues and take it for yourself." Implied is that the Hebrew *tachmod* refers to coveting accompanied by a deed.

10 Anyone who desires a home, a wife, utensils, or anything else belonging to a colleague that he can acquire from him, violates a negative commandment at the time he thinks in his heart, "How is it possible to acquire this from him?" and his heart is aroused by the matter, as Deuteronomy 5:18 states: "Do not desire...." Desire refers to feelings in the heart alone.

11 Desire leads to coveting and coveting leads to robbery. For if the owners do not desire to sell despite the offer of much money and many supplications by friends, the person motivated by desire will be moved to robbery, as Michah 2:2 states: "They coveted houses and stole."

And if the owner stands up against them to save his property, or in another way prevents the person motivated by desire from robbing, he will be moved to murder. Take, for example, the narrative of Ach'av and Navot.

12 Thus, we see that a person who desires another person's property violates one negative commandment. One who purchases an object he desires after pressuring the owners and repeatedly asking them, violates two negative commandments. For that reason, the Torah prohibits both desiring and coveting. If he takes the article by robbery, he violates three negative commandments.

ט כל החומד עבדו או אמתו או ביתו וכליו וכל חבירו או דבר שאפשר לו שיקנהו ממנו והכביר עליו ברעים והפציר בו עד שלקחו ממנו אף על פי שנתן לו דמים רבים הרי זה עובר בלא תעשה שנגאמר (שמות כ יד) (דברים ה יח) "לא תחמד". ואין לוקין על לאו זה מפני שאין בו מעשה. ואינו עובר בלאו זה עד שיקח החפץ שחמד. פנגין שנגאמר (דברים ז כה) "לא תחמד כסף וזהב עליהם ולקחתם לדך". חמוד שיש בו מעשה:

י כל המתאוה ביתו או אשתו וכליו של חבירו. וכן כל כיוצא בהן משאר דברים שאפשר לו לקנותן ממנו. כיון שחשב בלבו היאך יקנה דבר זה ונפתה בלבו בדבר עבר בלא תעשה שנגאמר (דברים ה יח) "לא תתאוה" ואין תאוה אלא בלב בלבד:

יא התאוה מביאה לידי חמוד והחמוד מביא לידי גל. שאם לא רצו הבעלים למכור אף על פי שהרבה להם בדמים והפציר ברעים יבוא לידי גל שנגאמר (מיכה ב ב) "וחמדו בתים וגלגל". ואם עמדו הבעלים בפניו להציל ממונם או מנעוהו מלגזל יבוא לידי שפיכות דמים. צא ולמד ממעשה אהאב ונבזח:

יב היא למדת שהמתאוה עובר בלאו אחד והקונה דבר שהתאוה בהפציר שהפציר בבעלים או בבקשה מהן עובר בשני לאוין. לכה נאמר (שמות כ יד) (דברים ה יח) "לא תחמד" ו(דברים ה יח) "לא תתאוה". ואם גזל עבר בשלשה לאוין:

Source 9: Rav Michael Rosensweig, Lo Tachmod: The Perfect Culmination of the Asseret ha-Dibrot

The Torah intentionally bypasses "*gezel*" for "*chimud*" precisely because the term "*chimud*" refers also to planning for or obsessing about attaining someone else's property. **There is much evidence to indicate that the improper focus upon another's property constitutes the root of this prohibition even according to those authorities who demand that the planning be implemented, as well. Rambam (Hil. Gezeilah 1:9), for example, insists that this violation cannot occur without the attainment of the object in question, yet he characterizes the prohibition as one lacking in action - "*lav she-ein bo masseh*" - with respect to the absence of *malkot*!...** R. Yonah and Ibn Ezra, in their Torah commentaries, explain that this prohibition seeks to inculcate the *halachic* approach to the material world by projecting the ideal of "*sameach be-chelko*" (satisfaction with one's material lot in life), thereby also guaranteeing mutual respect and limiting friction between individuals.

Source 10: Rav David Fohrman "The Hidden Structure of the Ten Commandments"

If you look at the language that the Ten Commandments couches the command not to covet in, there is something very obsessive about the language. It doesn't just say "...don't covet the house of your friend." It keeps on going: "Don't covet his house. Don't covet his wife. Don't covet his manservant. Don't covet his maid servant. Don't covet anything that he has." And it gets extremely specific in all these things, one thing after another thing. It's this veritable laundry list of stuff. It's like you feel like saying "I get it already! Why over and over again?"

... the Torah seems, I think, to suggest that there is something obsessive about the nature of coveting. Where does that come from? What lie am I telling myself that I think I am just going to be happy if I have all these things and then it never really works.

So let's try and play this thought experiment, I call it 'The Coveting Game.' Imagine you are coveting something. Here is your friend Joe, right, and it turns out that Joe has this beautiful wide-screen TV and you've decided there is nothing you want more in life than Joe's wide-screen TV. So you are desperate about this. And you keep on asking Joe for it and Joe just won't sell it to you, he won't give it to you and every time you go over to Joe's house you just look at this wide-screen TV and you get down. You think "why can't I have Joe's wide-screen TV?"

Eventually you go and you seek therapy for this. So you are in therapy with the Therapist and she is talking to you about coveting, about your obsessions. And finally she says to you "we could just go to Best Buy just down the block, and I could buy you a wide-screen TV with all this money that you're spending. Why don't we just go do that?" Would that solve my coveting issue?

I think the answer is what essentially I really want is, I want to be Joe. I don't want to be me. And the great lie I'm telling myself is that if I can just get enough of Joe's things then I can somehow crawl out of this terrible space which I call 'my own life' and somehow feel as if I'm occupying a

different role in the world; I am occupying Joe's role in the world. Of course it never really works, I never really feel like Joe. So I feel like I need the next thing, and I need the next thing, then I will feel like Joe. Now, if in horizontal relationships, I was given to coveting, what would my vertical relationships look like?

Think about your parents. Why would you honor your parents? The reason why you honor your parents is because they gave you everything you have. But, what if everything you have wasn't good enough? What if they gave me the wrong education? What if they gave me the wrong genes? The wrong DNA? What if I viewed life itself—that great gift that they gave me—as not a great gift at all. There would be no reason to give them honor. I would be resentful against them.

So if the Torah is saying "don't covet" on the one hand and "honor your parents" on the other hand, what it's really saying is "don't abrogate yourself." You don't need to seek out someone's life and try to be Joe. And your parents did give you something immensely valuable for which you are eternally in debt to them and that is your life. That life is worthwhile. When you honor your parents, what are you really saying? You're saying the gift they gave you was meaningful. The life they gave you was incredibly valuable. There is no greater act of self-affirmation than honoring your parents. When you honor your parents, you're actually affirming your existence.

The fifth principle is "recognize yourself." You do have something to honor your parents for. You don't need to covet and try to occupy somebody else's place in life.

Source 11: Rav Zev Leff

The root of coveting another's assets is a lack of satisfaction with one's own lot in life. "If only I were that other person," reasons the coveter, "I would have happiness!" Hence, all of that person's relationships and assets are equated since the coveter wants to be that person rather than desiring a specific one of his items.

Source 12: Rabbi Yaacov Haber:

Lo Tachmod: Mazal, Destiny and the Prohibition Against Coveting

Every individual's true sense of identity is ultimately rooted in his soul. The pairing of a specific soul with its unique personality into a specific body which is determined at or soon before conception (see *Nidda* (16b) and *Midrash Tanchuma Parashas P'kudei* 3) is decided upon with great precision by *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. It is this union which determines major aspects of a person's life since his body's genetic makeup will determine many of his physical qualities, some aspects of his personality, and many aspects of his health. The family in which he is born will greatly impact on his education, his training, his early social environment, will further affect his personality development, and often will even largely determine his career and marriage partner. Most of these factors, according to the *Midrash Tanchuma*, are determined by *Hashem* even before the birth of the child. He arranges that this specific soul should be placed into this particular body and born into this particular family so that all of the above-mentioned aspects of the person's life should occur with precision to that individual. The one factor which surely remains the domain of the child is whether he will choose to be good or bad, righteous or wicked. (See *Rambam Hilchos Teshuva* Chapter 5.)

Rabbi Soloveitchik *zt"l* often referred to these two aspects of the human soul-body entity - the predetermined and the non-predetermined - as Fate and Destiny. **It is the challenge of each individual to take his Fate and transform it into his Destiny or to marshal all of one's inborn and acquired talents as well as the challenges and obstacles of one's initial environment and serve His Maker from within that framework to fulfill his Destiny. To complain about one's Fate is futile. It is precisely this environment that is best suited for that particular soul to live out its life, and it behooves the individual to utilize precisely this framework to excel and maximalize one's potential.** Even if "*no'ach lo l'adam shelo nivra mishenivra*" (*Eiruvim 13b*) - the soul would not have chosen this existence and would rather remain in the heavenly bliss above without having to undergo the challenge of existence, "*achshav shenivra - y'fashpeish b'ma'asav!*" - now that he has been placed in this world, let him search out his deeds and perfect his service of his Creator! (Compare *Chazal's* statement (*Mo'eid Katan 28a*) "children, life, and sustenance are not (solely - see *Tosfos ibid.*) dependent on merit but on *mazal*" and see R. Aryeh Kaplan's *zt"l Handbook of Jewish Thought* (Vol 2. *Divine Providence 19:25-26*)).

Every morning we recite three *b'rachos* of identity noting who we are, or, in other words, who G-d made us into by placing our souls into a particular body thus deciding for us our religion, social status, and gender. We then praise Him as the One "*she'asa li kol tzarki*" - Who made everything I need to actualize my potential. We then proceed to exalt G-d as the "*Meichin mitz'adei gever*" - Who prepares the footsteps of Man. This can be taken to refer not only to Hashem's giving us the ability to walk but also to His constant arranging of events in our lives by placing us at the appropriate, precise crossroads for our decision-making process (*b'chira chafshis*) to play itself out. All of these aspects are included in our Fate. We conclude the *Birchos HaShachar* by beseeching G-d to make our Fate as easy as possible: *lo lidei nisayon v'lo lidei vizayon v'harchikeinu mei'adam ra...* - "[may You] not lead us to trials or to embarrassment and distance us from evil people." Each morning as we prepare for another day, we note that it is G-d who placed us in our past environment and will continue to present us with appropriate challenges specifically tailored for us alone (our Fate), and we ask for His assistance and kindness in helping us succeed (our Destiny).

Source 13: Mechilta D'R. Yishmael 20: 14

How were the Ten Commandments given? Five on one tablet and five on the other. "I am the Lord your God," and opposite it "You shall not kill," whereby Scripture apprises us that spilling blood is tantamount to "diminishing" the likeness of the King. An analogy: A king of flesh and blood enters a province, sets up statues of himself, makes images of himself, and mints coins in his likeness. After some time, they upset his statues, break his images, devalue his coins — and "diminish" the likeness of the king. Likewise, Scripture equates spilling blood to "diminishing" the likeness of the King, as it is written (*Genesis 9:6*) "One who spills the blood of man ... (For in the image of G d did He make man.)" It is written "There shall not be unto you any other gods in My presence," and, opposite it, "You shall not commit adultery," whereby Scripture apprises us that idolatry is tantamount to adultery.

כיצד נתנו עשרת הדברות? ה' על לוח זה וה' על לוח זה. כתיב "אנכי ה' אלהיך" וכנגדו "לא תרצח", מגיד הכתוב שכל מי ששופך דם – מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו ממעט בדמות המלך; משל למלך בשר ודם שנכנס למדינה, והעמיד לו איקונוט ועשה לו צלמים וטבעו לו מטבעות; לאחר זמן כפו לו איקונוטיו, שברו לו צלמיו ובטלו לו מטבעותיו ומיעטו בדמותו של מלך; כך, כל מי שהוא שופך דמים – מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו ממעט בדמות המלך, (שג) 'בראשית טו' (שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך) – כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם". כתיב "לא יהיה לך"

As it is written (Ezekiel 16:32) "You are the (very essence of the) adulterous woman, who (though) living with her husband, (still) takes strangers," and (Hoshea 3:1) "And the L rd said again to me: "Go and love a woman beloved by her husband, and playing the harlot under him — just as the L rd loves the children of Israel, while they turn to other gods..." It is written "You shall not take the name of the L rd your G d in vain," and, opposite it, "You shall not steal," whereby we are apprised that one who steals, in the end comes to swear in vain, as it is written (Jeremiah 7:9) "Shall one steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely (... and go after the gods of others, etc.?" And it is written (Hoshea 4:2) "swearing, lying, murdering, stealing, (committing) adultery..." It is written "Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it," and, opposite it, "You shall not testify (falsely)," whereby Scripture apprises us that one who desecrates the Sabbath thereby testifies before Him who spoke and brought the world into being that He did not create His world in six days and did not rest on the seventh day, and that one who keeps the Sabbath thereby testifies before Him who spoke and brought the world into being that He created His world in six days and rested on the seventh day, as it is written (Isaiah 43:10) "You are My witnesses, says the L rd ... that I am He. Before Me no god was created and there will be none after Me." It is written "Honor your father and your mother," and, opposite it, "You shall not covet," whereby Scripture apprises us that whoever covets, in the end comes to beget a son who curses his father and honors one who is not his father. This is why the Ten Commandments were given, five on one tablet and five on the other. These are the words of R. Chanina b. Gamliel. The sages say: (They were given) ten on one tablet and ten on the other. As it is written (Devarim 5:19) "These things (the ten commandments) the L rd spoke ... And He wrote them on two tablets of stone." And (Song of Songs 4:5) "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle." And (Ibid. 5:14) ("The tablets of) His hands are wheels of gold, set with emeralds."...

וכתיב כנגדו "לא תנאף", מגיד הכתוב שכל מי שעובד עבודה זרה – מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו מנאף אחר המקום, שנ' 'יחזקאל טז לב' (האשה המנאפת תחת אשה תקח את זרים", וכתוב) הושע ג א' (ויאמר ה' אלי עוד לך אהב אשת אהובת רע ומנאפת וגו'". כתיב "לא תשא את שם ה' אלהיך לשוא" וכנגדו כתיב "לא תגנוב", מגיד הכתוב שכל מי שהוא גונב, לסוף בא לידי שבועת שוא, שנ' 'ירמיה ז ט' (הגנוב רצוח ונאוף והשבע לשקר", וכתוב) הושע ד ב' (אלה וכחש ורצוח וגנוב ונאוף". כתיב "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו" וכנגדו כתיב "לא תענה...". מגיד הכתוב שכל מי שמחלל את השבת, מעיד לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם, שלא ברא עולמו לששה ימים ולא נח בשביעי; וכל מי שמשמר את השבת – מעיד לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם, שברא עולמו לששה ימים ונח בשביעי, שנ' 'ישעיה מג יב' (ואתם עדי נאום ה' ואני אל". כתיב "כבד את אביך ואת אמך" וכנגדו כתיב "לא תחמוד", מגיד הכתוב שכל מי שהוא חומד, סוף מוליד בן שהוא מקלל את אביו ואת אמו, ומכבד למי שאינו אביו. לכך נתנו עשרת הדברות חמשה על לוח זה וחמשה על לוח זה, דברי ר' חנינא בן גמליאל, וחכמים אומרים: עשרה על לוח זה ועשרה על לוח זה, שנ' 'דברים ה יט' (את הדברים האלה דבר ה' – ויכתבם על שני לוחות אבנים", ואומר) שיר השירים ד ה' (שני שדיך כשני עפרים תאומי צביה" ואו) 'שיר השירים ה יד' (ידיו גלילי זהב ממולאים בתרשיש".

Source 14: R. S.R. Hirsch: The Thematic Unity of the Ten Commandments

the demand for the recognition of GOD begins with a demand for the mind (Command #1&2: Belief etc.) but it is not satisfied with mere spirit; it demands the expression of this spirit in letter, in control of the word (#3 taking God's name in vain), of activities (#4 Shabbat) and of the family (#5). The SOCIAL LAWS begin with a demand for control of deeds and words (murder, adultery, stealing, false witness), but are not satisfied with our control over deeds and words, but demand control of spirit and feeling (#10 Do not covet).

This expresses the important idea: All "religion", all so called "honouring God in spirit" is worthless if the thought, the idea of God, is not strong enough to exercise its power practically in the control of our words and doings of our family and social life. Our deeds, our way of life must first prove that our "religion", our "honouring of God" is genuine. And on the other hand all social virtue is worthless and crumbles at the first test, as long as it aims at outward correctness, is satisfied with being considered righteous and honest in the eyes of fellow men, but refuses inner loyalty, does not depend on that pure inner conscience that only God sees and God judges, and which has its root and ... nourishment only in quiet but constant looking up to God.

All spirit must be developed into act. All acts must have their source in spirit. That is the inspiration that hovers over these fundamental ideas of God's Torah and fuses the two tablets; the "religious" and the "social", into one inseparable whole.

חובת ההכרה בה' פותחת בדרישה המופנית אל השכל ("אנכי", "לא יהיה לך"). אך אין די בהכרה השכלית בה'; אנחנו חייבים לבטא את הכרתנו בה' גם במעשה, על ידי שנשלוט על דיבורינו ("לא תשא"), על מלאכתנו ("זכור"), ועל חיי משפחתנו ("כבד"). החקיקה החברתית מתחילה בתביעות על מעשינו ודיבורינו ("לא תרצח", "לא תנאף", "לא תגנב", "לא תענה"). אך אין די לשלוט בדיבורינו ובמעשינו; התורה תובעת מאתנו שנמשול גם על לבנו ושכלנו ("לא תחמד").

דברים אלו מביעים את האמת הבאה: כל "דת" וכל "עבודת האלקים בלב ורוח", נטולות ערך הן, אם חסר להן הכח לשלוט בדיבורינו ובמעשינו, ובחיי המשפחה והחברה שלנו. רק על ידי מעשינו ודרך חיינו נוכל להוכיח שאנו עבדי ה' באמת ובתמים. ולהפך, כל מעלה חברתית, הינה חסרת ערך ומתפוררת במבחן הראשון, כל עוד שאין תכליתה אלא להיות מהוגן כלפי חוץ ולעשות הטוב והישר בעיני האדם, אך מתעלמת היא מנאמנות פנימית, ואינה מבססת עצמה על המצפוניות ועל הטוהר של אמונה שלמה ופנימית, אשר רק ה' יכול לראות ולשפוט אותם. כל מעשה טוב וישר צריך לנבוע מתוך הלב, ועל כל מחשבה אצילה לבוא לידי מעשה, כאשר עיני האדם נשואות תמיד אל ה'. זאת היא הרוח המרחפת על יסודות תורת ה' ומאחדת את שני הלוחות – ה"דתי" וה"חברתי" לשלימות אחת בלתימתחלקת.