

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XVII: Yitro (Ex. 18:1–20:23)

Essay 22. The connection between recognizing the L-rd and not committing murder

The Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael (20:14) draws a parallel within the Ten Commandments between the first five Commandments and the final five.¹ This essay considers the relationship between the 1st and 6th Commandments.

אֲנֹכִי - לֹא תִרְצַח

“I am the L-rd, your G-d, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Ex. 20:2). **“You shall not murder”** (Ex. 20:13).

היו"ד הדברות היו כתובים תמשה על לוח זה ותמשה על לוח זה, זה כנגד זה, ודבור הראשון "אנכי" מכונן נגד "לא תרצח". וילקושרם יחד בדרך רמז נקדים מאי דאמרינן בתגיגה פרק קמא "בעלי אספות" אלו תלמידי חכמים שיושבין אספות אספות ועוסקים בתורה, הללו מטמאים והללו מטהרים, הללו אוסרים והללו מתירים, הללו וכו' הללו וכו', היאך אני לומד תורה מעתה, תלמוד לומר בלם "נתנו מרעה אהד" בלם אל אהד נתנו ופרנס אהד אמרו מפי אדון כל המעשים וכו', שצאמר "ונדבר אלהים את כל-הדברים" וכו', אף אהה עשה אנדה באפרנסת וקנה לה לב לשמע דברי הפוסלים ודברי המכשירים וכו' עכ"ל.

The Ten Commandments were written five on this tablet and five on that tablet, corresponding to one another; and the 1st Commandment, “I am the L-rd,” corresponds to the 6th Commandment, “You shall not murder.”

To connect them together by way of allusion, we shall preface with what is stated in tractate Chagigah, chapter one, regarding the verse: “The words of the Sages are as cattle prods, and as well-fastened nails of the masters of [learned] assemblies; they were given from one Shepherd.”²

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¹ Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael, 20:14, “How were the Ten Commandments given? Five on one tablet and five on the other. ‘I am the L-rd your G-d,’ 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, ‘One who spills the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in His image Did G-d make man’ (Gen. 9:6). . . . 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.”

² Eccl. 12:11.

“Masters of assemblies”—these are the Torah scholars who sit in many assemblies and engage in Torah: these declare impure and those declare pure; these prohibit and those permit; these deem an item invalid and those deem it valid.

Lest a person say: **How, then, can I learn Torah** [when it contains so many differing opinions]? **Scripture therefore teaches: All of them “were given from one Shepherd”³; one G-d gave them, and one Leader uttered them, from the mouth of the Master of all Creation, Blessed be He, as it is said: “And G-d spoke all these words.”⁴ You too, make your ear like a funnel and acquire for yourself an understanding heart, to hear the words of those who disqualify and the words of those who qualify.**

- Chagigah 3b

צָרִיד עֵיוֹן דְּמַאי סְלָקָא דְעֵתְהָּ וּמַאי מִתְרַץ, דְּהָאֵי דְקָאמְרַ שְׂמַא יֵאמֵר אָדָם, נִרְאָה שְׂיֵישׁ לוֹ קוּשֵׁי דְרָבָּה טָבַע לְלִמּוּד הַתּוֹרָה מִחֲמַת הַמִּתְלוֹקֶת, וּמַהוּ הַתִּירוּץ שְׂפָלָם אָמְרָם הַקַּב"ה, וְלִכְאוּרָה מֵה שְׁטַעְנוּ לֹא הוֹדָה לוֹ.

This requires analysis, for what is entering your mind, and what is the answer? Torah study is a natural, logical pursuit, and should be consistent and clear. But the student finds that some rabbis will declare something impure, and other rabbis will declare something pure. **For the one who says “lest a person say” appears to express a natural difficulty in learning Torah because of disagreement.** He thinks, “If everyone disagrees, then the truth has been lost or is unattainable.” **What, then, is the answer—that all were spoken by the Holy One, Blessed be He? Seemingly, this does not resolve the difficulty,** for there are two or more different answers, and how can they all be Divine?

אָמְנָם בְּפִרְקָא קָמַא דְעֵבוּדָה זָרָה אָמְרִינָן אָמַר ר' חֲסִידָא פֶּל הַלּוּמַד תּוֹרָה מִרַב אֶחָד אֵינּוּ רוּאָה סִימָן בְּרָכָה לְעוֹלָם, וְהֵנִי מְלִי בְּסִבְרָא אָבֵל בְּגִמְרָא מַחֲד רַבָּה מְעֵלִי כִי הֵיכִי דְלֹא לְפָגוּם לִישְׁנֵיהּ. וְזֹאת הַסִּבְרָא הִיא הַפְּלוּל, דְּבְפִרְקָא ג' דְנִדְרִים אָמְרִינָן שְׂפַתְחִלָּה לֹא נִיתְנָה אֱלָא לְמִשְׁהָ וּלְזִרְעוֹ, וּמִשְׁהָ נְהַג בָּהּ טוֹבַת עֵינַן וּנְתַנָּה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמִקְשֵׁי הַתָּם הַגְּמָרָא וּמִסְקִינָן אֱלָא פְּלוּלָא בְּעֵלְמָא הוּא שְׂמַתְחִילָה לֹא נִיתַן אֱלָא לְמִשְׁהָ וְכו'.

However, in the first chapter of tractate Avodah Zarah it is stated:

Rabbi Chisda said: Anyone who learns Torah from only one teacher will never see a sign of blessing. That matter relates to reasoning [i.e., in order to come up with sophisticated reasoning it is necessary to hear many different opinions]. **However, with respect to the oral tradition, it suffices to learn from teacher, so as not to impair its language** [for if he hears different versions from different teachers, he will become confused].

- Avodah Zarah 19a

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ex. 20:1.

This “reasoning” is analytical reasoning [*pilpul*]. For in the third chapter of tractate Nedarim (38a) it is stated that at first the Torah was given only to Moses and his descendants, but Moses acted with generosity and gave it to Israel. The Gemara there asks and concludes: that it is not talking about Torah as a whole; rather, it refers only to analytical reasoning, which was initially given only to Moses, etc.

ופירש העיון יעקב שמתחלה לא היו צריכים ישראל לפלפול, שהרי קודם שנשמתברו הלווחות לא היתה שכיחה בישראל כדאמרין בפרק ה' דעירובין, מה שאין פן אחר שבירת הלווחות שהיתה השכיחה היו צריכים לפלפול, כדאיתא בכתובות פרק הנושא גבי ר' חייא דאי משתכחה תורה מישראל מהדרנא לה מפלפולי, וכן מצינו בעתניאל בן קנז שהחזיר בפלפולו שלש מאות הלכות שנשמתכחו בימי אבלו של משה רבנו ע"ה עכ"ל.

Zera Shimshon now shifts the conversation from confusion to forgetfulness.

The *Iyun Yaakov* explains that initially Israel had no need for analytical reasoning, for before the Tablets were shattered there was no forgetfulness in Israel, as stated in the fifth chapter of Eruvin (54a). However, after the shattering of the Tablets, when forgetfulness came, they required analytical reasoning, as stated in Ketubot, the 12th chapter, entitled “One who marries,” regarding Rabbi Chiyya. He said: “If the Torah were to be forgotten from Israel, I would restore it through my analytical reasoning.”⁵ Similarly, we find this with Othniel ben Kenaz, who restored—through his analytical reasoning—three hundred laws that had been forgotten during the mourning for Moses our teacher, peace be upon him.⁶

ומעתה כדאי ללמוד סדר הפלפול צריך ללמוד הסברא מיותר מרב אחד, אך קשה שאם אנו הולכים ללמוד הפלפול מרבנים אחרים מוכח מזה שיש שכיחה בעולם, ואם יש שכיחה אם כן אף לימוד הגמרא צריכים אנו ללמדה מהרבה רבנים, דדילמא רב אחד שכח איזו גמרא הצריכה, וכן כתב הרמב"ם ו"ל בהקדמתו לפירוש המשנה שבימים הראשונים לא היתה שכיחה בעולם, וכל אחד ואחד היה זוכר מה ששמע מרבו והיתה דעתם שנה, ומשום הכי לא היה להם מחלוקת, אמנם משרבתה השכיחה לא נשמו עוד הדעות ורבו המחלוקות, וכן רש"י כתב בפרק ב' דעירובין "דברי חכמים פדרבנות" אלו דברי תורה שנמסרו למשה על פה, שנחלקו בהם חכמי הדורות לאחר שנמתעט הלב ושכחום עכ"ל.

From this point forward, in order to learn the method of analytical reasoning, one must learn reasoning from more than one teacher, who differ in their opinions, so as to understand the depth of the matter. However, this presents a difficulty: if we go to learn analytical reasoning from different rabbis, it follows that there is forgetfulness in the world. If there is forgetfulness, then even the study of Gemara should require learning from many teachers, lest a single teacher has forgotten some necessary passage of Gemara. Accordingly, Maimonides of blessed memory wrote in part three of his introduction to the *Commentary on the Mishnah* that in the early days there was no forgetfulness in the world: each person remembered what he heard from his teacher, and their understanding was uniform, and therefore they had no disputes. But once forgetfulness increased, understandings were no longer equal, and disputes multiplied. Rashi similarly wrote on the second chapter of Eruvin (21b) that “the words of the Sages are like cattle prods”—that is, words of Torah that were transmitted orally to Moses, concerning which the Sages of later generations disagreed after the diminution of the heart and the onset of forgetfulness.

⁵ Ketubot 103b.

⁶ Temurah 15b.

וְזֶהוּ בִּיאור הַמְאָמַר הַזֶּה, שֶׁמֵּא יֵאמֹר אָדָם הוֹאִיל שֶׁהִלְלוּ מְטַמְּאִים וְהִלְלוּ מְטַהֲרִים וְכוּ' הַיֵּאָדָּה אֲנִי לֹמֵד תּוֹרָה מֵעֵתָהּ, הוֹאִיל שֶׁרַבּוּ הַמְחַלְקוֹת וְהוּא סִימָן שֶׁבָּאָה לְעוֹלָם הַשְּׂכָחָה אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְלַמּוֹד עוֹד אֶפְיִלוּ הַגְּמָרָא מֵרַב אֶחָד, שֶׁהָרִי רַב אֶחָד אִי אֶפְשָׁר שְׂיִזְכּוֹר הַכֹּל, אֲלֵא צְרִיךְ לְשִׁמּוֹעַ הַגְּרָסָאוֹת וְהַהֲלָכוֹת מֵהַרְבֵּה רַבָּנִים, וְהַיֵּאָדָּה אֲנִי לֹמֵד תּוֹרָה מֵעֵתָהּ שֶׁתְּלַמּוּדֵי לֹא יִתְקַנְיִם בְּיָדֵי כָמוֹ בְּגִי גְלִיל דְּלֹא גָמְרוּ מִחַד רַבָּה שְׁלֹא נִתְקַנְיִם תּוֹרָתוֹן בְּיָדוֹ. תְּלַמּוּד לֹמֵר, כֹּלָם "נִתְּנוּ מֵרַעֵה אֶחָד" אֵל אֶחָד נִתְּנוּ וּפְרָגְס אֶחָד אֶמְרוּ, לֹא תֵאמַר שֶׁאֵלּוּ הַמְחַלְקוֹת לֹא הָיוּ בְּעוֹלָם אֲלֵא לְאַחַר שֶׁרַבְּתָה הַשְּׂכָחָה, כִּי מִתְחַלְלָה נָמִי הָיוּ הַסְּבָרוֹת אֵלּוּ בְּעוֹלָם, שֶׁהָרִי עַל כָּל דְּבָר שֶׁהִנֵּה הַקַּב"ה אוֹמֵר לְמֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה מֵרָאָה לוֹ מ"ט טַעְמֵי טוּמְאָה וּמ"ט טַעְמֵי טְהָרָה.

This, then, is the explanation of the aforementioned teaching: “Lest a person say—since these declare impure and those declare pure . . . how, then, can I learn Torah?” Since disputes have multiplied—which is a sign that forgetfulness has come into the world—it is impossible to learn even the Gemara from only one teacher, for a single teacher cannot remember everything. Rather, one must hear the various versions and rulings from many teachers. How, then, can I learn Torah so that my learning will endure in my hand, unlike the people of the Galilee? That is, the Judeans were precise in their language and learned from one teacher, so their Torah endured. The Galileans were not precise, and they did not learn from a single great teacher, and as a result, their Torah did not endure with them.⁷

Scripture therefore teaches: all “were given from one Shepherd,” one G-d gave them, and one Leader uttered them.” Do not say that these disputes came into the world only after forgetfulness increased. Even from the beginning, these multiple perspectives existed. For concerning every matter that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses, He would show him forty-nine reasons for impurity and forty-nine reasons for purity.⁸ That is, there was not only multiplicity due to forgetfulness, but there was also multiplicity due to depth. Therefore, the student’s “assumption” that disagreement equals “loss of truth” is wrong. Instead, disagreement is a sign of the depth of the Torah. “Forgetfulness” is the mechanism that allows us to use our own “analytical reasoning” to recover those different facets of truth.

וְעֵינֵינוּ בְּיָבִין שְׁמוּעָה (דף כ"ט ע"ב) בְּשֵׁם מְהַרְרֵי גְמָרִים טַעַם נִכּוֹן לָמָּה הוּצְרָה הַקַּב"ה לְלַמּוֹד לְמֹשֶׁה עַל דְּבָר שֶׁל טְהָרָה טַעְמֵי טוּמְאָה, לְפִי שֶׁהַדְּבָר לֹא יוֹבֵן מֵעֲצָמוֹתוֹ כְּמוֹ שְׂיִוְבֵן מִהֶפְכוֹ וְעֵינֵינוּ ש. וְעֵינֵינוּ בְּזוֹהַר רִישׁ פְּרָשַׁת חֻקַּת.

See also *Yavin Shemu'ah* (page 29b),⁹ citing the *Meharerei Nemarim*,¹⁰ for the correct reason why the Holy One, Blessed be He, needed to teach Moses reasons for impurity concerning a matter of purity. This is because a thing is not understood from its essence as well as it is understood from its opposite; and see there. See also the *Zohar*, beginning of *parashat Chukkat* (181a).

⁷ Eruvin 53a.

⁸ Midrash Tehillim (Midrash Shocher Tov), on Ps. 12. The number 49 represents the 49 Gates of Understanding, which is considered the maximum depth of logic allowed to humans.

⁹ Rabbi Shlomo Algazi (1610–c. 1683), *Yavin Shemu'ah* (Venice, 1639).

¹⁰ Rabbi Abraham ben Solomon Akra (16th Century), *Meharerei Nemarim* (Venice, 1599).

ואף הגרסאות עצמן הואיל שהפוסקים פוסקים הדין כל אֶחָד לפי גרסתו, צָרִיךְ לומר שאלו דברי אלהים חיים, ומתחלה קודם השכחה היה החכם שבדור יודע כלם, ולאחר שברבתה השכחה נחלקו הסבורות, שנה אומר טעם השכחה ונה אומר טעם הטומאה כל אֶחָד לפי בחינתו, ואם פן נקרא שאתה לומד מנה מה שלא ידע זה, ואינו כמו בני גליל שהיו לומדים ענין אֶחָד מיותר מרב אֶחָד, כמו שפירש רש"י התם שהיו שומעים מנה בלשון אֶחָד ומנה בלשון אחר וכו' ועיי"ש.

Even regarding the textual versions themselves—since decisors rule according to their respective versions—it must be said that “these and those are the words of the living G-d.”¹¹ Initially, before forgetfulness, the sage of the generation knew them all; after forgetfulness increased, the reasonings diverged, such that one would state the reason for purity and another would state the reason for impurity, each according to his perspective. If so, it is still considered that you learn from this one what the other does not know. This is not like the people of the Galilee, who learned one matter from more than one teacher, as Rashi explains there—that they heard it from one in one formulation and from another in a different formulation, and so forth. See there.

ובדי שיתקיים תלמודך בידך משום דאי אפשר לה לגמור מחד רבה, יש לה תקנה אחרת, לעשות סימנים, כמו שאמרו ו"ל "הציבי לה צינים", ונהו וקנה לה לב ועשה אנך פאפרכסת, דהכי אמרינן התם בני יהודה דמנחי להו סימנים נתקיים תלמודם בני גליל דלא מנחי סימנא לא נתקיימה תורתם בידם.

So that your learning will endure in your hand, since it is impossible for you to complete your studies with only one teacher, you have another remedy: to make mnemonic signs, as the Sages of blessed memory said, “Set up for yourself signposts.”¹² This is what is meant by “acquire for yourself an understanding heart” and by “make your ear like a funnel.” For thus it is stated there in Eruvin 53a, regarding the people of Judea, who placed mnemonic signs for themselves, their learning endured. But regarding the people of the Galilee, who did not place mnemonic signs, their Torah did not endure with them.

ומנה בא לה תועלת שגם אתה תוכל לסדש אינה דבר בעולם על ידי פלפולך ממה שפכר נשפח, שאם לא הייתה שכחה בעולם לא היית יכול לסדש כלום, כדאמרינן בפרק ב' דערוובין שמהא תאמר אם יש בהן טעם למה לא נכתבו, אמר קרא "עשות ספרים הרבה אין קץ", להראות לכל תלמיד חכם שבהו ינהי לו הרינוח, שגם הוא יוכל לסדש, ומה שישדש החכם מדעתו הם חשובים תורה ממש שניתנה מפי הגבורה, ונהו "אנכי ה' אלהיך", שאל אֶחָד אָמְרָן.

From this you will also gain the benefit that you too will be able to innovate something in the world of Torah study and halacha through your analytical reasoning, from what has already been forgotten. For if there were no forgetfulness in the world, you would not be able to innovate anything. As stated in the second chapter of Eruvin (21b): “Lest you say: If [the words of the Sages] are of substance [and have such great importance], why were they not written [in the Torah]? [Thus,] the verse states: ‘Of making many books there is no end,’¹³” to show every Torah scholar that herein lies his gain, that he too can innovate. What the sage innovates from his own understanding is considered actual Torah, given from the mouth of the Almighty. This is the intent of “I am the L-rd your G-d”—one G-d uttered them. Thus,

¹¹ Cf. Eruvin 13b.

¹² Jer. 31:21.

¹³ Eccl. 12:12.

while the shattering of the Tablets seems like a tragedy, it led to forgetfulness, which created a new mechanism for Torah growth.

Zera Shimshon now discusses several distinct reasons why the 1st Commandment, “I am the L-rd” corresponds to the 6th Commandment: “You shall not murder.”

ואדרבא צריך האדם להיות נזהר יותר בדברי סופרים מדברי תורה, שהללו יש בהם עשה ולא תעשה כדאמרינן בפרק ב' דערובין והללו יש בהם מיתה, שכל העובר על דברי סופרים חייב מיתה, וזהו "אנכי ה' אלהיך" מכונן כנגד "לא תרצח".

***The Authority of the Sages:* Furthermore, a person must be even more careful with the words of the Scribes, i.e., Rabbinic law, than with the words of the Torah, for the latter include positive and negative commandments, as stated in the second chapter of Eruvin (21b), whereas the former carry the penalty of death, for whoever transgresses the words of the Scribes is liable to death. This is “I am the L-rd your G-d” corresponding to “You shall not murder.”**

עוד יש לומר ש"אנכי ה' אלהיך" בא להזהיר את האדם שישמור על כוונתו בתפלתו, כי תפלה בלא כוונה כגוף בלי נשמה, "אנכי ה' אלהיך" כמו שאמר ר' יוחנן בן זכאי לתלמידיו וכשאתם מתפללים דעו לפני מי אתם מתפללים, וזהו בכיוון כנגד "לא תרצח" שענינו גוף בלי נשמה. וכן על דרך זה בא להזהיר על כוונת וזהירות התפלות, כי מי שלא יכוין בתפלה ובברכות אף נכיר שה' אלהיו, יען התפלה הם רחמים לבקש ממנו יתברך על הסתים ועל המזון, והברכות הם דבר עקרי, כי "לה' הארץ ומלוואה" קודם ברכה.

***Prayer and Intention:* It may further be said that “I am the L-rd your G-d” comes to warn a person to strive to focus his intention in prayer, for prayer without intention is like a body without a soul. “I am the L-rd your G-d,” as Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai [sic] said to his students: “When you pray, know before Whom you pray.”¹⁴ This corresponds to “You shall not murder,” for answering with a body without a soul.**

In this same way it warns regarding intention and care in blessings, for if one does not focus in prayer and blessings, how will he recognize that the L-rd is his G-d? Prayer is mercy, to ask from Him, blessed be He, for life and sustenance; and blessings are fundamental, for “the earth and its fullness belong to the L-rd”¹⁵ prior to the blessing.

ומכונן "לא תרצח" כדנתנו במסכת מכות לפיכך אימותיהן של פהגים מספקות להם מחנה ומזון כדי שלא יתפללו על בניהם שימותו, וכי יתיב רחמנא שבועא לחיי הוא דיהיב.

***Physical Maintenance of Life:* The intent of “You shall not murder” is as taught in tractate Makkot: “Therefore the mothers of the priests would provide them with food and sustenance so that they would not pray that their sons die.”¹⁶ When the Merciful One grants satiation, it is for the benefit of the living that He grants it.¹⁷**

¹⁴ Berachot 28b, where the source was actually Rabbi Eliezer. Our text reads, “Know before Whom you stand.”

¹⁵ Ps. 24:1.

¹⁶ Mishnah Makkot 2:6; Makkot 11a.

¹⁷ Ta’anit 8b.

ועוד שהנהיר בברכת הַהַגְנִיּוֹן מִתְקַן וּמְחֻזָּר לְמָקוֹם הַיְחוּד וְהַקְדוּשָׁה הַנִּיצוּצוֹת הַיְדוּעוֹת, וְיֵי שְׂאֵינּוּ זְהִיר מְקַלְקֵל בָּהֶם וְנִקְרְאוּ מֵתִים.

***Sparks of Holiness:* Furthermore, one who is careful with the blessing over enjoyment repairs and restores the known sparks of Holiness to the place of Unity and Holiness. This is an act of “giving life.” In contrast, one who is not careful with blessings damages [the sparks], and they are called “dead,” thus violating the 6th Commandment, “You shall not murder.”**

ועוד מי גָרַם שְׂיַעֲשׂוּ אֶת הָעֶגְלָה וַיַּעֲבְרוּ עַל "אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ", "לֹא תִרְצָח" בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂעֵבְרוּ קוֹדֵם עַל "לֹא תִרְצָח" בְּהַרְיַגַת חֵר, כְּדַפְתֵּיב "וַיִּרְא אֱהָרֹן וַיָּבֹן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו", מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו.

***The Golden Calf:* Moreover, what caused them to make the Golden Calf and to transgress “I am the L-rd your G-d,” and thus “You shall not murder”? Because they had already transgressed “You shall not murder” in the killing of Hur, as it is written regarding the verse, “And Aaron saw and built an altar before it”¹⁸:**

What did he see? . . . He saw Hur [who had been appointed together with Aaron by Moses to lead the people during Moses’ absence],¹⁹ who was slaughtered before him [as he had protested the plan to fashion a calf and had been murdered by the people as a result].

- Sanhedrin 7a

ועוד "לֹא תִרְצָח" מִזְהִיר שְׁלֹא לְסַפֵּר לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָה, כִּי הַמְסַפֵּר לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָה הוֹרֵג שְׁלֹשָׁה, הָאוֹמְרוֹ וְהַמְקַבְּלוֹ וְהַנֶּאֱמָר עָלָיו, וְגוֹרֵם לְשִׁכְנֵיהָ שֶׁתִּסְתַּלַּק מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם, וְכוּפֵר בְּעֵקֶר כְּדָאֵמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן מִשׁוּם ר' יוֹסִי בְּפֶרֶק ג' דְּעַרְכִּין, וְזֶהוּ בְּכִיוּן כְּנֻגַד "אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ".

***Derogatory Speech:* Additionally, the 1st Commandment, “You shall not murder” warns against derogatory speech [*lashon hara*], for one who speaks derogatory speech kills three: the speaker, the listener, and the one spoken about.²⁰**

Also, derogatory speech leads to a violation of the 1st Commandment, because [one who engages in derogatory speech] causes the Shekhinah to depart from Israel—G-d forbid.

Also, another violation of the 1st Commandment is that he denies a fundamental principle of faith, as R. Yochanan said in the name of R. Yosi in the third chapter of Arakhin (15b). This corresponds to “I am the L-rd your G-d.”

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¹⁸ Ex. 32:5.

¹⁹ Ex. 24:14.

²⁰ Yerushalmi Pe’ah 1:1.