

Lesson 2

G-D STUFF

CONTENTS:

Section #1 – PROHIBITION OF IDOLATRY

Section #2- PROHIBITION BLASPHEMY

Section #3- PRAYER, TIME TO CONNECT...

prohibition of:

I DOLATRY

“Know this day and take into your heart that the L-rd is G-d; in the heaven above and upon the earth below, there is nothing else.”

Deuteronomy 4:39

CAN'T I BE MORAL WITHOUT G-D?

Without compunction we trap mice and crush roaches that dare invade our homes. Why? Because we do not fear invading battalions of armed avenging rodents or insects. What if we viewed another segment of the population in a similar light? No, this is not simply remote conjecture; this actually occurred in a highly enlightened and civilized society less than a century ago!...

Ultimately, however, it is *not* wise to follow these moral principles independent of their Giver. Such a moral system may work for most of the people most of the time, but inevitably it will fail -- either society-wide, or in the individual lives of citizens in certain situations. Absolute morality can only be a product of the unchanging realization that there is an absolute Divine "eye that sees, ear that hears, and all your actions are chronicled in a ledger."

(taken from "Morality without G-d" by Naftali Silberberg)

We must realize that we aren't the center of the universe. As important as we are; we must not forget who bestowed this value upon us. When ethics are determined by people, who's to say which is correct? We are all part of a world community and cannot be our own judges, there must be a common code for all people at all times. Once G-d is removed from the picture, the "moral structure" will soon collapse because of lack of foundation. Our first stronghold is to recognize the Creator, and look to Him alone. Looking to "other gods" fiddles with the remaining precepts in our moral compass. Idols in our time have gone from stone statues to other things that people crave. How many times has moral decision been hindered because of bribery? All idolatry begins when the things that are meant to be a "means to an end," become "ends" in and of themselves.

"Whosoever recognizes idols has denied the entire Torah; and whosoever denies idols has recognized the entire Torah"

Midrash Sifre, Deut. 54

WHERE DID IDOLATRY COME FROM?

Two generations after Adam mankind was already on its way to depravity. Why? G-d was dropped from the picture. How did that happen? The masses were not as silly as one might think. Many understood that the sun, moon, and stars had influence on the world. The sun provided warmth, and enabled the crops to grow; the moon manipulated the tides, and so forth. The multitudes wanted to glorify G-d by praising the sun. They knew G-d formed the sun, but when requesting heat for their harvest, instead of directing their petition to the Al-mighty, they went to the sun direct. Soon after, G-d was put on hold, and the sun and the moon were the new replacements. As the generations spiraled downward the object their affection was reduced to silver, gold, and jewels. They built lavish temples and honed statues all to extol their newfound lords.

Everything in the universe was meant to be a means to an end, a vehicle to bring out good, and a tool to serve the Al-mighty. When the "means" becomes the "end" that is when the trouble ensues; and how idolatry came about. In our own lives we often make assorted objects our fixation. Our drive and our pleasure is dedicated primarily to them instead of G-d. Although, this form of 'idol worship' is much more refined than the barbaric practices that accompanied idol worship of days gone by, it is nevertheless, something we need to be aware of, and in control of.

bonus components

- *against entertaining the thought that there exists a deity
- *against making or owning any graven image
- *against making idols for use by others
- *against making any forbidden statues (even for ornaments)
- *against bowing to any idol
- *against worshiping idols in any of their customary manners
- *against causing our children to pass in the worship of Molech.
- *against practicing divination, occult, witchcraft, etc.

prohibition of:

BLASPHEMY

**“Whoever curses his G-d shall bear his sin. He that blasphemes the name of G-d shall be put to death.
Leviticus 24:15-16**

YOU ARE WHAT YOU SPEAK

Words say a lot about a person. One can assess intelligence, behavior traits, ethnic background, and emotions, just by listening to another's speech. Words are powerful; whether used for the positive, or for the opposite. Speech separates us from all other creatures, and is a medium for revealing the soul. This form of expression was given to us to convey positive ideas and channel them into action. G-d 'speaking' the world into existence, is the parallel for the faculty of speech as it exists in the world. The damage of negative speech is in some ways an affront on creation. Since G-d has no physical semblance, words are the only means we have to strike Him.

We are meant to use our words to praise G-d and His creations; to be grateful to Him for His providence rather than profane it. We owe Him our maximum awe and adoration at all times. Irreverence to the Almighty is similar to, and in some ways more severe than, idolatry. Idolatry denies the existence of G-d, blasphemy acknowledges His existence, but denies his omnipresence and majesty. The blasphemer denies that everything comes from G-d, and is ultimately good. Often the 'good' is not unveiled in a way we can relate to; nevertheless, our objective is to look past to the deeper reality.

**“Then I will praise the L-rd
according to His righteousness,
and sing to the name of the exalted L-rd.”
Psalms 7:18**

bonus components

- *to acknowledge the presence of God
- *to fear God
- *to sanctify God's name
- *to study the Torah
- *to honor the scholars, and to revere one's teacher
- *to pray to Him

PRAYER, TIME TO CONNECT...

WHAT IS PRAYER?

*(Pray*er)*- The act of addressing supplication to a divinity, especially to the true God; the offering of adoration, confession, supplication, and thanksgiving to the Supreme Being
Webster's Dictionary 1913

Prayer is the fusion of creation and Creator. The Hebrew, *tefillah*, hints at one of the main objectives in prayer.

Tofel = Joining, Uniting

Prayer is the backbone in the life of a human being; without it, one's spiritual life is a total void. G-d is the source of life, and through prayer, we bring out the idea that He is the base of *our* lives. It links us to our Maker and allows us to interact.

**And he (Jacob) dreamed, and there was a ladder standing on earth and its top reached to the heaven. And G-d's angels were going up and down on it. And G-d was standing over him...
Genesis 28:12-13**

Prayer is compared to that “ladder standing on earth and its top reached to the heaven” (Genesis 28:12). This connection between heaven and earth serves two purposes: raising the earthly to heaven, and bringing heaven down to earth.

Likkutei Dibburim 3, p. 497

The union formed during prayer, not only confirms our belief in G-d, but attests to our trust and reliance in Him. Prayer affirms the idea that G-d cares for us, listens to us, and wants to assist us.

**Cast your burden on the Lord,
and he will sustain you.**

Psalms 55:22

**From the depths I called upon you, O L-rd.
Psalm 130**

**In desperate straits, I called to G-d; He
answered me from His divine expanse.**

Psalms 118

In conjunction with being that tool which attaches us to the Al-mighty, it also is a time of self-assessment. The word, *tefilla*, also hints at this as well.

Lehitpalel = To pray; self-judgment

Prayer is hard work which takes much sincerity and painstaking effort.

**To love the L-rd your G-d and serve Him
with all your heart” - which service is in the
heart? This is prayer.**

Talmud, Taanit 2a

Often times people have an inability to express the depths of their feelings in all of their detail. For this reason the sages compiled the siddur, prayer book, which compiles every feature of entreaty to G-d, and singing His praises. A Jew, when praying must pray by the format laid out in the siddur, in addition to any personal supplication he wishes to make in his own words. The construct of the three prayer services detailed, stand in place of the sacrifices that were offered throughout the day in the times that the Temple stood. Our utterances take the place of the bulls and rams.

A non-Jew is must pray to G-d as well, being that it asserts a reliance on the Al-mighty. His day is filled with thanks, confession, and supplication, each in its proper time. A non-Jew prays essentially from the heart, but is free to use any of the Psalms or other Jewish texts in aiding his clarity. Heartfelt prayers for oneself or others are very powerful.

"an enormous body of evidence: over one hundred experiments exhibiting the criteria of good science, many conducted under stringent laboratory conditions, over half of which showed that prayer brings about significant changes in a variety of living beings."

Larry Dossey MD,

Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine