

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #1 *To believe in Hashem* - לידע

| Siman | Definition          | Source in Torah                |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| לידע  | Know there is a G-d | אָנְכִי ה' אֱלֹהִים (שמות כ:ב) |

- Some Rishonim (like the **Ramban**) don't even count this as a Mitzva, because it's so fundamental that it precedes the Mitzvos!
- The **Rambam** says that the mitzvah is "to know that there is a First Existence that created all that exists". He doesn't say "to believe", but "to know", since we are commanded to have absolute certainty of Hashem's existence. **Rabbi Avigdor Miller**<sup>1</sup> takes it a step further: "'To know' means to conscientiously think about it - not merely to say that you assent." This is one of the 6 Constant Mitzvos which can be performed at any time.
- The first Siman in **Shulchan Aruch** even expresses this idea of living with a constant knowledge of Hashem's presence, quoting the words from Tehillim: "שְׁוִיתִי ה' לְנֶגְדֵי תָמִיד" - "I place Hashem in front of me constantly".
- The **Chazon Ish**<sup>2</sup> explains that בִּיטְחוֹן - trust in Hashem - is the practical side of אֱמוּנָה, namely the mindset that "everything that occurs under the sun is the result of a decree of the Almighty".
- The **Smak**<sup>3</sup> writes that part of this Mitzva is to believe in and await the arrival of Moshiach and the end of our exile, just as Hashem took us out of Egypt.

*Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells that when he was only 7 years old, his father passed away. Shortly prior to this, when the family was in the hospital, **Rav Shimon Schwab** came to visit him and his siblings. "How's your father?" he asked the 7 year old. "I have בִּיטְחוֹן that he'll be okay." Rav Schwab's face suddenly turned very serious, and he looked into his eyes and told him earnestly: "Remember this for the rest of your life. בִּיטְחוֹן does not mean it will all be good and wonderful; rather it means 'whatever will happen - even the tragic and the sorrowful - is good.'"*

.1 Ohr Avigdor, Duties of the Mind, pg.25

.2 אמונה ובטחון ב:א

.3 סמ"ק, מצוה א

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## #2 No other G-d - זולתִּי

| Siman   | Definition                                       | Source in Torah                                   |
|---------|--|---|
| זולתִּי | Don't believe in any power <u>besides Hashem</u> | לא יהיה לך אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי (שמות כג) |

• On the most basic level, this Mitzva refers to the prohibition against worshipping or attributing power to idols.

Q) If belief in Hashem includes within it all of the positive commandments, it follows that this mitzva - being the very first negative commandment - encapsulates every negative commandment. How so?

Q) If the Torah and its instructions are eternal, then how does the sin of idolatry apply to us? When was the last time you were tempted to worship the stars?!

A) In truth, we are drawn to a far more dangerous “power besides him”. The **Gemara**<sup>1</sup> states that when the Torah talks of “a foreign god”, this refers to the Yetzer Hara. Listening to one’s evil inclination is in effect believing that pleasure and success can come from some place other than Hashem. Is there an idolatry worse than that?!

If we internalise the message of this Mitzva, then the Yetzer Hara would have a much greater struggle - with every sin!

• The **Rambam**<sup>2</sup> based on the aforementioned Gemara states: “When one gets angry, it is as if he has served idols”.

The **Baal Hatanya**<sup>3</sup> explains that the reason for this is that getting angry at a situation ignores the fact that every occurrence comes from Hashem and He caused it to happen, which is akin to denying Hashem’s control in the world.

*The **Alter of Kelm** set aside an “angry suit”, which he would put on every time he felt feelings of anger. This way, he delayed the reaction and by the time he’d got himself busy with the suit, his temper had subsided.*

1. שבת קה:

2. משנה תורה, הל' דעות ב:ג

3. אגרת הקודש, כה

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #3 Hashem is One - 'יחוד ה'

| Siman    | Definition                     | Source in Torah                    |
|----------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 'יחוד ה' | Know that <u>Hashem is One</u> | ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד (דברים ו:ד) |

- This mitzva follows on from Mitzva #2, since once we are aware that committing a sin is considered idolatry, we need to take this realisation to a new level by understanding that Hashem is One, which means that nothing exists other than Him, including the Yetzer Hara!

This is perplexing; if the Yetzer Hara is part of Hashem, this implies that it is purely good - by definition. But how on earth can this be? The answer is that we must view the Yetzer Hara's provocation not as obstacles to growth, but rather as a means to help us grow. As **Rabbi Noach Weinberg**<sup>1</sup> put it: "When your Yetzer Hara comes and tells you to sin, he's really saying, "Here's a challenge. Let's see you overcome this one!" He is our personal life coach, sent straight from Hashem.

- Just like the 1st 2 Mitzvos, this is one of the 6 constant mitzvos, which we can keep every second of our lives!
- Included in the awareness that Hashem is One and everything that exists is part of Him is the idea that everything we do should be part of drawing closer to Hashem, using the seemingly mundane activities as tools for growth. For example, you can transform your sleep at night from several hours of nothing to several hours of *infinite reward* - if you go to sleep with the simple intention of having energy to serve Hashem!!

*The Pasuk in Tehillim states: "הַשָּׁמַיִם שְׁמַיִם לַה' וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי אָדָם" - "The heavens belong to Hashem and He gave the earth to Man".*

*The **Chiddushei Harim** would interpret this to mean that Hashem gave us the earth so that we can make it heavenly!*

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## #4 Love Hashem - אֶהְבֶּתָּ ה'

| Siman         | Definition         | Source in Torah                           |
|---------------|--------------------|---|
| אֶהְבֶּתָּ ה' | <u>Love Hashem</u> | וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ (דברים ו:ה) |

- This mitzva is the 4th of the 6 constant mitzvos.
- The **Rambam** writes in one place<sup>1</sup> that the way to come to love Hashem is by learning Torah, yet in another place<sup>2</sup> he says that the way to develop 'אֶהְבֶּתָּ ה' is to look at nature.

Q) Which method is correct, and if it's both of them then what's the difference? Furthermore, doesn't the Torah<sup>3</sup> caution us not to look into nature and the skies, in case we come to worship them?

A) **Rabbi Zev Leff** explains that there is a great distinction between the 2 methods of nurturing 'אֶהְבֶּתָּ ה' in ourselves. Studying nature makes room for the danger of forgetting the focus - Hashem - and could lead to idolatry. Conversely, the Torah is *guaranteed* to foster love of Hashem. Perhaps this is why the **Sefer Hachinuch**<sup>3</sup> omits mention of the nature approach altogether!
- The **Rambam**<sup>1</sup> asserts that one who genuinely loves Hashem will spread this love to others, and do whatever he can to bring people who are distanced from Hashem closer to Him, just like a son who knows how much his Father has given to his children and sees how pained He is when they distance themselves from Him will try his best to bring them closer to their Father once more.

*"Love of Hashem - there is no greater measure than it, because all service of Hashem and Judaism emanates from it"*

**- Pele Yoetz, R' Eliezer Papo**

4. ספר החינוך, מצוה תיח

1. ספר המצוות, מצות עשה ג  
2. משנה תורה, הל' יסודי התורה ב:ב ו:ז  
3. דברים ד:ט

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #5 *Fear Hashem* - יִרְאַת ה'

| Siman      | Definition         | Source in Torah                     |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| יִרְאַת ה' | <u>Fear Hashem</u> | אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא (דברים י:כ) |

- This is the 5th of the 6 constant mitzvos.
- The **Rambam**<sup>1</sup> writes that fear of heaven can be reached by thinking about the punishments we will receive for sin, and this is called יִרְאַת הָעוֹנֵשׁ. There is also a higher level called יִרְאַת הַרוֹמְמוֹת, which is being awed by Hashem's creation and actions.
- Serving Hashem out of fear and awe is a lower level than serving Him out of love, which creates a father-son relationship. However, in order to reach אֶהְבֶּת ה' one must start by having יִרְאַת ה', which provides strength and stability to his connection with Hashem.  
This is shown in the Torah when Moshe tells the Jewish people what the *one* thing Hashem wants from us: "Only to fear Hashem your G-d, to go in all his ways and to love him"<sup>2</sup>. We see that יִרְאַת ה' is the "one thing" from which all other service of Hashem stems, including אֶהְבֶּת ה'.
- The **Mishna Berura**<sup>3</sup> says that it is a matter of Halacha to learn Mussar every single day of one's life in order to foster in oneself יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם.
- The **Chayei Adam**<sup>4</sup> affirms that learning Mussar is more of an obligation than any other learning!
- Rav **Elazar Man Shach** requested that when he'd pass away people should have "even one thought of Mussar" לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמָתוֹ.

*"Before learning Mussar, I held the whole world guilty and myself innocent. Once I started learning Mussar, I held the whole world and myself guilty. And finally, I held myself guilty and judged the whole world favorably"*

**- R'Yisroel Salanter, founder of the Mussar Movement**

1. ספר המצוות, מצות עשה ד + משנה תורה, הל' יסודי התורה ב:ב  
2. דברים י:יב  
3. אורח חיים, סימן א:יב  
4. חיי אדם, הל' יוה"כ, דין עשרת ימי תשובה וערב יו"כ

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #6 Sanctify Hashem's name - קידוש ה'

| Siman    | Definition                | Source in Torah  |
|----------|---------------------------|--|
| קידוש ה' | To sanctify Hashem's name | וּנְקַדְשִׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (ויקרא כב:לב) |

- **Rabbeinu Yonah**<sup>1</sup> asserts that “the main reason for Hashem sanctifying us with His Torah and Mitzvos and separating us to be His nation - was to sanctify Him”. The whole purpose of us being Jews, our Torah learning and every Mitzva observance, is to make a Kiddush Hashem!!!
- **Rav Matisyahu Salomon**<sup>2</sup> asks: Why is it that a mourner says קדיש for a dead relative? The answer is because the whole purpose of our life is to increase the honour of Hashem in the world, and that is what קדיש is there to remind us about.
- The **Rambam**<sup>3</sup> states that one who gives up his life for being a Jew merits a place in עוֹלָם הַבָּא higher than anyone else!
- Similarly, the **Shlah Hakadosh**<sup>4</sup> and **Rav Eliyahu Dessler**<sup>5</sup> write that Kiddush Hashem is a greater Mitzva than any other and our whole Avodas Hashem is included in it!
- The **Malbim**<sup>6</sup> explains that although it seems that a Kiddush Hashem can only be made in public, this is not the case. Hashem set up the world in a way that His manifestation in the world is dependent on how we act, meaning that the more מְצוּוֹת we do - even without anyone's knowledge - the more Hashem's presence will be revealed and sanctified in the world.

**Rav Yisroel Ber Weisberger** was the Rosh Yeshiva of Nitra and lost all of his 5 children in the Holocaust, yet picked himself up and had another 5 after the War. At the Bris of the 5th child, he exclaimed with emotion: “I had 5 children who died על קידוש ה'; I hope these 5 will LIVE על קידוש ה'.” This is our job.

4. שער האותיות, אות א  
5. מכתב מאליהו, ח"א עמ' כב  
6. התורה והמצוה, ויקרא יט:ב

1. שערי תשובה ג:קנח  
2. פתיחה לספר מקדשי שמך  
3. משנה תורה, הל' יסודי התורה ה:ד

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #7 *Don't profane Hashem's name* - 'חילול ה'

| Siman    | Definition                          | Source in Torah                    |
|----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| חילול ה' | Not to <u>profane Hashem's</u> name | ולא תחללו את שם קדשי (ויקרא כב:לב) |

- **The Gemara**<sup>1</sup> says that desecrating Hashem's name is the only sin which neither Teshuva, Yom Kippur nor suffering - rather death - can atone for.
- **The Mishna**<sup>2</sup> states that a חילול ה' committed unintentionally is considered as if it was done on purpose. Why? Why is this Aveira unique in this regard? **Rabbi Shraga Feivel Freedman**<sup>3</sup> answers using a parable of a man who sends his servant on an important mission, and also mentioned in passing that he should do a couple of small tasks on the way. The servant returned and told his master: "I've done everything you asked from me, except for the main mission". That's useless! He failed to do what he was sent for! And unintentionally missing out the purpose of our coming into this world by making a חילול ה' instead of a קידוש ה' is inexcusable!
- In fact, **Rav Yaakov Kamentsky**<sup>4</sup> says that although children are exempt from Mitzvos and should therefore not need to give up their life על קידוש ה', they are obligated to do so since otherwise it would be a חילול ה'!
- Every one of our actions can come under the category of a קידוש ה' or חילול ה' since there's no such thing as 'neutral' in Judaism. As the Sefer **Tikkun Hamiddos** puts it: "A person must decide before every action that this action is the most important in the world at this moment; there's no thought or act more important now! And if there is - then it's upon him to do it now."

When the **Chafetz Chaim** turned 80, he had a very unusual request: he asked for a large get-together to celebrate. At this 'birthday party', he explained: "All my life I've been afraid that I might die young, and people would mock Hashem's promise of a long life for those who guard their mouths. Now that I've lived to this old age, I can stop worrying about this חילול ה'. That is why I'm celebrating."

4. אמת ליעקב על התורה, ויקרא כב:לב

1. יומא פו.

2. פרקי אבות ד:ה

3. הקדמה לספר מקדשי שמך

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #8 *Don't erase Hashem's name* - שמות

| Siman | Definition   | Source in Torah                     |
|-------|--|-------------------------------------|
| שמות  | Don't destroy things associated with Hashem's name | לא תעשון כן לה' אלקיכם (דברים יב:ד) |

- Included in this prohibition is:
  - Destroying any part of the **בית המקדש**
  - Destroying even one letter of Hashem's 7 names, which are:  
יקוק/אדנ-י, קל, אלוק, אלקים, אקיה, שקי, צבקות
  - Destroying any ספר is Rabbinically forbidden
- The **Sefer Hachinuch**<sup>1</sup> says that the purpose of this mitzva is to instill in us **יראת שמים** and to realise how much awe and trepidation we must feel towards Hashem.
- The **Gemara**<sup>2</sup> writes that although it's a terrible sin to destroy Hashem's name - and all the more so an entire Sefer Torah - it's permitted and even a mitzva to burn a Sefer Torah written by an **אפיקורס** (heretic)! This is because a name of Hashem written by a heretic has *no* holiness, even less so than one written by a non-Jew.
- Rav Moshe Feinstein**<sup>3</sup> writes that a **תפילה** which **הז"ל** established, such as **תפילת הדרך**, must be put into שמות even if it doesn't contain Hashem's name.
- Rav Chaim Kanievsky**<sup>4</sup> holds that a Zemanim chart containing the times for **קריאת שמע** and **תפילה** should be put into שמות. However, a chart which has the times of Shabbos can be thrown out in a regular manner.

The **Tashbetz** was so particular in respecting his ספרים and keeping them clean, that he would even make sure that they didn't gather too much dust. A **בת קול** came out and exclaimed: "The ספרים which you write will never wear out." **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** inherited a 500-year-old **תשובה** from this uncle the **Chazon Ish** - in perfect condition!

4. גנזי הקודש יב:ז

1. ספר החינוך, מצוה תלז

2. גיטין מה:

3. אגרות משה, יורה דעה ב:קלה, ועוד עיין גנזי הקודש י:יג

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #9 Listen to the prophets - לשמוע

| Siman | Definition                  | Source in Torah     |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| לשמוע | Listen to Hashem's prophets | אליו תשמעון (יח:טו) |

- One is obligated to listen to a נביא even if he tells him to transgress a sin and break the Torah for a particular instance, unless it involves idolatry.
- One who transgresses this עבירה is תייב מיתה.
- A נביא whose own actions don't conform with his prophecy and a נביא who doesn't announce his prophecy are תייב מיתה too.
- Since nowadays we no longer have נביאים, how can we best fulfill this mitzva? Perhaps the way to do so is to learn Nach, since the **Gemara**<sup>1</sup> states that all the prophecies in Nach are relevant for every generation. So by learning Nach and its countless messages, we are listening to the נביאים!
- **Rav Shlomo Kluger**<sup>2</sup> writes that if the majority of one's learning time is spent on Gemara, he may study Nach for 1-2 hours. Similarly, the **Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avoda**<sup>3</sup> implores people to complete Nach once a year.
- More recently, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** holds that a Yeshiva bachur needs to learn Nach, and should do so on Shabbos<sup>4</sup>. **Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner**<sup>5</sup> also attests to the fact that all Gedolim over the generations have been fluent in Nach, and asserts that such an inherent part of Talmud Torah does not need anyone's endorsement; it should not be ignored.

*"Someone who doesn't know Shas and Halacha is unable to have רוח הקודש and someone who does know Shas and Poskim and learned for Hashem's sake - he certainly has רוח הקודש!"*  
- **Chasam Sofer**

4. זה לשונו: "כן - בן ישיבה צריך ללמוד תנ"ך - וילמד בשבת  
5. שו"ת שבט הלוי, חלק ח סימן רז

1. מגילה יד.  
2. האלף לך שלמה, יורה דעה סימן רנט  
3. יסוד ושורש העבודה

# TIME 4 MITZVA

## #10 *Don't test prophets* - לא לנסות נביאים

| Siman           | Definition                   | Source in Torah                   |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| לא לנסות נביאים | Don't test Hashem's prophets | לא תנסו את ה' אלקיכם (דברים ו:טז) |

- This prohibition of testing a prophet to discern if he's a real prophet applies from when he has been established as a prophet in one of two ways:
  - (a) Being declared a prophet by another prophet. This is learnt from when מִשֵּׁה affirmed יהושיע's prophetic status even before יהושיע performed anything miraculous.<sup>1</sup>
  - (b) Predicting an occurrence accurately 2 or 3 times.<sup>2</sup>
- The **Smag**<sup>3</sup> and **Sefer Hachinuch**<sup>4</sup> include within this Mitzva the prohibition against testing Hashem Himself, for example doing a mitzva to check whether Hashem will reward him. This is because reward does not come immediately, rather in עולם הבא.
- This mitzva also shows the importance of not questioning our Rabbanim and Gedolim, since the **Gemara**<sup>5</sup> says that a wise man is greater than a prophet.
- In fact, the **Gemara**<sup>6</sup> says that one should seek out a Rav who is like an angel, and if he isn't then he shouldn't learn from him! One explanation of this is that one's Rav must be like an angel *for him*, meaning he must view his teacher's words as divine and not to be questioned. When approaching Torah and its leaders, we must be aware of their greatness.

The **Chazon Ish** asks a fundamental question: How can one follow his Rav's opinion in הלכה if there is a rule that "ספק דאורייתא לחומרא" - we're always strict if we have a doubt in a Biblical law, and the Gemara says this includes if it's an argument? He answers that one must view his personal Rav's opinion as 100% correct and not doubt or question it. This is what having a Rav means.

4. ספר החינוך, מצוה תכד.  
5. בבא בתרא יב.  
6. מועד קטן יז.

1. משנה תורה, הל' יסודי התורה י:ה.  
2. שם + ספר החינוך, מצוה תכד.  
3. סמ"ג, לא תעשה ד