

WHAT ABOUT THE 613 COMMANDMENTS

By: Earl Walters

The word Torah means “to guide”. Torah must be seen as the guide, the only guide through life. Yahshua says that He is the Way, He is HaTorah.

John says that He is the Word that became flesh.

Some people conceptualize religion as *an ingredient in life*; an important ingredient, but nevertheless only an ingredient. If religion is an ingredient of life, then they view life without religion as livable.

Although we use the term “**Torah Life**”, it is a redundancy. Life without Torah is not a life that lacks an important ingredient. **It is not life at all. It is existing in the Realm of death.**

The Torah is the manual for spirituality. Rejection of Torah is rejection of the Ruach.

The Talmud says “To the degree that a person fails to implement the spirit, to that degree he is deficient in humanity.”

Torah is the manual, the guide that gives a person the distinction of being a true human being.

Moshe began his review of the Torah by instructing the Israelites not to add nor take away from the mitzvos. (Davarim 4:1-2)

He was telling them that Yahweh has provided them with the formula for life: The Torah.

Its 613 mitzvos are the “combination” for proper living. Tampering with the formula would invalidate it. **One should not reject any of the mitzvos or create new ones.**

A number of the mitzvos are contingent on the existence of the Beis HaMikdash (Temple) and on our dwelling in the Holy Land. How can we complete the requisite 613 mitzvos to make the Torah formula operational when we are in exile? The Talmud answers that when one studies the content and rules of the mitzvah in the Torah, this is equivalent to performing it (Menachos 110a). It is thus possible to fulfill the entire Torah formula, including those mitzvos which we cannot perform, by the study of Torah.

The true Torah scholar is a person whose sole interest is to unite with Yahweh, and he achieves that by dedicating himself to Torah study. Yahweh has said, “I put myself into the Torah.” One who identifies with Torah has an intimate relationship with Yahweh. He is indeed beloved by Yahweh and by man, and gladdens both.

The true Torah Scholar is devoid of self-centeredness. His devotion is therefore to others, to Yahweh and to his fellow man.

The Torah scholar never considers himself to be in a state of completion.

The fact that the Torah is infinite makes it impossible for anyone to grasp it in its entirety.

The more Torah one learns the greater is his understanding of its infinity. A Torah scholar is therefore in a constant state of becoming. He is always advancing toward a goal which he knows is unreachable.

One is not expected to reach a stage of completion, but one is obligated to progress as far as possible.

Today's world is replete with indecency in the various types of media. It is a mistake to think that we are so spiritual that exposure to these will not corrupt us. We must always remember our human vulnerability, and distance ourselves from all impropriety.

We need to seek to be a scholar that learns Torah with total dedication (lishmah**).**

The secrets of the Torah are revealed to one who learns with total dedication and only to one who learns with such total dedication.

Some Torah authorities have pointed out that the essence of the Torah lies in the concealed portion. The "surface" of the Torah or its revealed portion is accessible to all and allows us access to its hidden treasures.

Yahshua in many of His teachings of Torah truth stated that it was hidden from the casual participant.

It is axiomatic that one should not delve into the concealed portion of the Torah until one has reached maturity and has a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the revealed portion.

The Mishnah says, "The student of Torah becomes modest, patient, and forgiving of insult to himself. The Torah makes him great and exalts him above all things."

This is true humility.

If we wish to save our children from the prevailing decadence, we must achieve what the mishnah says, "to be exalted above all things."

Rabbi Twerski states that “We must elevate ourselves to a level of spirituality where we are so far above our environment that its toxic behavior cannot reach us. This requires us to observe Torah with total dedication (lishmah).”

Some of the sages say that when a person feels he is spiritually deficient and that he must devote himself more to Torah, it is because at that moment his neshaman (soul) has heard from Mt Horeb (Sinai)

The heavenly voice is an incentive for teshuvah. It is important that we recognize the source of the awakening to teshuvah. It is nothing less than Yahweh calling us to reevaluate our goals in life and our lifestyle.

Responding to the call for teshuvah would necessitate that we make changes in the way we live.

Some of these changes may impinge on our comfort and on our pursuit of pleasure.

What we will be starting next week will be very uncomfortable for many of us. We must learn to speak the words of Torah aloud. **Silent study is inadequate.**

We must learn to stand in awe of the Torah we are studying.

“Fear of Yahweh” does not refer to fear of punishment. The mature fear of Yahweh is the fear that one might be seduced by temptation to do something that is self-destructive spiritually.

We must seek to learn with modesty and joy.

The circular pattern of Torah means that it is without end. Such must be our dedication to study.

Dedicated study is not passive. It requires you to participate fully.

One of the suggestions for this life will be for each of us to write ourselves a copy of the Torah. **Handwritten, not typed.** It is for no one but you. **No time limit.** That is between you and Yahweh.