

## Yeshua's Mitzvot

*<sup>20</sup> For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees and Torah scholars, you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven! (Matt. 5:20)*

The Pharisees and *Torah* scholars were scrupulous in their observance of commandments (*mitzvot*), plus they were extremely zealous for the Word. They hungered and thirsted for procedural righteousness being far more careful in their attention to the details of the letter of the Word than the disciples could ever be. How then, could the *Master* ask the disciples (and us) to reach a level of *righteousness* that is higher than theirs (people like Billy Graham, Paul, John, Peter)? When the disciples heard this, their hearts must have sunk. Hard words, don't you think? Is there deeper meaning to the letter of the Word?

Even more to the point, *Yeshua's* rigors draw out the original intention of the Ten Commandments (the Ten Words). One of the things the people of His day (and today) believed was that *"the Messiah will explain all difficult things in God's Word"*. And in fact, *Yeshua did*. He did more than just build arbitrary fences of additional legislation. He calls His disciples to do everything at a level that reaches the *very heart of the matter*. The standard He raises is at the core values of *Adonai* Himself. He gives specific examples by going beyond the prohibition of murder with a prohibition against anger, slander, and insult. He goes beyond the prohibition against adultery with a prohibition against lust. He raises the standard on the sanctity of marriage with a prohibition of divorce for the sake of remarriage. He raises the standard of the prohibition of taking God's name in vain by refraining from oaths.

Each of these *Yeshua pronouncement's*, built fences around the original commandments by the raising of a standard of righteous living to a deeper spiritual level (a heart level). His words expose the internal deviancy inside the heart of man. He cuts past external appearances and erects a new standard around each of the Ten Words that are *deep in the heart*. We must concede that these are very high standards – higher standards of righteousness than that of the religious leaders of His time. Thus, by following His commands, *"our righteousness exceeds that"* of religious leaders.

Original Commandment	<i>Yeshua's (Matthew 5) Standard</i>
<i>"Do not murder" (Exodus 20:13). However, slave masters could severely beat their servants with or without anger (see Exodus 21:21).</i>	<i>"<sup>22</sup>But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be subject to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca' shall be subject to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be subject to fiery Gehenna (Hell)"</i>
<i>"Do not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). The Torah required two or three witnesses to convict a woman of adultery, or a trial by bitter water. (See Nu. 5:11-31)</i>	<i>"<sup>28</sup>But I tell you that everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."</i>
<i>"<sup>33</sup>Again, you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall carry out your oaths to Adonai.'" (Matt. 5:33; Deut. 23:23)</i>	<i>"<sup>34</sup>But I tell you, do not swear at all – not by heaven, for it is the throne of God... <sup>37</sup>But let your Yes be Yes and your No, No – anything more than this is from the evil one."</i>
<i>"<sup>19</sup>If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done, the same is to be done to him: <sup>20</sup>fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Just as he has injured someone, so it should it be done to him." (Lev. 24:19-20)</i>	<i>"<sup>39</sup>But I tell you, do not resist an evildoer. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him also the other. <sup>40</sup>And the one wanting to sue you and to take your shirt, let him also have your coat."</i>
<i>"<sup>43</sup>You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" (Matt. 5:43; Lev. 19:18; Deut. 23:6)</i>	<i>"<sup>44</sup>But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"</i>

*Our Savior* said: “*If ye love me, you will keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). He gave three promises to everyone who will do this: “*21He that has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him*” (John 14:21). Anyone who is loved by the Father through His Son *Yeshua*, and who intimately knows Him will have a special ability to give wise and insightful testimony and counsel to others. All words of wisdom, as well as all the things that happen to us, are related to the goal of knowing Him and being conformed to His image (See Ro. 8:28-29). ***Therefore, loving the Lord Means Keeping His Commandments.***

Since “*God has so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son...*” (John 3:16), then, surely, we must also love one another. Loving those who love us back is easy – loving the world with all of its problems is hard. When we take inventory of the Ten Words spoken by *Adonai* in Exodus 20, we realize how many of those have to do with others – relating to the world around us: “*20If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21And this commandment we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother”* (1 John 4:20-21). Those who receive our words must be convinced that we are speaking out of a heart of genuine love. They will be able to discern this only if we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is on the basis of loving God that we do things for others, because *Yeshua* said: “*Amen, I tell you, whatever you did to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*” (Matthew 25:40). ***Therefore, keeping His Commandments Means Loving Others.***

The whole purpose of testifying (or giving godly counsel) is providing light for others to follow. Without the light of *Adonai's truth*, people stumble in the darkness (Prov. 4:18-19). We are to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:14). *Yeshua* explained precisely how to a light in Matt. 6:22: “*22The eye is the lamp of the body...*” We are to let “*the light of our eyes so shine before men that they will see the good works that we do for them and glorify our Father Who is in Heaven*” (Matt. 5:16). Having the *Light of Messiah* in our eyes is also a vital means of discerning the motives of those who come and ask questions. Those who want the truth will come to the light, while those who are evil will stay away from the light lest their deeds be reproved (John 3:20-21). Many would be witnesses of the Gospel spend countless hours of useless time trying to help those who do not really want to be free from their evil deeds. On the other hand, those who are eager for lasting results will be open to one who radiates *Adonai's love* and the light of truth. The relationship between commandments and the light in our eyes is given in Psalm 19:8: “*The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes*” (NKJV). When we witness to someone with His light in our eyes, it causes their heart to rejoice because “*The light of the eyes rejoices the heart*” (Prov. 15:30, NKJV). ***Therefore, Keeping His Commandments Produces His Light in Our Eyes.***

The greater than Ten Words of *Yeshua* in Matthew 5-7 are challenging and because we focus mostly on the *love aspects* of a believer's life, and there is a tendency to not think about commandments. Truly our righteousness must *excel* that of the religious leaders of our time as well. It is our job, as a disciple, to emulate our teacher and to make more disciples. I trust that we will allow *Yeshua's Commandments* (His *mitzvot*) to go deep in our heart this year and as a result we will become righteous doers (*tzadikim*) and not just hearers of His Word. *Shabbat Shalom!*