

A FENCE AROUND THE TORAH



Matthew 5:17-20

“(Jesus says,) ‘Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps them and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

Matthew 23:23

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others

הם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים: הוּוּ מְתוּנִים בְּדִין, וְהִעֲמִידוּ תַלְמִידִים הַרְבֵּה, וְעָשׂוּ סִיג לַתּוֹרָה:

They [the Men of the Great Assembly] said three things:

- Be cautious in judgement.
- Establish many pupils. And
- make a fence around the Torah.

Pirkei Avot 1:1

CRIMES OF PASSION

ANGER

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and, 'Whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, everyone who goes on being angry with their brother or sister will be liable to judgment; whoever calls them 'brainless' will be liable to the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court); whoever says 'moron' will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

So if you are bringing a sacrifice to the Temple and there remember that a brother or sister has something against you, leave your offering there in front of the altar and first go be reconciled to them.

(Matt. 5:21-24)

LUST

You have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone looking at a woman for the purpose of coveting her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

So if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away, for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna.

(Matt. 5:27-29)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

James 4:1-2

VOWS

“You have heard it was said, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but you shall repay your vows to the Lord’...” (Matt. 5:33)

The Nazirite Vow (Numbers 6)

- Limited time of special separation “to the Lord”
- No alcohol or any grape product
- No haircuts or shaving
- No contact with corpses
- Vow ended by offering cut hair along with sacrifices on the altar

Judges 11: 30-31

³⁰ And Jephthah made a **vow** to the LORD: “If you give the Ammonites into my hands, ³¹ whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”



Paul took a vow

Acts 18: 18 Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. **Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken.**



BETTER THAT
YOU DO NOT VOW
THAN THAT YOU
VOW AND NOT
FULFILL IT.

ECCLESIASTES 5:5

Acts 21:23-24

²³ ... We have four men who are under a vow; ²⁴ take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but **that you yourself also live in observance of the law.**