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the Ten Words Series
Honor, Murder & Adultery

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a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that YHVH your Elohim is giving you." Exodus 20:11

"You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Exodus 20:12 (passages taken from The Sar Shalom Hebrew-English Bible)

Several have written to ask in some form essentially the same question: *"My father (and/or mother) have only been abusive toward me my entire life in one way or another. Does that mean I still have to honor them?"*

The short answer to that question is - "Yes." The scripture makes no allowances for bad behavior on the part of the parents other than for the separation from the **Present Presence** ([click on highlighted words to view content](#)), they incur as a result of their actions. The English word translated as "honor" comes from the Hebrew word **kabed** which is found 376 times in the *Tanakh* (OT). It is used over half the time as a reference to describe a "weighty" person in society, someone who is honorable, impressive, worthy of respect. But it also carries within its definition a person who is "insensible, dull, grievous, hard, burdensome." Notice, however, that the promise contained within that Word is one that benefits **YOU** - not them. It benefits you because you are upholding YHVH's Word in the face of whatever egregious circumstances to have been or are currently occurring and, as a result, you can expect to live a long life. That does not mean the parents become exempt from the laws of men. Only that they are to be recognized as the source of your life and treated with the respect that deserves.

We saw in the article, **Unequally Yoked** how Yeshua said that *"a person's enemies will be those of his own household"* (**Matthew 10:34-38**.) But, notice here that He did **NOT** say to *"hate"* them - reinforcing to honor them regardless of what state they are in. I can only speak for myself in sharing that when my then 86 year old mother fell and broke her neck, YHVH instructed me to leave Israel behind and come back to the States to live with her to care for her. She was as obstinate toward the Truth as anyone could be, never missing an opportunity to tell me how "crazy" I was to keep YHVH's Words. One evening after about six months, being entirely frustrated by her ranting during the day, I went to the Father expressing my exasperation with her and asking Him what I should do - at this point being willing to do anything. He asked me, "haRold, just why did you move here with your mother?" Meekly I said, "To bless her." To which He said, "why don't you just do that and leave the rest to Me." In an instant I saw that everything I thought I knew about servitude was just at a surface level. The words of Yeshua began to ring in my ears to, *"love your enemies, do good to those that curse you and despitefully use you"* (**Luke 6:27-28**). I had always wanted to apply those words to those outside my sphere of influence - not realizing they were to be given to those of my own household. Even though she never appreciated it, I stayed and honored my mother, caring for her until her death.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
Matthew 5:27-28



How we read Scripture is a function of certain cultural and historical assumptions; assumptions about inspiration, the work of the Spirit, the faith of the authors, the language of the audience, etc. All those factors

that we spend so much time trying to understand and elucidate - but much more, for we ourselves read the text in certain "natural" ways, ways that have been passed down to us through tradition, education and personal experience. The frightening implication of it all is this: What does this mean for our idea of TRUTH? Are we simply calling something true because it fits what we already assume? Is there really any independent truth; truth that does not incorporate those assumptions? And what does it mean to say, "YHVH's word is true," if the "word" is subject to our own historically bound protocols?

When Yeshua said, "**You have heard that it was said,**" he drew on the common understanding of the crowd. Now we should ask, "Who told the crowd these things? How did they come to believe this?" Yeshua pushes the assumption envelope. He challenges the audience to rethink what they believe. Two millennia later we read His words and don't feel any confrontation. Why? Because we have two millennia of cultural assumptions about what He said. Maybe we need to question why His words don't make us uncomfortable as they did with the original audience. Maybe we are the ones lost in the stupor of comfortable acceptance. Maybe it's time we think "outside the box" to look at these words from the Hebraic perspective they were written from.

For instance, Aviya Kushner notices something odd. "In Hebrew, four key 'commandments' are crammed into one verse in **Exodus 20:13 - from The Sar Shalom Hebrew-English Bible**. But in the 1611 King James Bible, they have more space, with four verses, not one. Each of the four commandments gets star billing, as if each were a lone pole on a prairie of white space."(Aviya Kushner, *The Grammar of God*, p. 127) Kushner finds the English translation inexplicably odd. But, of course, we don't, because we have always read these as four lone poles on a white prairie. In other words, we never paid any attention to the neighborhood. Perhaps we need to.



Kushner points out something else. Using the rabbinic rule *klal* (what is attached to what - observations about word proximity), she follows Rashi in order to answer the question, "Why are murder, adultery, stealing and lying all found in the same verse?" The answer she discovers is that all of these involve the death penalty. That answer, however, is not obvious. It takes a deeper look to see how stealing and lying are connected. Murder and adultery are fairly straightforward. Other biblical instructions tell us that a murderer must die. And since adultery is the "murder" of the **one-flesh covenant** between a husband and wife, a man who commits adultery with another man's wife must die. But since these four commandments are all in the same sentence, then the commandment, *lo tignov* (You shall not steal) isn't really about theft. It is about kidnapping because stealing another person requires **the death penalty**. Yes, there are prohibitions about theft, and there are provisions for atoning for theft, but in this case, the penalty for stealing a person is **death**. In scriptural terms, kidnapping is a form of murder. Similarly, *lo ta'ane vereaka ed shaker* (You shall not bear false witness) is

not about lying but rather about perpetrating a false accusation that results in loss to another, whether reputation, material or financial. In other words, *lo ta'ane* is about murdering a person's public or private standing.

What do we learn from this little investigation? First, we learn that even the disaggregation of the words in translation affects how we understand YHVH's instructions. The words might be translated correctly but the neighborhood has changed and Hebrew communicates through its neighbors, not just its vocabulary. So we will have to read more carefully. Second, we might not be murderers or adulterers, and we might not be kidnappers in the legal sense, but are we not skirting the edge of the death penalty commandments when we diminish, castigate, impugn or stereotype another person with malice aforethought? How many of us have said something that was intended to falsely accuse another because we wanted to "bring them down a notch"? Have we never acted in such a way that another person's **character or reputation** was harmed without justification?

It seems that YHVH wishes to lump these four together. Murderer, adulterer, kidnapper and slanderer. You might be righteous in one of these circles, but can you say the same for all of them? If not, are you then on any

more solid ground than those who violate the other three? Perhaps YHVH lumped them all together because He intends us to see that any violation of the image of YHVH in the other person carries extremely severe penalties. Perhaps we need to see just how close to the edge we are so that we will have hell scared out of us.

Honor, Murder & Adultery - a discussion

"Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." 1John 3:15

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???Questions???

Please feel free to email me at harold@hethathasaneer.com. While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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