

# 1: I AM THE LORD

## A Call to Kindness



MOSHAV OR KIBBUTZ



PROJECT ASERET  
[www.aseretglobal.org](http://www.aseretglobal.org)

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Welcome to the *Aseret Israel Scholars Program: Traveling the Ten Commandments*. Get ready to experience the Ten Commandments and Israel in a powerful, new way.

During this meaningful Jewish Journey, we will prepare to travel to Israel, finding connections to the Ten Commandments in the places that we will visit. The Ten Commandments will come alive as we discover profound and relevant principles and beliefs upon which to base our life decisions.

Each booklet contains texts to spark meaningful discussions, activities to bring the topic to life, and videos to experience each location virtually. There are also links to additional information for further exploration of some of the topics.

The last page of the booklet contains a space to jot down your thoughts and memories as you travel the Ten Commandments in Israel, either in person or virtually. For a virtual scrapbook, we suggest a free app such as Canva or Google Scrapbook, or any program that you like.

After completing the course you may be eligible for a stipend towards your Israel trip. For more information, please contact [info@chaimitzvah.org](mailto:info@chaimitzvah.org).

Have a great trip! דרך צלחה!



ASERET ISRAEL SCHOLARS DIBER I

# 1: I AM THE LORD



## Introduction:

In this Diber, God says, “I am the God who took you out of Egypt,” rather than, “I am the God who created you.” The Exodus from Egypt, as an act of *chesed*, kindness, is central to our concept of a merciful God. When the Jewish people came out of Egypt they heard a call to emulate God in this way.



## P'shat: the Literal Understanding

This Diber is unique in that it is not in command form. It is because of this that some commentators do not count it as one of the 613 Mitzvot. Whether it is or isn't a Mitzvah, it is definitely a Diber, the first of the “Ten Commandments.”



## Texts:

**SOURCE ONE:** *Exodus 20:2 (the Diber)*

I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

**SOURCE TWO:** *Exodus 15:2 (part of the Song of the Sea)*

This is my God and I will be like him (*v'anveyhu*).

זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֲנִי

**SOURCE THREE:** *Talmud Shabbat 123b*

Abba Shaul said, 'V'anveyhu' — become similar to Him. Just as He is gracious and merciful, so too, you be gracious and merciful.

אבא שאול אומר ואנוהו הוי דומה לו מה הוא חנון ורחום אף אתה היה חנון ורחום



## Conversation:

- “I am the Lord your God who took you out of Egypt” is a call for kindness. Why do you think the concept of *chesed*, kindness, is contained as a Core Value in the first of the Ten Commandments?
- Do you think of God as being kind? How does the idea of emulating God through kindness resonate with you?
- *Chesed*, kindness, can be done in many ways. What are some of the ways you are able to help and enhance the lives of others?

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## Yesod: the Underlying Principle

Besides the benefit to society, through *chesed* we extend beyond ourselves. This, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner called the first step on the path of spirituality. Abraham and Sarah, the first Jews, with whom God made a covenant, were famous *Baalei Chesed*, people of kindness. Their tent was open on all four sides in order to welcome passers by and people in need.



## Texts:

**SOURCE ONE:** *Talmud Shabbat 31a*

A potential convert dared Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel answered, "That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study."

דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד זו היא כל התורה כולה ואידך פירושה הוא זיל גמור.

**SOURCE TWO:** *Winston Churchill*

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.



## Conversation:

- Look at the photo on the cover. What are the elements of community depicted in this photo?
- Which elements of *chesed* are best performed in your community/society? Which need improvement?
- Our society is more affluent than almost any other in history. Are there specific elements of *chesed* which are less needed? More needed?
- Who are the kindest people you know? What drives them?



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## When You Visit:



### Where You Are:

A **kibbutz** is a closely knit social grouping, sharing all property and means of production and labor, while providing for all the needs of the members, who are called *kibbutzniks*. A **moshav** is a group of people, called *moshavniks*, who live in one area in their own homes, and agree to share the purchase of supplies and marketing of produce. On some *moshavim* (plural of *moshav*) farming is done collectively and profits are shared equally.

Click on the photo below to travel through time to the beginning of the kibbutz movement, or [click here](#) to see the video full screen.



### Conversation:

One of the founding principles of the first *moshav*, Nahalal, was mutual assistance – individual, when necessary, by physical work or financial support. This can be thought about as a covenant of *chesed*, kindness.

- This is an example of formalized *chesed*, written into the bylaws of the *moshav*. What are some other examples of formalized *chesed*?
- What are some examples of spontaneous *chesed*?
- If you could choose one *chesed* to be formalized in the world for everyone, what would it be?

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## Activities &amp; Reflections

@ THE KIBBUTZ OR MOSHAV



## Activities:

- **Board of Governors:** At home or at the kibbutz, imagine that your group is the governing body of the kibbutz/moshav, or any other community organization such as your school, synagogue, or a club. What elements of sharing and caring would you implement? How practical are they? Who would pay for them? **Role play:** Each person makes a suggestion, puts their proposal to the board, and fields questions. After discussion, the group votes on which proposals to adopt.
- When you visit, **interview** a member of the kibbutz/moshav about the *chesed*, kindness, they experience. How does the kibbutz/moshav provide *chesed* for its members?



## Reflections:

- What does this *diber* mean to you?
- How can you add it to your life every day?
- How can living this *diber* change the world around you?



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*Chai Mitzvah* was created as a way to engage adults, teens, and families in a Jewish journey throughout their lives. Combining texts to spark discussion, ritual, and social action, Chai Mitzvah provides the framework for a meaningful Jewish journey.

*Project Aseret* provides a new, powerful way to look at the Ten Commandments as Core Values – universal in nature and the bedrock of Jewish identity – containing profound and relevant principles and beliefs for both individual and communal life.

It is our hope that your Chai Mitzvah/Project Aseret experience will ignite deeper Jewish engagement and continued growth.

