

Human Behavior & Consequence

The Law of Moses

I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF ISRAEL'S CONDUCT

The Law of Moses is not merely a set of rules but a reflection of a specific theological and historical foundation

1. **The Character of God:** The primary foundation for the Law is the nature of the deity who issued it. According to Exodus 34:6-7, God is:
 - **Compassionate and Gracious:** Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.
 - **Forgiving:** Providing pardon for iniquity, transgression, and sin.
 - **Just:** He does not leave the guilty unpunished and visits iniquity across generations.
2. **Physical Deliverance and Covenant:** The Law is predicated on the historical act of God rescuing Israel from Egypt. In Exodus 19, God describes this act as bearing the nation on "eagles' wings." This deliverance established a conditional covenant: if the nation obeyed God's voice and kept the covenant, they would become His "own possession among all the peoples."
3. **National Identity and Purpose:** Israel's conduct was intended to fulfill a specific role on the global stage:
 - **Uniqueness:** To show other nations that they were distinct in their relationship with God.
 - **Counter-Cultural Influence:** To provide a moral alternative to the idolatry, immorality, and violence of the Gentiles.

II. THE STRUCTURE AND SUMMATION OF THE LAW

The Law is categorized by its breadth and its ultimate focus. While the "Mitzvoh" includes 613 specific commands, the "Ten Sayings" (Ten Commandments) serve as an abstract or summary of the entire Law.

The Great Commandments: Jesus identified the two pillars upon which the whole Law and the Prophets depend:

1. **Love for God:** "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."
2. **Love for Neighbor:** "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

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Factions Within Conservatism

Commandment	Purpose / Context	Specific Regulations / Penalties
No other gods	Recognition of God's unique power shown in Egypt.	Prohibits placing any deity before the true God.
No Idols	Recognition of God as a jealous God.	Prohibits worshiping likenesses of things in heaven, earth, or water.
Name in Vain	Protecting God's attributes and works.	God will not leave those who misuse His name unpunished.
Sabbath	Recalling the source of creation.	A day of rest for all (family, servants, animals, and sojourners).
Honor Parents	Preservation of familial authority.	Capital punishment for physically harming or slandering parents (Ex. 21).
No Adultery	Preservation of marriage.	Both parties involved were subject to capital punishment (Lev. 20:10).
No Stealing	Preservation of property and justice.	Restitution required returning the item plus 1/5th; prohibits unjust weights/measures and kidnapping (capital offense).
No False Witness	Preservation of truth and justice.	Prohibits slandering, lying to one another, or perverting justice for the needy.
No Coveting	Addressing internal motivation.	Focuses on avoiding the influence and motivation that lead to theft or adultery.

III. CONSEQUENCES: BLESSINGS AND CURSES

The Law of Moses operates on a system of divine sanctions. According to Deuteronomy 28:1-63, the outcomes for the nation are strictly conditional on obedience.

Physical Blessings for Obedience

- Exaltation above all nations.
- Prosperity in cities and fields (crops and livestock).
- Victory over enemies.

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- Economic success (lending to many nations; being the "head, not the tail").

Curses for Disobedience

- Famine, disease, and mildew.
- Captivity of sons and daughters.
- Defeat by enemies and rule by foreigners.
- Madness, blindness, and being forced to serve foreign gods.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: THE LAW OF MOSES VS. THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

Feature	Law of Moses	Code of Hammurabi
Source of Authority	Given by God Himself.	Written by Hammurabi to show he was chosen by Marduk.
Primary Goal	To expose who God is ("I am the LORD").	To further and preserve civilization.
Atonement System	Includes sacrifices and priestly mediation for violations (Leviticus).	No sacrificial system for violations.
Specific Prohibitions	Includes unique religious mandates like the Sabbath.	No law regarding a Sabbath or similar day of rest.
Punishment Severity	Capital punishment used for specific moral/familial violations.	Often harsher; e.g., burning a "sister of god" for entering a tavern (Code 110).

V. CONCLUSION

The Law was given specifically to the nation of Israel to reflect God's character and promote a unique national behavior. While modern believers are considered a "body" rather than a "nation" and do not adopt the Law of Moses directly, the document argues that the **essence and motivation** behind the Law remain relevant. The believer's conduct is still intended to be based on the declared identity and attributes of God, replicating the Law's core values—such as the rejection of idolatry, murder, and immorality—as a testament to God's nature to all of humankind.