

## Unit 3 – Moshe’s Second Speech – Ten Commandments

### Lesson 13 – Chapter 5 – Introduction to the Ten Commandments

**Background:** Moshe now recalls the giving of the Ten Commandments at Har Sinai. Before repeating the commandments, Moshe gives a short introduction in pesukim 2-5.

**Objective:** For students to think about why we follow the Torah. Why do we have to accept the Mitzvoth just because our ancestors did many generations ago?

#### Activity:

1. Ask students to reenact this speech. Students should recognize the break between the first seven words of pasuk 1, which are part of the narration, and the rest of the chapter, which are the words of Moshe himself. Choose two students: one to be the narrator and the other to be Moshe. Ask the narrator to begin at 4:44 and stop where appropriate at which point Moshe begins and continues until pasuk 6. They should figure out which words to say and the class should correct them if they make a mistake. Tell the class that they are also part of the reenactment as the new generation of Bnei Yisrael. Remind them that only those who were under twenty years old at Ma’amad Har Sinai would still be alive today.

2. Break down the structure of the Perek:

4:44-5:1a - Narrator’s Introduction to Moshe’s Second Speech
5:1b and on – Moshe’s Second Speech
5: 1b - 5 Introduction to Ten Commandments
6 – 18 The Ten Commandments

3. Ask class: *Did you notice anything strange about the beginning of Moshe’s speech?* Moshe speaks to the people as if they themselves were at Har Sinai, accepted the Berit, and heard God speak. But actually it was their parents for the most part. This is relevant to another questions which students often ask:

*Why must we today follow the Torah? Since we weren’t at Sinai and never accepted the Berit upon ourselves why are we bound by it?*

See if students have any suggestions.

It seems that both of these questions have the same answer. Give students an analogy of a corporation. If the original founders make decisions about the company, then those who run the company in the next generation are still bound by those decisions. Once a corporation signs a contract, all future members must adhere to the rules of that contract. Many German and Austrian companies are now paying reparations to Holocaust victims even though nobody now working in those companies were working there during WWII. Bnei Yisrael similarly is a corporate entity. The essence of a Berit is that it applies not just to one person but to his children as well. That’s why the symbol of the Berit – the

Berit Milah – is on the reproductive organ. That’s also why the Torah stresses the importance of teaching Torah to one’s children.

The second generation of Bnei Yisrael weren’t actually at Har Sinai but it is as if they were there since their parents told them about it and have made decisions that effect all future members of the nation. This idea is expressed in the Passover Haggadah: “In every generation one must view (show) oneself as if he personally came out of Egypt...It was not only our ancestors that the Holy One, Blessed be He, redeemed, but us, too, with them.”

4. Discuss other reasons why we learn and follow the Torah:

Torah gives us direction in life. It helps us decide between right and wrong. To keep up the traditions that our parents and grandparents have taught us. It makes our lives meaningful. We become part of a worldwide community of people who share a common history and set of beliefs and practices. It enhances family life. It’s inspiring and rewarding etc...

What Mitzvoth, events, or teachings of the Torah do students like the most? Perhaps you can better explain those Mitzvoth that students find difficult.