



BRUCE LICHT

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Bruce grew up in Lafayette, California and received a BA in Political Science from UCLA as well as a Graduate Gemologist degree from the Gemological Institute of America. After graduating, Bruce operated his family's 100 year-old retail fine jewelry business for twenty-two years. Bruce had a passion for computers and graphic arts, so he changed careers and joined his best friend at a national technical publishing company for seventeen-years as the company's Publisher, where they invented the modern labor law poster industry, including the first "All- On-One Labor Law Poster" and "Labor Law Poster Compliance Plan."

Aside from being the Founder of this website, *My Elevator Pitch for God*, Bruce was the co-editor of the book titled, *Elevator Pitches For God: Volume 1*, and author of the cookbook titled, *Immediate Chef: No Previous Experience Required*.

Bruce's goals for this website are: To introduce more people all around the world to God and strengthen the faith of those who already believe in a non-political and non-religious way, to bring people together, find common ground between different faiths, create meaning in people's lives, and start to move the world in a better direction.

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You can also connect with the website project's LinkedIn page by clicking below:

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What's Most Important?

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The Torah has 304,805 letters, which combined together make up 79,976 individual Hebrew words.¹ Are there any words, phrases, verses or teachings that could be considered "most important," and if so, what can we all draw from them, regardless of what religion we follow?

Our sages tell us that it is ALL equally important—nothing is any more important than anything else,² but that hasn't stopped people from making suggestions. Some have proposed that the first few words, "*In the beginning*"³ are most important. Others have said that it is the first few words of Judaism's most important prayer, *the Shema*, which translates to, "*Hear, O Israel.*"⁴ People have also said it is the first few words of the Ten Commandments, which translates to, "*I am God.*"⁵

The "Rambam" or "Maimonides,"⁶ in his "Book of Mitzvot," listed all 613 commandments within the Torah in what he said were in order of importance, and the top three were: 1) to believe in God, 2) to believe God is one, and 3) to love God.⁷

Some say that one of the most important verses is, "*You shall love your fellow like yourself.*"⁸ Rashi⁹ said, "*This is the most important phrase in the Torah.*"¹⁰ Rabbi Akiva¹¹ said, "*This is a major principle of the Torah.*"¹² Hillel¹³ said, "*This is all of the Torah. Everything else is commentary.*"¹⁴

There is another opinion that one of the most important verses is regarding the offering of sacrifices: "*This is what you shall offer upon the Altar: two sheep within their first year every day, continually. You shall offer the one sheep in the morning, and the second sheep, shall you offer in the afternoon.*"¹⁵ Why is this so important? These two offerings were the "bookends" for all the others. They represent the need to do the commandments every day, consistently, even when you don't feel like it. Likewise, when it comes to your relationship with God, it has got to be without fail and continuous. That is how you build, strengthen, and maintain a relationship.

There is another teaching from the Talmud¹⁶ by Rabbi Bar Karpara,¹⁷ who said, "*What is the small, brief passage that all fundamental principles are dependent upon in the Torah?* A verse from Proverbs: "*In all of your ways, you shall know God and He will direct your paths.*"¹⁸ This verse is saying, "*know God*" with whatever you're doing. "*Know God*" when you sit in your house, when you walk along the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.¹⁹

Now, if I²⁰ were to attempt to "boil all this down," it would be to know without a doubt that there's only one God and to love Him with all your heart, soul, and might. Practice the Golden Rule: Love your fellow human beings and treat everyone with the same respect and consideration as you would want for yourself. Integrate God into all aspects of your daily life, and be consistent in your behaviors and practices, all day, every day.

Footnotes:

- 1) Those 79,976 individual Hebrew words are contained within 5,845 verses, among the 54 portions (called Parshas) that comprise the Five Books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

From Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe's Podcast Collection: Midrash and from Dan Kullman's "The Shema Podcast for the Perplexed": The Deeper World of Hebrew Names, June 15, 2025.

There is a teaching that the Torah has 600,000 letters, corresponding to the 600,000 "core" souls (of the living as well as future converts) that were present at Mount Sinai. If you open up a Torah scroll and start to count, it's true that there are actually 304,805 letters. So how do we reconcile this number with the 600,000 number which we often hear quoted?

The answer is that, of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, 19 of them (all but three letters - the vav, zayin and the yud) are made up of what is called, "composite letters" (letters made up of 2-3 other letters). For example, the alef, can be broken down to be made of two yods and a diagonal vav. The letter he (pronounced "hey") can be broken down to be made of a dalet and a yud. The letter shin can be broken down to be made of three vavs.

The Zohar, known as the primary text of the Kabbalah, says that the Torah was given in "black fire written on white fire." That means the spaces between the letters and the crowns of the letters are spiritually significant. You also have some letters that are larger, smaller, dotted, floating, or broken. You also have places with extra spaces between letters, verses, chapters, etc. All these particulars—this special "divine type setting" contribute to the "hidden count," bringing the total number from 304,805 up to 600,000.

- 2) While acknowledging that some commandments might have a greater impact on society or one's relationship with God, the teaching that every single part is equally important to every other part, is rooted in traditional Judaism's belief of the Torah's divine origin, being given directly from God.

- 3) From Genesis / Bereishis / Chapter 1 / Verse 1:

"In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth"

- 4) The Shema is recited three times daily by Jewish people as a declaration of faith and allegiance to God. The various paragraphs of the Shema prayer can be found in three distinct passages within the Torah:
 - A) Numbers / Parshas Shelach / Chapter 15 / Verses 37-41
 - B) Deuteronomy / Parshas Devarim / Chapter 6 / Verses 4-9
 - C) Deuteronomy / Parshas Eikev / Chapter 11 / Verses 13-21

- 5) The Ten Commandments were given to Moses at Mount Sinai after the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. They are found in the Torah, with only minor differences, in two places:
- Exodus / Parshas Yisro / Chapter 20 / Verses 2-17
 - Deuteronomy / Parshas Va'Eschanan / Chapter 5 / Verses 6-21
- 6) The great twelfth-century physician to the Sultan of Cairo, Egypt and codifier of Jewish philosophy and Torah law, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1138 – 1204 CE), also known as "The Rambam" or "Maimonides," (which is the Greek form of "the son of Maimon").
- 7) https://www.jewfaq.org/613_commandments
- To know that God exists (Exodus / Parshas Yisro / Chapter 20 / Verse 2 and Deuteronomy / Parshas Va'Eschanan / Chapter 5, Verse 6)
 - Not to entertain the idea that there is any god but the Eternal (Exodus / Parshas Yisro / Chapter 20 / Verse 3)
 - Not to blaspheme (Exodus / Parshas Mishpatim / Chapter 22, Verse 27)

Additionally, within two verses in Deuteronomy, it says that there are four things that God asks of you. Deuteronomy / Parshas Eikev / Chapter 10 / Verses 12-13 says:

"Now, O Israel, what does HASHEM, your God, ask of you? Only to fear HASHEM, your God, to go in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve HASHEM, your God, with all your heart and all your soul, to observe the commandments of HASHEM, and his decrees, which I command you today, for your benefit."

So the four are:

- A) To fear God (this does not mean to be terrified of Him. It is to understand that He is the Creator and Master of Heaven and Earth. He is all being, all knowing, all caring)
- B) To emulate God
- C) To love God
- D) To serve God

- 8) The saying, *"You shall love your fellow like yourself,"* is contained within Leviticus / Parsha Kedoshim / Chapter 19 / Verse 18.
- 9) "Rashi," whose full name was Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, was a renowned 11th-century French commentator on the Torah and Talmud. He is considered one of the most influential Jewish commentators in history. His commentaries, known for their clarity and conciseness, are still widely studied today.
- 10) This is found within Rashi's commentary on Leviticus / Parshas Kedoshim / Chapter 19 / Verse 18.
- 11) https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/112059/jewish/Rabbi-Akiva-His-Life-and-Teachings.htm
Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (known simply as "Rabbi Akiva"), who lived from about 50 to 135 CE, is considered one of the most prolific and inspiring teachers of Judaism in history, formed a crucial link in the chain of transmission of Jewish tradition that began

with Moses and continues to this very day. He taught and led during the tumultuous years of the destruction of the Second Holy Temple, and was ultimately executed by the Romans for the "crime" of teaching Torah.

- 12) Rabbi Akiva said that the verse "Love your fellow as yourself" is a major principle of the Torah in the Talmud, specifically in Sifra, Kedoshim, Chapter 4:12 and Talmud Yerushalmi Nedarim 9.3.
- 13) Hillel (also called "Hillel the Elder" or "Hillel the Babylonian"), who lived from about 110 BCE to 10 CE, was a Jewish religious leader, sage and scholar. He was associated with the development of the Mishnah and the Talmud and the founder of the "House of Hillel school of Tannaim."
- 14) Hillel's actual statement was, "*That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the commentary; go and learn,*" is found in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 31a. Hillel's widely quoted statement is actually a negative formulation of the principle, "*Love your neighbor as yourself,*" found in Leviticus / Parshas Kedoshim / Chapter 19 / Verse 18.
- 15) From Exodus / Parshas Tetzaveh / Chapter 29 / Verse 30.
- 16) From Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe with Torchweb.org: Torah 101 - #35, #36, #37, #38 (What is Mishnah? / What is Talmud? What is Aggadah? What is Halacha?).

The Talmud is the foundational work for Jewish law, theology, and tradition, offering interpretations and applications of the Torah. There are two massive corpuses of the "Oral Law" and various other parts within them. There are 63 books of Mishnah and 73 volumes of Talmud.

- 17) Rabbi Bar Kappara (Eleazar ha-Kappar) was a Jewish scholar, talented poet and storyteller, who was a student of Rabbi Judah the Prince (Judah ha-Nasi), although they are reported to have had a strained relationship. He lived during the period of Jewish history between the Tannaim and Amoraim, in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries CE. He was most active in the capital of Caesarea Maritima from around 180 to 220 CE. Though he was a talented scholar, his humor and unconventional behavior sometimes prevented him from obtaining positions of authority.
- 18) In Brachot, page 63a.
- 19) This verse, which is part of the Shema, emphasizes the importance of integrating God's word into all aspects of daily life and can be found in Deuteronomy / Parshas Va'Eschanan / Chapter 6 / Verse 7.
- 20) "I," (myself), not being an ordained Rabbi, or remotely having a thorough understanding of the Talmud as well as the 24 books of Tanach, comprised of the Five Books of Moses plus Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).