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Temple Beth El Social Action Committee Wins National Award

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ceremony was auspicious in that it was held for the first time during the Consultation on Conscience, in Washington, DC. During that luncheon on Capital Hill, conference attendees and award winners shared programming ideas and made contacts with like minded congregants from across the country and Canada. Each delegation of winners had their photo taken with Rabbi Yoffie, Leonard Fein,



Social Action Committee members march with Grier Heights residents in the MLK, Jr. Day Parade.

Commission Director, and Evelyn Laser Shlensky, Commission Chairperson.

The CSA is a joint instrument of the UAHC, its affiliates, and

the CCAR. It strives to apply Jewish ethics to contemporary issues of social justice, religious liberty, and world peace. ✪

Seeing Shavuot In A New Light

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good life. I've been repeatedly amazed at how practical and psychologically brilliant the original Hebrew meanings are, compared to the watered down English translations most of us grew up with.

For example, the Eighth Commandment, "Do not steal," actually reads in Hebrew, "Lo tignove," "Don't be such a gonnif," or in other words, "Don't be sneaky and don't misuse the cleverness and smarts God has given you, because if you use your intelligence to manipulate or deceive people you will always feel inside that you're a fraud or that you're going to be found out." This reminder to live with integrity and not to mistreat other people in your pursuit of success or comforts has meant so much more to me and to the people I counsel in my psychotherapy practice than the simple phrase, "Do not steal," which misses the

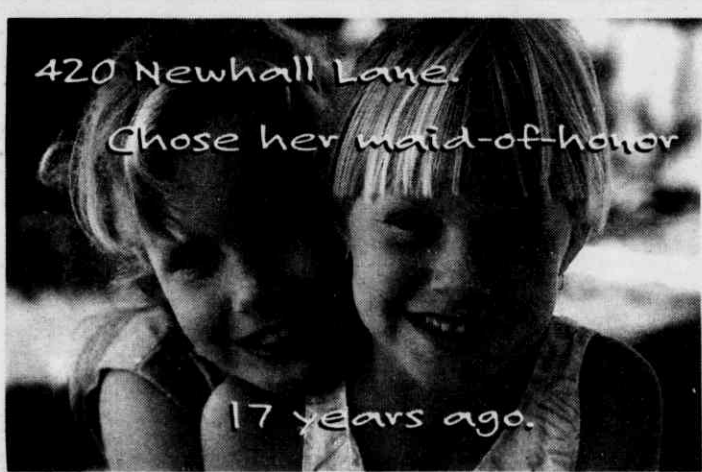
essence of the Hebrew.

Or the Sixth Commandment, "Lo tirtza-akh," usually translated as "Do not murder," which can also mean, "Do not crush someone's spirit, including your own." Most of us don't think of ourselves as murderers, yet we constantly have opportunities to crush someone's spirit by our cruel words to a spouse, our indifference or coldness to a newcomer at shul, our being too busy to listen to our kids, or our jumping in with advice too quickly when in fact the person asking for help might need us to let them do it themselves.

The more I studied the various rabbinic commentaries on each of the Ten Commandments, the more I realized just how much these ten vows can help us live with greater meaning, purpose and peacefulness. So now when I attend a Shavuot celebration or study session, I feel like I'm being

given the keys to a more fulfilling life. It's made me aware that unless stop to understand and review the ideas behind the commandments that keep us connected to God and the sacredness of life, it's easy to fall back into old neglectful habits. Thankfully we have wedding anniversaries to remind us how precious a marriage can be and we have Shavuot to remind us how to breathe new life into our spiritual partnership with the Eternal One who reached out to us at Sinai and asked us to help repair the world together.

Leonard Felder, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist in West Los Angeles and the author of seven books, including *The Ten Challenges: Spiritual Lessons from the Ten Commandments for Creating Meaning, Growth and Richness Every Day of Your Life* (Harmony/Random House). ✪



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