

The Living Words

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~~ Command ~~

An English definition of a command or commandment is “to direct with authority” or “to give orders” as a general does to his troops.

*And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these **commandments** (mitsvah) before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.*

Deuteronomy 6:25 (KJV)

Is the meaning of the Hebrew word **מִצְוָה** *mitsvah* ^[H:4687], as found in the passage above, a command? Is God our general giving us an order to obey? Or is the Ancient Hebrew understanding of this word something different?

*And we departed from Horeb and walked through all that great and fearful wilderness which you saw by the path of the mountain of Amorites just as Yahweh our God **directed** (tsavah) us and we came unto Qadesh Barnea.*

Deuteronomy 1:19

The word “directed” above is the verb **צָוָה** *tsavah* ^[H:6680], the root of the word *mitsvah*. While translators usually translate this word as “command,” an abstract word, the more Hebraic definition is “to direct,” a concrete concept meaning “to show or point out a path.” God is not a general barking orders but a guide. He is our

guide and his *mitsvah* is his direction to us to lead us on his path as can be seen in several passages from Psalm 119.

*With all my heart I will seek after you, you will cause me to not stray from your **directions** (mitsvah).*

Verse 10

*I will run the path of your **directions** (mitsvah) because you have widened my heart.*

Verse 32

*Lead me in the pathway of your **directions** (mitsvah) for in it is my delight.*

Verse 35

*I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek your servant so that I don't forget your **directions** (mitsvah).*

Verse 176

The Biblical Greek word used to translate the Hebrew word *mitsvah* is εντολη *entole* ^[G:1785] and is a combination of the word εν *en* ^[G:1722], meaning “in” or “with,” and τελος *telos* ^[G:5056] meaning “end” or “goal.” *Entole* literally means “with a goal” and is very similar to our Hebraic understanding of the *mitsvah* as a direction.

Yeshua was asked a question in regards to the *mitsvah*.

*Rabbi, tell us, what is the great **direction** (entole/mitsvah) which is in the teachings (torah)? He said to him, “And you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart.’ This is the first, the*

*second is like it, 'And you shall love your neighbor as yourself,' and upon these two **directions** (entole/mitsvah) all the teachings hang, and the prophets."*

Matthew 22:36¹

¹ This translation is from the Shem Tov Hebrew Matthew.