

## Ten Temptations No One Can Resist

During the 30<sup>th</sup> November presentation I used the phrase “even though Jehovah believed this to be the truth.” Many people have asked what “this” referred to in that phrase, and have also asked for a clearer explanation of what Jehovah’s “lie” was.

The “this” that Jehovah believed to be the truth was the explanation of life used in ancient India by The Movement: the theory of karma, dharma and reincarnation, with the eventual goal of enlightenment. Although Jehovah did not doubt its truth, he had severe doubts about its effectiveness in promoting virtue and the pursuit of happiness. He perceived the profound despair many people sunk into due to the multi-million year journey toward perfection they saw in front of them. And he worried that that nearly hopeless vision would increase their everyday level of despair by adding the debilitating feeling that their bad karma must certainly be accumulating faster than their good karma.

Jehovah’s “lie” to his friends in The Movement was a lie of omission: he told them he wanted to try an experiment on a different group of people, an experiment designed to end human sacrifice. But he didn’t say that he also intended to test a different explanation of life (one that he felt was inspirational even if inaccurate) in order to see whether it caused less despair. Jehovah recruited several of his friends in The Movement to help with his experiment without the full disclosure that, if successful, it might undercut the karma-dharma-enlightenment theory of life that those friends taught and lived by. That was the “lie” he confessed to during The Movement’s recent “comparing notes” meeting. And that blunt honesty on Jehovah’s part opened the discussion up to many doubts others had had that they had also never shared before, all of which proved crucial in the discussions among Shankara, Jehovah and the other members of The Movement that led to the new consensus The Movement reached during its meeting.

Jehovah is delighted that his dissenting experiment has proved so useful in reaching this new consensus, and he hopes that The Movement’s new understanding will eventually eliminate the despair so many have developed due to attempting the impossible task of becoming perfect.

Jehovah also asked me to share with everyone my 1979 short story, *Ten Temptations No One Can Resist*. Several of his reasons for that request should be obvious. One that might not be as obvious is that he’d like his authoritarian reputation to shift a bit. He’d like to become known for paying merely social visits too.

## **Ten Temptations No One Can Resist**

The other night I camped near the summit of Mount Washington. Gloomy clouds had shrouded my view all night, but the fog began to disperse before dawn. The deep blue sky, lightening gradually as the sun approached the horizon, sparkled with thousands of stars, one by one being extinguished by the rays of their distant cousin.

The rising sun only caught a momentary glimpse of the green-covered valleys and peaks of New Hampshire's White Mountains before they were blotted from view by an enormous black cloud which sped towards me from the East. Volleys of thunder and flashes of lightning heralded the approach of this peculiar cloud, which settled itself right over Mount Washington, and stayed there.

After a few minutes of thunder and pyrotechnical displays I was sufficiently awed to remark, "Jehovah! If that doesn't beat anything I've ever seen!"

"Glad you like it," a voice rumbled like thunder.

"Jehovah?" I asked.

"It's me," the voice replied.

"What do you want?" I asked suspiciously, knowing that he was not known for paying merely social visits.

"Just a little favor," he said, following his words with a bolt of lightning which shattered a rock near my feet. Two heavy tablets remained intact amidst the rubble.

"I'm not interested in lugging those tablets down this mountain," I said, "but if you want me to deliver a message for you, just give me the name and address of the intended recipient, and I'll take care of it."

I took some paper and a pen out of my pocket to demonstrate my willingness — under certain conditions.

“You have no sense of the dramatic,” Jehovah complained.

“Drama is fine, but not when I have to do all the lugging,” I said. “Besides, you’ve already used that trick before.”

“All right, all right,” he said, “have it your way.”

I readied my pen and paper and waited.

“Well?” I finally asked.

“I’m thinking of how to word this,” Jehovah replied.

“Well, who’s the message for?”

“Everyone,” he said. “You can use the media this time. Just let out a few hints that you possess some top-secret information and you won’t have to do any of the work yourself — and make sure that the material is considered forbidden information.”

“You’re learning fast,” I said admiringly.

“Thanks,” he said. “Now, here’s my message. I have Ten New Commandments for the human race.”

“You’re wasting our time,” I protested, disgusted that he was going to try that old scheme again.

“Oh no I’m not,” he insisted. “You see, I’m counting on your race to listen in exactly the same way they have listened for thousands of years.”

“Then shoot,” I said, feeling the hopelessness of my position.

“Number One,” he majestically intoned, “Thou shalt never be kind. The seductive pleasures of this emotion are reserved solely for the gods.

“Number Two: Thou shalt never laugh. Life is a serious business. It is a punishment inflicted on you by me. I forbid you to enjoy it.

“Number Three: Thou shalt never respect anyone’s free will. The harmony which results from such an attitude is too enjoyable for humans to bear.

“Number Four: Thou shalt never seek the truth. Human intelligence is incapable of understanding life. I have made you that way on purpose. You should be satisfied with the superficial. It is all you are capable of comprehending.

“Number Five: Thou shalt never be patient. Patience would eliminate all your anger and make you greater than the gods. Therefore I forbid humans even to consider it.

“Number Six: Thou shalt never love anyone. I have created others for you to use, to manipulate, to serve your petty desires and lusts. I have made you incapable of rising above these lusts, so you needn’t even try.

“Number Seven: Thou shalt never respect anyone else’s possessions. Anything that is not tied down you should cart away. This will keep your race impoverished, as I meant you to be.

“Number Eight: Thou shalt never be honest. Language would become too powerful a tool for knowledge if you were honest, and knowledge I have reserved for the gods.

“Number Nine: Thou shalt never seek the higher beauty. These forbidden emotions are too sublime for your race. Be content with what you have.

“Number Ten: Above all, Thou shalt never be happy. I forbid you even to consider the possibility.”

Jehovah’s stern, commanding voice was silent for a few moments. Then he added, “and tell them a fate worse than life awaits those who disobey.”

Thunder and lightning punctuated this last remark.

As Jehovah’s cloud drifted eastward, peals of laughter thundered through my mind.