

## THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

### Deuteronomy 6: 1-9

1. And Moses stood up, smoothed his robe, and proclaimed to the people in a loud voice, OK. Pay attention! I have had another vision. And the people drew near thinking it might be about a burning bush or Pharaoh's daughter among the bullrushes with a sponge, but he sayeth, Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments – a phrase that I'm going to repeat ad nauseum by the way - which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might keep them in the land whither ye go to slaughter with exceeding smiting with a mighty arm and war clubs and asses' jawbones (I think I got that the right way round) and slings and arrows to bring outrageous fortune to those already living there and possess it. Use processions and long trumpets as a last resort:
2. That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, oh yes – and the judgments which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, and your wife and your wife's mother – yes, I know, I know - and even those cousins who married each other and are shunned, all the days of thy lives; and that thy days may be prolonged, even though the gift-giving at Christmas, whatever that is but I hear Lebanon has plenty of suitable trees, be enormous and expensive;
3. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that all manner of things may be well with thee, and that, oh yes, ye may increase mightily, (and some men did nudge each other and wink at this entreaty to much naughtiness, but not all, and the women were downcast,) as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey and juniper juices and unnamed linctuses and tinctures in brown bottles and ales of all descriptions, and strange herbs which thou may cast upon the fire and breathe of their smoke freely so that thy appetites and other things may be strengthened. And don't forget the myrtle creams.
4. Hear, O Israel, yes, I know it's a collective noun, but it refers to you singularly there at the back: The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt believe this above all else no matter the future conflicts this might cause. Forget all other geometric theologies at least for the time being.
5. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and in everything that thou doest in thy home or in the fields, with thyself or with neighbours, his manservant or maidservant, even his ass. Or her ass.
6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and I shall give unto thee scribes to write them down, and unto divers artists to draw them in lurid details with squashed berries, chalks and crushed nuts; and poets – God! - to write endless verses and choruses, and choruses, and choruses, so that they may be remembered in ways that many will want to forget:
7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children if they listen, and thy children's children crawling around the manger, and yea, even unto those unmentionable cousins I mentioned before, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house at table, in a chair, a plump embroidered cushion, or even squatting in the communal place of easement, and when thou walkest by the way, or wandereth the footpaths, or creepeth along the dark alleyways, or lurketh in back passages, or strolleth along the water's shore in the full sun, and when thou liest down in thine own bed or thy neighbour's, and when thou risest up in the morning. Caleb, wipe that grin off your face!
8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets (no, that's not a little frontal for the altar) between thine eyes, and if thou wish, be scribed into thy flesh – taking great care in certain regions - with needles and coloured inks,

9. And when we have ceased to be a nomadic people and have settled in the land we have taken into our possession with the aforementioned methods and the blast of the horn, thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates, and may even carve them into the lintels of thy windows or upon the panels of thy doors, and cause their words to be moulded by a potter into thy vessels, a banner across the front of thy cart, and engraved by a smith into thy tools, and embossed upon thy leather goods - but only those for public display. Thou may have these words everywhere thou pleasest, but not upon thy neighbour's ass, for thou shalt not covet that. What's that? No!