

*CBI 5776*  
*40 Quotes for 40 Days*



1. “Apply your mind to discipline and your ears to wise sayings.” Proverbs 23:12

*We become wiser with words that touch us deeply.  
What is a favorite quote? What does it teach you?*

2. “Every human may become righteous like Moses our Teacher or wicked like Jeroboam: wise or foolish, merciful or cruel, selfish or generous, and so with all other qualities. There is no other that coerces or decrees or draws to either of the two ways, but each person turns the way desired, spontaneously and of his [or her] own volition.” Maimonides (12<sup>th</sup> century, Spain-Egypt, recorded in “Laws of Repentance” 5:2)

*We have the power to choose our character.*

*To what degree do you determine your character traits? What is one trait that you have chosen as a strength?*

3. “Happy is the person who has not followed the advice of the wicked, or taken the path of the sinner, or joined the company of scoffers; that the teaching of the Lord is delight, studying that teaching day and night. Such [a person] is like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades, and whatever it produces thrives.” Psalm 1:1-3

*The company that we keep shapes what interests us and whether we grow.*

*Who is your closest friend? How does that person shape you for good?*

**Week one- body:**

4. “A king of flesh and blood stamps his image on a coin and all such coins look alike; but the King of Kings put the stamp on the first human and no person is like any other.” Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

*You are unique physically and in personality and spirit.*

*What for you is the significance of looking like no other person before you?*

*What does your inner uniqueness say about you?*

5. “Every person should know that since Creation no other person ever was like him or her. Had there been such another, there would be no need for him to be. Each is called on to manifest his unique qualities. And it is his failure to heed this call which delays the Messiah.” Ba’al Shem Tov (Ukraine, 18<sup>th</sup> century)

*The lifelong challenge is discerning and acting on your distinctive purpose.*

*What do you sense is your distinctive contribution to make?*

6. “You must not let a corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must bury the same day” (Deuteronomy 22:23). “Since a human being is created in the image of God, it can be likened to the twin brother of a king, who is a bandit and hanged for a crimes. People who see the body think that it is the king” Rashi (France, 11th century)

*You are the distinctive banner for God’s presence in the world.*

*What does it mean to you that you are created as a symbol of God?*

7. “And God created the human [*HaAdam*] in God’s image....” Genesis 1:27

*Created in the image of God is quite a responsibility.*

*What is unique about being human? God like?*

8. “Praised are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who fashioned the human body with wisdom, creating openings, arteries, glands, and organs, marvelous in structure, intricate in design. Should but one of them, by being blocked or opened, fail to function, it would be impossible to exist and to stand before You. Praised are You, Eternal, Healer of all flesh, who sustains our bodies in wondrous ways.” Abaye (3<sup>rd</sup> century Babylonia, Talmud *Berachot* 60b)

*Cause for wonder: the body heals.*

*Appreciating the intricacy of your body and its functioning prompts what reaction?*

9. And God “breathed into his [Adam’s] nostrils the breath of life, and the earthling became a living being.” Genesis 2:7

*Gratitude when aware that each breath offers the gift of life.*

*What is the connection between breath and soul? In what ways do you possess a Divine quality?*

10. “And on the seventh day, God completed the work that God had been doing and refrained on the seventh day from all the creativity that God had done and God blessed the seventh day and called it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that God had done.” Genesis 2:2-3

*Our essential value is determined not by what we create, but in that we are God’s creation.*

*Why would God need to rest? What was created on the seventh day of which you partake?*

**Week two- heart:**

11. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5); You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18); “...and You shall love the stranger as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt, I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:34).

*Love unites and uplifts.*

*What is the connection between these three commands to love? What does it mean to love?*

12. “You shall not fear” (most repeated command in *Tanakh*); Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, “All the world is a narrow bridge but the main thing is not to fear at all.” Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav (Ukraine, 19<sup>th</sup> century)

*There is danger and yet, we flourish with a focus on goodness, trust, and hope.*

*How can we distinguish between legitimate and false fear?  
How can we live with greater feelings of safety and fearlessness?*

13. “Learn to serve God not only with your noble impulses but even with the base, selfish desires of your heart.” Mishnah *Berachot* 9:5

*Competition motivates action. When combined with cooperation and care, we are at our best.*

*What are the base, selfish desires of your heart? How can you direct those desires for good?*

14. “Serve God in joy, come before God with rejoicing.” Psalm 100:2

*We come before God as partners anticipating the satisfactions of service.*

*What is the connection between serving God and joy? What is an example of such service in your life?*

15. “God lies me down in lush pastures; besides tranquil water God leads me.”  
Psalm 23:2

*Nestled in God’s beautiful creation, we find peace.*

*Picture yourself in this image. How does it make you feel?  
Linger there for a few moments.*

16. “Two are better than one, in that they have greater benefit from their earnings. For should they fall, one can raise the other; but woe to the person who is alone and falls with no companion to raise him. Further, when two lie together they are warm; but how can she who is alone get warm? Also, if one attacks two can stand up to the assailant. A threefold cord is not readily broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

*With companionship, we are more secure and strong.*

*What difference does it make in your enjoyment of a movie or sporting event to watch it with others? In what ways do you feel more motivated to do a task, such as exercise, when you have a companion?*

17. “Call the Sabbath a delight” (Isaiah 58:13). “Yannai would don his robes on Sabbath eve, and call, “Come, O bride! Come, O bride!” Talmud, *Shabbat* 119a

*Some moments define life’s unity and completeness- and endure with imagination.*

*In what ways is welcoming the Sabbath a break from the rest of your week? In what ways does it feel like a wedding?*

### **Week three-head:**

18. “Go up to Me on the mountain and be there.” Exodus 24:12

*More than physical presence is needed for peak moments.*

*What are the challenges in being fully present, even for a moment of significance? How can you better cultivate your focus?*

19. “More than all that you guard, guard your mind; for it is the source of life.” Proverbs 4:23

*Our thoughts determine how we experience life.*

*What are three of your core beliefs? How do they shape your view on life?*

20. “How much better to acquire wisdom than gold; to acquire understanding is preferable to silver.” Proverbs 16:16

*What really matters is what we appreciate most.*

*What do you actively do to acquire wisdom? Why is such knowledge precious?*

21. The laws of the Torah do not disagree with what is right....Every precept, be it minor or major, must be weighed in the scale of one’s heart, wherein the Eternal has planted some of God’s wisdom. Thus, if there appears to be something in the Torah that is intellectually impossible to accept or contrary to the evidence of our senses, then we must search for a hidden meaning. This is so because intelligence is the basis of the Torah.... Man’s intelligence is the angel that mediates between God and us. Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra (Spain, 1089-1164, Introduction to the Torah)

*A believable story or a directive needs reasoning as a check.*

*What is an example of a Torah story or law that you do not take literally, but interpret? What is the value of that story for you?*

22. “Do you believe that absolutely everything can be expressed scientifically?” “Yes, it would be possible, but it would make no sense. It would be a description without meaning—as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation of sound waves. Albert Einstein (Germany/United States; 1879-1955)

*Not all that is real is quantifiable.*

*What is an example of something that is important to you that cannot be put into a scientific formula or measured quantitatively?*

23. “A student of laws who does not understand their meaning or cannot explain their contradictions, is but a basket full of books.” Rashi (France, 1040-1105) commenting on statement of Rabbi Nahman (3<sup>rd</sup> century, Babylon) in Talmud *Megillah 28b*

*Wisdom is more than quotation.*

*What is the value of book learning? What are its limitations?*

24. “An artist cannot be continually wielding his brush, but must stop at times in painting to freshen the vision of the object, the meaning to express on the canvas. Living is also an art...The Sabbath represents those moments when we pause in our brushwork to renew our vision of the object.” Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan (*The Meaning of God*, 1937, p.59)

*We see much that we might have missed when we stop moving.*

*When do you stop to gain perspective? What would be the benefits for you of observing the Sabbath consistently each week?*



**Week four- spirit:**

25. “The *neshamah* of a human is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inward parts.” Proverbs 20:27

*The inner eye that observes our thoughts, emotions, and intuitions is both core self and transcends self.*

*In what sense is their inner Divine part of you that surveys your inner life? What is the role of intuition in your making judgments?*

26. “A dream that is not interpreted is like a letter unread.” Rabbi Chisda, *Berachot* 55b

*Dreams offer insight into what is otherwise unseen.*

*When was the last time that you paid attention to a dream? Can you recall the dream and what it signified to you?*

27. “The supreme task of the physicist is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. There is no logical path to those laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them.” Albert Einstein (Address, 1918, *Ideas and Opinions*, 226).

*The necessary assumptions of science are not necessarily logical or fact.*

*In what ways is the world ordered? Do you intuit an underlying source of that order?*

*Explain.*

28. The fierce power of imagination is a gift from God. Joined with grandeur of the mind, the potency of inference, ethical depth, and the natural sense of the Divine, imagination becomes an instrument for the holy Spirit. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (Israel 1865-1935).

*Imagination is a bridge to the Godly.*

*What is the power of imagination? What is needed to confirm imagination's message as reality based?*

29. "A religion based upon mystical intuition, unchecked by reason, is capable of all sorts of grossness and stupidities." Rabbi Milton Steinberg (*Reconstructionist*, November 1, 1935)

*Wishful thinking unchecked by reality is dangerous.*

*What role does superstition play in your life? Is it helpful or detrimental?*

30. "[Success will be achieved] Not by strength, nor by might, but by my spirit, says the Lord." Zechariah 4:6

*We draw our greatest strength from reaching toward the Source of self.*

*When have you felt stronger or wiser by drawing on a Power from beyond yourself?*

31. "Shabbat is a mirror of the world to come." Zohar, Genesis 48a

*We can taste now, a state of being that we would want to nourish all continually.*

*What do you best like about Shabbat? Can you imagine an entire world in Shabbat at the same time? What would that be like?*

**Week five- hand:**

32. “The poor will never cease to exist in your land, which is why I command you: Open your hand generously to the poor and impoverished in your land.” Deuteronomy 15: 11

*An open hand containing goods is a conduit for God’s goodness.*

*Why are there poor people? Can you imagine yourself as ever being poor?*

33. “... O earthling, what is good and what does the Lord require of you? Only to do justice; and to love kindness; and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

*We are duty bound to manifest godliness, while knowing that we are not God.*

*What does it mean to walk humbly with your God?*

34. “When you reap your land’s harvest, do not completely harvest the corners of your fields; and do not pick up individual stalks [that have fallen]...[All the above] must be left for the poor and the stranger. I am God your Lord.” Leviticus 19:9-10

*We are property managers for a God who is the parent of all people.*

*What underlies this Biblical command in terms of the owner’s relationship to the land?*

35. “A generous person enjoys prosperity; the person who satisfies others shall be sated.” Proverbs 11:25

*We only possess ultimately what we have given away.*

*What are the satisfactions in generosity? Recall one time that you were generous and how it felt?*

36. “And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God demand of you? Only this: to revere the Lord your God, to walk only in God’s path.... Cut away, therefore, the thickness about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more....

*We are unaware of God when oblivious to the needs of others.*

*What causes a calloused heart? How could you remove some of the callousness from your own heart?*

37. God upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow and befriends the stranger, providing food and clothing. You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 10: 12, 16, 18-19

*How we treat the vulnerable and dependent reveals our character.*

*The image of God is that of parent of the whole of Creation. What that role, why is God so protective of the weak? What is your role?*

38. “A good name is preferable to great wealth.” Proverbs 22:1

*Our reputation is our greatest possession.*

*Bring to mind a person is admired by many, whether still alive or having passed. What was the source of that admiration? In what ways is their good name more valuable than wealth?*

39. “Before you, I place this day, life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life.” Deuteronomy 19:20

*We have the power to choose life.*

*What does it mean to you to “choose life?” Why is this a Biblical command?*

40. The Sabbath is the day of peace between a person and nature... By not working- by not participating in the process of natural and social change- a person is free from the chains of nature and from the chains of time, although only for one day a week. Erich Fromm (*Forgotten Language*, 1951, p. 244)

*The Sabbath draws us to our most whole and holy self.*

*What is the satisfaction and perspective that you gain in setting aside the day of Sabbath?*



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