

Exodus 20:5

לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי
אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֶקֶד
עֵוֹן אֲבֹת עַל-בָּנִים עַל-שְׁלִשִׁים וְעַל-
רְבָעִים לְשֵׁנָאִי:

you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me (RSV)

לֹא (lo)

This word means "no" or "not" and is often used to negate the action of the following verb.

תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (tish-tahh-veh)

The base word is the verb שָׁחָה (shahhah) meaning to bow down to the ground. The prefix ת (t) identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine and singular - you and the tense of the verb as imperfect. This verb is written in the hitpa'el form meaning that it is reflexive (the action of the verb is imparted on the subject of the verb). This form is usually identified with the prefix הִת (heet) but this word uses a unique spelling where the ה (h) is dropped and the ת (t) is placed after the letter ש (sh). The ו (ve) is also a unique spelling of this word. The whole word would be translated as "you will bow yourself down" but because of the previous word it would be translated as "you will not bow yourself down."

לָהֶם (la-hem)

The ל (l) is a prefix meaning "to" or "for." The הֶם (hem) is a suffix meaning "them." Combined this means "to them."

וְלֹא (ve-lo)

The prefix ו (ve) means "and" and again the word לֹא (lo) meaning "no" or "not."

תַּעֲבֹדֵם (ta-av-dem)

The base word is the verb עָבַד (avad) meaning to "serve." The prefix ת (t) identifies the subject of the verb as second person, masculine and singular - you and the tense of the verb as imperfect. The suffix ם (m) identifies the object of the verb as third person, masculine and plural - them. The whole word means "you will serve them" but because of the previous word it would be translated as "you will not serve them."

כִּי (kiy)

This word means "because."

אֲנִי (ah-no-kiy)

This word means "I."

יְהוָה (YHWH)

This is the Tetragramaton (meaning four letters) and is name of God usually transliterated as Yahweh, Yihweh, Yahu'eh, etc.

אֱלֹהֶיךָ (eh-lo-hey-kha)

The base word is the noun אֱלֹהִים (elo'ah) and is usually translated as God, god or judge but more literally means "powerful one of authority." This noun is written in the plural form - אֱלֹהִים (elohiym) but because it is in the construct state (God of...) the ם (m) is dropped. The suffix ך (kha) is the second person, masculine and singular pronoun - you. The whole word means "powerful one of authority of you" or "your powerful one of authority."

אֵל (eyl)

This noun is usually translated as God, god or mighty. It literally means a "mighty one."

קָנָא (qana)

This noun means zealous, jealous or envious.

פָּקַד (po-qeyd)

This verb means to visit and is written in the participle form - visiting.

עוֹן (ah-von)

This noun means iniquity.

אָבֹת (ah-vot)

The base word is אָב (av) meaning "father" and the suffix ת (ot) is the plural suffix. The standard masculine plural suffix is ים (iym) and the feminine plural is ות (ot) but, some words, such as this one, use the ת (ot) suffix.

עַל (al)

This word means "upon."

בָּנִים (bah-niym)

This is the word בֵּן (ben) meaning son with the masculine suffix ים (iym).

עַל (al)

Again the word meaning "upon."

שְׁלִישִׁים (shi-ley-shiym)

The base word is שלש (shelesh) meaning "third" or "third one." The masculine plural suffix ים (iym) changes the word to "third ones."

וְעַל (ve-al)

The prefix ו (ve) means "and" and again the word meaning "upon."

רִבְעִים (riy-bey-iym)

The base word is רבע (ribeyah) meaning "fourth" or "fourth one." The masculine plural suffix ים (iym) changes the word to "fourth ones."

לְשׂוֹנְאִי (le-shon-ai)

The base word is the verb שונא (shaney) meaning to "hate" and is written in the participle form -hating. The prefix ל (le) means "to." The suffix י (i) is the first person and singular pronoun -me. The whole word means "to hating me."