

**On a Different Note**

February 1, 2024

**Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rav Moshe Yitzchok Weg**

<https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Final-Yisro.mp3>

*You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness against your fellow.*

Shmos 20:13

The *Aseres Hadibros* has two different sets of *trop* (cantillation notes), *ta'am elyon* and *ta'am tachton*. The latter is the regular *trop*, while the former treats each *dibrah* as if it were a *pasuk*—with the *dibrah* ending in the *sof pasuk* note with which every *pasuk* normally concludes—whether the *dibrah* is several *psukim* long or it's only part of a *pasuk*.

The Biur Halacha (494:1), citing the Mas'as Binyamin, says that *ta'am elyon* is used only on Shavuos, to reenact *matan* Torah. But at the regular Shabbos *leining*, and when performing the mitzvah of *shnayim mikra*, *ta'am tachton* is used (see Megillah 27b). The Or HaTorah, however, says that *ta'am elyon* is used for all public readings, while *ta'am tachton* is used in private. R' Yaakov Emden (Luach Eresh) appears to concur, writing that *ta'am tachton* was intended to make the reading easier for the individual.