

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 tachtan*. 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 tachtan* is used (see *Megillah* 27b). The *Or HaTorah*, however, says that *ta'am elyon* is used for all public readings, while *ta'am tachtan* is used in private. R' Yaakov Emden (*Luach Eresh*) appears to concur, writing that *ta'am tachtan* was intended to make the reading easier for the individual.