

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

BILL: Well, I thought we might each say a few words to begin with and sort of introduce the subject. I'd like to know from each of you in turn what your feelings are as to what meaning, if any, the Ten Commandments generally have in America today. What do most people think of when they think of the Ten Commandments? I told you how we started with this idea. What do you say, Mrs. Roosevelt, do most of the people think these are --

MRS. R. Well, I don't think I can speak for anybody else. The Ten Commandments, like the Old Testament generally have always been to me of interest. First because they applied to the world as it was in those days. It was something we wanted to know about and something interesting. Then, as being wisdom, for that period, how could it be turned to be of value to today, and I've always felt that each one had some kind of bearing that you could turn onto modern situations or modern thinking. For instance the very first, Thou shalt Love God, if you have one God, it's sort of preparation for one world and one mankind. It's the beginning of an idea which has sort of developed as the years have gone on. I think every one of them has something that you can derive from it to apply to modern conditions, and that's what makes the Bible an interesting book to read, first as history and then as wisdom which, when it applies only to the things that happened in that day, may have no bearing on your modern life, but which often has a bearing on anything because there's some kind of everlasting truth in the basis.

BILL: What would you say, Dr. (Szilard), what's your feeling about the way Americans generally regard the commandments today?

SZILARD: Oh, I do not know that at all, but from the point of view of today the Ten Commandments are very much unbalanced, that is, the emphasis in the Ten Commandments is not what the emphasis would be today, if you wrote them today. This is why I rewrote them.

BILL: In what respect?

SZILARD: Well, let me put it this way: The most dangerous sin of society is not individual murder, but war. Now you see, after the last war we formulated, we proclaimed a new law. For instance, we proclaimed something we called crime against peace. And very few people know about it but surely these are very much more important, that those shall be obeyed than any individual killing. You see, we defined as crime against peace, for instance, the initiation of an invasion in violation of international law and treaties, and the Germans were tried under that law. So there is no Ten Commandments which says thou shalt not commit a crime against peace. But I think there ought to be one.

BILL: In other words the emphasis, where the emphasis originally was very definitely as an individual, being addressed to individuals, you would say that today the Ten Commandments need to be addressed to society as a whole.

SZILARD: No, No, I think today the Ten Commandments also should be addressed to individuals, but you see, the crime against peace concept is also applied to individuals. It's a crime not of governments, it's a crime of the individual.

MRS. R. May I ask a question?

BILL: BY all means.

MRS. R. I would say that when that was used, "Thou Shalt Not Kill", it didn't mean only people, it meant all the ways of killing, and there are many ways of killing besides just murder, just killing another person or war. There are many ways of killing, and I've always thought that it applied to anything where you (destroyed.) Where you'd -- and therefore, how it applied to today was in almost any area that you wanted to prevent destruction. That was a command, "Thou Shalt Not Kill."

SZILARD: Well, I understand it always in a more narrow sense. That it really meant, Thou Shalt Not Murder.

BILL: Which is, I understand, the original translation of it, the original word was murder. As differentiated from the word kill. What's your feeling,

Dr. Schuster about the Commandments today.

SCHUSTER: Well, may I say, first of all I think that you have to distinguish between two points of view. One is a rather literal traditional acceptance of the Commandments, and I think we'd be astonished to find how pertinent this still is in large sections of the United States. Most people do not know when you want to carry out literacy programs in the mountains of the south, you do not ask these people to translate or read the newspaper or a comic. The only thing they want to find out how to read is the Bible. And this is much more characteristic in the United States than many people assume. Now, if you take it out of this context and put it into a modern one, well then, I would, myself feel that the first Commandment, being basic, might be interpreted this way. There are various urges in man, all of them, the ones I shall refer to are basically-speaking good. But the supreme urge, and it seems to me the one that dictates our ethical concept is, whether there is an urge to holiness in man. And if you say there is, and you say this urge shall be the first one, and there shall be no other ones before it, that is, you cannot satisfy an urge for power until after you have satisfied the urge for holiness. Well then, something like Adolf Hitler is impossible. I think we have lived in a time which has perhaps violated the Commandment as understood this way more seriously than has any other time. It is the assumption that power for its own sake, the old libidos of any kind -- lust, power and knowledge -- couldn't be supreme in human life unless there were a regulatory factor, which is the urge for it, when it's holy their own civilization will not endure. I sometimes think that perhaps if you understood it this way it would mean for the more sophisticated American almost what it means for the unsophisticated one.

BILL: That this in other words is fairly basic.

SCHUSTER: Yes, I think this is the basic commandment.

BILL: Mrs. Roosevelt, you said something which applied too, and we seem to be getting into that, "I am the Lord thy God which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage. Thy shall have no other God before me." This presupposed an idea of unity, and that from an idea of unity of one God and a single God and a sole God comes an idea of one humanity from which you can logically interpolate one government, one world, and so forth. Is there anything more that we can say about that? This is I should think a quite extreme secularization of the original religious interpretation of it, but it follows it seems to me, because one rarely hears the expression, "One God," these days without hearing the expression, well, without its being used in race relations and so forth, to mean the brotherhood of man.

MRS. R. That seems to me to be at the base, if you believe in one God and if you believe in one God for all people, then all people are children of God. No such question as a difference in race.

BILL: And must be equal. Would you, Dr. Sziland say something on the first Commandment?

A Yes. I can say something which illustrates this concept of God to which Mrs. Roosevelt refers. And this is from George Bernard Shaw's book, "Back to Methusala." There is a discussion in the first act with two biologists and the prime minister. They are talking about the First World War and the biologist says, "Well, first of all, we have so many million dead. And the prime minister says, "Oh, no, "he says," the number of dead is only so much. And finally it took the total number of deaths, and the prime minister was thinking only of the English who died. So finally the prime minister says, "Oh, if you count foreigners." And the biologist says, "God counts foreigners." I think this illustrates what kind of concept of God you relate to the first Commandment.

BILL: Does the first Commandment have an application beyond the concept of God? If we regard the ten Commandments or this commandment at the moment as

basic, the basis for morals and ethics, does it say anything for the person who doesn't believe in God? Does it have any meaning for such an individual?

SCHUSTER: This was the point I was trying to make before, it seems to me that even a person who found it difficult to accept, let's say a Jewish-Christian tradition would nevertheless looking, as we must, at man as we have come to know him decide that, there are only two possible definitions, either this one or that one. Either a man does have a faith in implicit commitment which one, I think myself, of course, must identify with God or else you may be led to strange Gods.

BILL: That's the subject I hope to get on next. What other Gods might one have? What other Gods seem to you to be the ones that in many cases are being preferred in the United States?

SCHUSTER: One example that I always like to use is the example of the Duke of Wellington, who, as a result of going to St. Cyr, had committed himself to the view that the only function of a soldier during the war was to prepare for the peace that was to follow. This is a concept which then came to dominate thinking at West Point too, as a result of Wellington's influence, so that when the Civil War came to an end you had, and it's a good thing to remind ourselves of this, you had a perfectly extraordinary thing happen, and that was that the two major commanders and the President of the United States were both committed to a principle of human dignity. Now, if you compare that, for example, with Adolf Hitler's attitude toward his own soldiers at Stalingrad, why they were flies that could be sacrificed without hesitation. I think you can see very clearly how far manking can move if you take away the basic commitment, the fundamental belief, however you may phrase it in terms of a theological commitment or a philosophical one, we might not agree on that. But I think we probably would on the other.

BILL: Would you say that the worship of money, the worship of power, the worship of ideologies is a breaking of the first Commandment?

MRS. R. Isn't that a worship of self?

BILL: The worship of self you say this is. Well, aren't there selfless worshippers of ideologies, would you say that communists are worshippers of themselves? They certainly worship an idea.

SZILARD: What was it that Mrs. Roosevelt said?

BILL: That worship of power and money in these things was basically worship of self? But would these things be breaking the first Commandment? Is the man whose major aim in life is money or power, is he breaking the first Commandment.

MRS. R. Certainly.

SCHUSTER: He's having other strange Gods before Him.

BILL: What other kinds of things are we Americans in danger of worshipping to the exclusion of God? Or before God?

SCHUSTER: I think you have the same old lebidos the ones we've had with us for thousands of years if you take the lebido of power, it's what the Latin phrase calls *Lebido Dominandi*, it can take one or other form, in our specific American society I think probably does not frequently take the form of money.

SZILARD: I would say success.

BILL: Yes, success. Status.

SZILARD: Success.

BILL: Success.

SZILARD: As variously defined, yes.

BILL: So that this then is a commandment which has not only religious context but has a basic wisdom to it. Would you say that one of the wisdoms in it is the people who make Gods of money, success, power or whatever it may be generally do not live the happiest sorts of lives?

SZILARD: I think you are reading something into this Commandment which is not in there. I think we are reading something into it, yes.

BILL: What's the widest interpretation you could put on it yourself, Dr. Szilard?

SZILARD: Well, I am not in favor of interpreting things widely. Because then you are really projecting.

BILL: How would you interpret it? Literally?

SZILARD: Just what it says. I would interpret it literally, yes. And also let me make other cases.

There may be a case with the co-existence of separate Gods. Let me explain this to you. I have a little nephew, I think nine years old, and his mother is a doctor. She is a doctor at one of our Catholic hospitals. The family is Jewish and one day she came home and said to her little girl that Sister Marie is very ill and I visited her. Sister Marie asked me and you to pray for her, and so the little girl just nodded. Next day her mother went off to the hospital again and said to her, "By the way, did you pray for Sister Marie?" And the little girl said yes, I prayed twice. And the mother said, "Why twice?" She said, "First I prayed to the Catholic God to make her well, and then I prayed to the Jewish to apologize."

SCHUSTER: I don't think that the Gods that are mentioned in the texts of the Commandment are so different from ours. Anthropologically speaking you would have to consider that the Gods with whom the monotheistic tradition first came into conflict were Gods that are very much like modern social expressions of the libidos.

BILL: Gods and goddesses of plenty and so forth.

SCHUSTER: Suppose you take, for example, the old gods of central Europe to whom thousands of victims were offered up every year, or take Bacchus, the God of Gluttony or any one of these apparitions who really projected some libido into human history. And although ours take a different form I think they are basically speaking the same creatures.

BILL: That's a thought I never heard before.

Well unless we have something else to say, let's move on to number two.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, and so on. And an interesting part of this that I think we would want to talk about is the second part, "For I, the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me and showing mercy under thousands," and I am told that that means thousands of generations," of them that love me and keep my Commandments." I might say in the spirit, Dr. Szilard suggested that we have fun that one of the things that Dean Pope said at a previous discussion that I didn't get into my digest was, he insisted on telling us a story about the two sailors who went to church when the ship from the fleet was in town and the sermon was on the Ten Commandments, and as they left the Church one sailor turned to the other one and never made any graven images. What, if any application does Commandment #2 have for us today? What would you say, Dr. Szilard.

SZILARD: None.

BILL: You would say it has no application at all?

SZILARD: None

BILL: What would you say, Mrs. Roosevelt.

MRS. R. I would say that there still was some application for that because as you suggested, people make gods out of the things that they want to achieve in one way or another. So it would seem to me that there was some application that you could -- graven image definitely means that you actually make the graven image if you have something you care about as much. I suppose this would apply to the amount that you would give to the thing you cared about.

BILL: Isn't this the one in which the minister said that this idolatry is what is being talked about here, is that correct?

MRS. R. You can be idolatrous about a lot of things.

SCHUSTER: I would argue that there's one way in which this Commandment is very pertinent and our neighbors can throw this thesis out the window, but after

twenty years of trying to be an educator I have come to the conclusion somewhat reluctantly, that the man or men who devise the phrase "morals equal mores" have done more damage to the United States than anybody else could have rendered. Now, if you read this Commandment to say that this is not so, that the impact of moral conduct over a long period of time will be absolute, whereas the impacts of immoral conduct will also be. Then I don't think you're saying anything different from what the commandment says, and you're making it extremely modern from my point of view.

BILL: THEN morals, in other words, are absolute and mores are not?

SCHUSTER: Well, fortunately the anthropologists have repented from their sins of a generation or two ago but if you take for example, a case like young Van Doren. The most interesting thing to me was this: That very few young people of his generation thought that he had done anything wrong. And why did they think so? Because this is the way you act if you're an advertiser or a public relations person or you're on the air. And there's no other way in which you can act in that context. This is what I mean by mores. And this turns up in a thousand different forms. I think it's -- anyway I think if you applied the commandment to that it would have a considerable pertinence to this day.

SZILARD: You mean the young people thought ~~that~~ that Van Doren violated was the 11th commandment, which reads, "Thou shalt not be found out."

BILL: Perhaps additionally that in that climate he would never be found out because nobody looked. What about this part of it, though? An interesting thing was said at the previous discussion that Old Testament literature is literal and unsentimental and that, "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation", and then the tremendous difference in "showing mercy unto the thousands of generations of them that love me" has been misinterpreted many times and ought really to be interpreted as saying, this

is a fact of life: that the iniquity of fathers is visited upon children and up to maybe three or four generations, but that the kind of absolute morality you're talking about, good behavior is rewarded for generations far beyond that. Does this have any meaning today? If we regard this as part of the second commandment, does this have any meaning today? Is it true that the iniquity of the father is visited unto the children today in our society?

MRS. R. I think without question that has some truth.

SZILARD: Now, you are interpreting this to read it to mean that the mills of the Gods grind slowly.

BILL: More or less, I suppose, yes.

SZILARD: In which I really profoundly believe. Sometimes they don't grind so very slowly.

MRS. R. What you're really saying is that a bad example has an influence on the next generations and perhaps, I don't know enough about it this to know, but perhaps there is something that happens physically also but that a good example perhaps will have an example for many, many years. Now, I think most of us can find in our backgrounds, if we look, certain examples that have come down that have affected, even though they're forgotten, who it was that set this example. I think it comes perhaps to a sense of responsibility. Perhaps there's a sort of tradition that goes on, and many of the younger ones probably have no idea from where it came.

SCHUSTER: May I say that I think that the theologians were saying something like what C.S. Lewis is always saying, that: "You can like the world as it is or you can dislike it. The simple fact of the matter is that this is the only one you've got."

BILL: And that this is merely then, perhaps an observation rather than a part of a -- it's not -- it isn't commanding, it is a sort of an observation that is tacked onto the end of the commandment. Interesting that it should be tacked on to that particular one though. It seems to make it much more forceful than

otherwise would be. Dr. Szilard started by saying he thought this had no application today, and yet this is the one commandment that points out that that the iniquity of the fathers is visited unto the children.

SZILARD: Well, do we have anymore to say about the second commandment? We can always come back. Let's go on to the third then. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh this name in vain. What does this mean today? What should it mean?"

SZILARD: Someone said,

"One must not forge God's signature to one's own hand."

BILL: And we do this all the time.

SZILARD: Our statesmen do it.

BILL: We do it all the time. Everything we do we do in the name of God, don't we? I wonder is there any connection between that, what you say statesmen do, and the original idea in our Constitution of separation of church and state, keeping God, religion and state separate. Was there a thought in anyone's mind then, or should there have been, that this very concept of governing in the name of God was dangerous?

SCHUSTER: I don't know.

BILL: It's a different application. Is it dangerous to govern in the name of God, to declare war in the name of God?

MRS. R. I've always thought that the people who were always so perfectly sure that they were doing what was the Lord's business, so to speak, had a remarkable arrogance because everybody else had the same feeling, that they were carrying out the commandments of the Lord and that this just doesn't seem to me right to be perfectly sure that you are right and that everybody else is wrong.

SCHUSTER: I think that nothing in history has been more interestingly devastating than the notion that ever since the 12th century all statesmen had been fighting crusades in the name of the Lord. This set an awfully bad example.

BILL: The crusades themselves were devastating ^{at} in the numbers of people slaughtered in the name of God.

How does it apply today? What do we do today in the name of God that really is blasphemous in this sense?

SZILARD: We invade Cuba.

BILL: We invade Cuba?

SZILARD: You see, invading Cuba means that Communism is evil and we can fight it with evil means. Not that Communism is bad, but that it's evil and that's a big difference.

BILL: This is an interesting thing. Why is it -- does this explain why so often the most vehement anti-Communists always insist on referring to it as atheistic Communism, is this to invoke God to the other side?

SZILARD: Yes.

MRS. R. Of course.

BILL: This is the idea of referring to Communism always as atheistic communism? We invade Cuba, you say, in the name of God? This is sort of a backward kind of thing. We said that Communism is the devil, really.

MRS. R. And, this is why we cannot allow it to exist.

SZILARD: Yes, it is actually defined as the devil, yes.

BILL: What other things can you think of that -- is this commandment important in terms of -- does it say anything about swearing, about blasphemy, what does it say?

SZILARD: I see no reason why people should object to simple swearing.

BILL: You don't?

SZILARD: Why should God object to simple swearing? It's letting off steam in a most harmless way.

MRS. R. Of course most people were brought up to think that that was the whole meaning, that you shouldn't use the name of God at all except when you used it with reverence and in the proper context, but I don't think it applies anymore.

SCHUSTER: I am perfectly willing to wager that Mrs. Roosevelt has -- I'm perfectly willing to wager that on any number of occasions you got out the soap and washed the mouths of children who had just violated this commandment.

MRS. R. I don't happen to have done it, but I think there were a great many. I done that horrible deed because children lied, but I don't remember doing it for swearing.

SZILARD: This must be the Puritan tradition which is adverse to pleasure, the simple and harmless pleasure of swearing. I think this is the reason for the new interpretation of the commandment.

MRS. R. My mother was brought up more or less according to Puritan ideas and believed that the use of the name of God in casual conversation in a way as an exclamation, was very wrong. I've heard her many times, when she didn't quite dare reprove her son, turn and say to someone, "My son never used to use bad language, he's learned it from his little boy, Johnny, who got it out at the stable."

BILL: The most I can say that I've heard on this subject as far as this commandment is concerned is that the only real danger of using the name of the Lord in vain in the sense of swearing is that you are likely to be thought to be more or less inarticulate, that the articulate person doesn't need to strain for this kind of impact, which is really what you are trying to give to a statement.

MRS. R. Well, in many cases it's just -- almost a habit that people have formed, it doesn't mean anything at all.

BILL: It has no meaning anymore.

MRS. R. No.

SCHUSTER: I think the theologians, of course, did something very important when they were commenting on this and that was to refer to the very probable resemblance that in the Hebraic tradition that sort of thing has to the use

of the name of the Lord in the East, in the Orient where the name -- the nomen -- is really part of the being so that if you called upon the Lord vainly you were violating the whole thing.

BILL: They said another thing that seemed interesting to me, and that was that, well, Dean Pope said there's a curious relation between reverence and profundity, Dean Sperry of Harvard Divinity School used to say that the depth of any religion can be gaged by the most profound oath that you can make, and the trouble therefore, with the Ethical Culture Society was that its most profound oath was Oh, my goodness. You can translate from that that without a basic belief in God one would be unable to really swear to anything, by anything, or at anything, really with a profundity. It's always curious to me that Premier Khrushchev and before him Premier Stalin used very often in their speeches to say ... to refer to God ...

SZILARD: In what way?

BILL: Well, "By God, we will never do this." That kind of thing.

MRS. R. I thought it was a result of their background really, that both of them had religious backgrounds. Premier Khrushchev in a speech in the last general assembly made some reference to God. I can't recall about what.

BILL: I think I recall the same one. I wonder, can people talk -- could you exist for a whole lifetime without referring to God, or some such concept, whether you believe or not.

SZILARD: Yes, some people are very -- to explain, for instance, the remark which I quoted you before: "God counts foreigners". How else would you say it?

BILL: That's right. There is no other way to say it.

SZILARD: Exactly.

BILL: Well, this sort of implies that the whole concept, then, of God is basic human concept.

.of it.

SZILARD: In a sense, yes, one aspect.

BILL: Now, let's go on to number 4, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy". This is quite long what follows that. I won't go into all of it, but I understand, my feeble understanding of the Commandments includes a belief that the strict interpretation of the word Sabbath would mean that this commandment actually applied only to the -- within Judaism and that the Christian religion has translated Sabbath into meaning the Holy Day -- Sunday. Is that correct?

SZILARD: Well, it is the same concept, isn't it?

BILL: Same basic concept.

SZILARD: It's one day in the week which is the holy day.

BILL: Anyway, what does this mean today? What should it mean, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Does this apply to stores that are opened on Sunday, or does this mean that there's something basically important about having a day that is separate and distinct?

SZILARD: I don't know. Seems we have two days, it's become a little blurred.

BILL: Saturday, you mean?

MRS. R. Saturday is the Sabbath for the Jews and Sunday is --

SCHUSTER: I think here again you have to put the emphasis on the word holy. It's true that as a result of this there was introduced into history the concept of the day off, of the freedom of people from labor. But one of the most moving things I've ever seen in my life was the eve of the Sabbath coming in the ghetto of Warsaw. This really was the advent of religion on earth. We have tended, I think, in the Christian dispensation, to break up into parts, that is into those who follow more rigidly the Old Testament and the Jewish tradition and the ones who do not. And when I was a boy in Wisconsin we had all kinds of people who sat on the front porch all Sunday afternoon, and wouldn't do anything, which was not true of my ribald household.

SZILARD: But my point is that when you have two free days like we have it now here, and soon you will have it everywhere, and you look at television on both, the concept of the Sabbath loses its practical meaning.

MRS. R. But you know there's a great deal that turns over between the two because the Jewish Sabbath which has certain very carefully subscribed rites you can't -- I remember once, you can't light the lights at a certain time and you can't -- if you're non-Jewish you can go light the lights. I happened to be in Jerusalem and be with the chief Rabbi and all the lights went out. And I didn't know that a non-Jewish person could light them. I was stupid enough not to know that I could go light the lights. And you don't cook certain things, you don't do certain things. Well now, in my childhood, I happened to be brought up in an Episcopalian church by my grandmother, we had Episcopalian traditions. We were supposed, at least if possible, we did not cook on Sundays and things were cold, and I was never allowed to play games on Sunday, not even a gentle game of croquet was permitted. And I wasn't even allowed the same books to read on Sundays that I was allowed on other days. I was a very strictly brought up little girl in those days, but she was a traditional person. She believed, I think that Jonah was swallowed by the whale, literally. It made no difficulty for her whatsoever. It was just one of those miracles you accepted without any regard to the actual possibilities of the modern whale. And so I think there's much that so mixed a great deal that you just feel as though certain things came over from one area of religion to the other without very much difficulty.

SZILARD: Before we leave the subject I want to tell you a story which I rather like. These are two Jews, who talk, both about their own Rabbi, one tells a Rabbi who is held in high esteem and the story of how the Rabbi got called to a dying man. There was a heavy fog on the road, and so there was no way to get there, but he got into his carriage and he kneeled down to pray to God and told the coachman to drive on, and in front of him there was fog and behind him there was fog, but where the carriage drove there was no fog. The other said something very similar happened to his Rabbi. He was going to a man who was about to die on the Sabbath. You know on the Sabbath you must not drive.

But the Rabbi called his coachman and entered his carriage and prayed to God, then he told the coachman to drive on. In front of him there was Sabbath and behind him there was Sabbath but where the coach drove, there was no Sabbath.

BILL: Going back to what you said earlier, Dr. Szilard, that if we use Saturday and Sunday merely to sit on front of the television set, then it's lost much of its meaning. Isn't it curious that Sunday has turned out in terms of television to be what is called in the business the intellectual ghetto and that on television on Sunday you get the largest concentration of serious programs, and I'm not speaking now only of the religious programs that are generally on in the morning, but in the afternoon, serious programs. It used to be that all the documentaries were on on Sunday. Now, fortunately, you can get them during the week too. But Sunday even on television seems to be a rather different day, a special day.

SZILARD: Well, it's true on the radio. I agree. I usually turned on the radio to get some news and on Sunday I always get a sermon. But most of them strike me as blasphemous, really. A man preaching to morons.

BILL: What does, let's remove it from its religious context for a moment, of what importance is it that we have a day off, or days in which we do not work?

MRS.R. Well, actually, in the modern world, a day of rest for the worker meant a tremendous amount. It meant a great deal for health, for development, for recreation. Now it's spreading so that most people have both days, Saturday and Sunday, but the holy part of the day, which in the Ten Commandments was emphasized and I think still has quite a hold on great numbers of people: the people that feel at least a part of this day should be given to some connection with one's, whatever one's religion may be. Which has an inspirational tie with one's life.

BILL: In addition it certainly is a day in which family becomes more important than the other days of the week, if only by virtue of not working, but very frequently by some such pursuit as what you're ~~talk~~ talking about.

MRS.R. In the Soviet Union Sunday is the day of rest, and families are together that day when they're not together other days except evenings and mornings.

BILL: It's the same day of the week too, isn't it? So there again the Soviet's atheistic^{al}ly though they may be have carried on.

MRS. R. That's their background.

BILL: But they're attempt to deny their background in other areas, why not this?

SCHUSTER: Well, this is a curious thing, but in Eastern Germany you see the thing from another point of view. The effort to wean young people away from their religious moonings very frequently takes the form of occupying the Sunday morning, or indeed the whole Sunday afternoon with something else. So that the young person doesn't have a chance to keep holy the Sabbath day. The Russians are very curious, I think, myself, that many of them have a secret hankering to go to church on Sunday morning. I could tell you many tales --

MRS. R. I wish you could explain something that I've never been able to understand in the Soviet Union. You walk into the Baptist Church and it's filled with young people. Young boys and girls. It's the only denomination where they seem not to be afraid. Now, is it that among them, among the Baptists, there are many people who don't expect any kind of opportunity in the way of joining the party or of great advancement and they're willing to take this or, what is it that -- It's the one church in the Soviet Union that you walk into that has young people in it.

SZILARD: Well, the Baptists were always dissident in Russia, were they not?

SCHUSTER: I'm going to take just a moment to relate this. I had a very interesting experience in Paris. I went to Notre Dame on Sunday morning. It was High Mass. The next day I met the head of the Russian delegation who was a Ukranian diplomat, and he had been ambassador to Turkey. And he said, "You know, I saw you at the Mass last Sunday, and I said, "Yes," and he said, "I go whenever I can to High Mass because the music is so much more attractive than it

is in Russia."

BILL: Well, let's move along. As Dr. Szilard says, we may come back and range over all of them if we want to, once we've been through them.

Fifth Commandment, "Honor Thy Father and thy Mother", and not just that, but in addition, in order that I guess this means, "that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee. What does this mean to you, Mrs. Roosevelt, and what should it mean today?"

MRS. R. Today what it probably applies to is our interest in our growing, rapidly aging generation. But actually I suppose what it meant in those days was that they were seeking to impress the fact that wisdom was gained by experience as much as by other types of learning, and that if you honored your father and mother, you honored other older people who could impart wisdom and therefore this would be of value to you and it's the old question that appears so often in the Bible of reward -- which is the one thing I can't bear in most of these things I always remember you do right in order to be rewarded, runs all through these things. I had an old Frenchwoman who was head of the school where I went to school abroad, and she always used to say, "I could not belong to any religion.. "She said she was an atheist; she wasn't really. But, "I could not belong to any religion where you do right for reward." But that's really what this says: You do it in order that your days may be long in the land which the Lord has given thee.

"A" _ BILL: Couldn't it possibly mean that if we again accept Rabbi Gold's explanation that nothing is sentimental, couldn't it possibly mean that if the concept of honoring thy father and thy mother is upheld that the days of all of us will be long. All of us as our elder citizens will be honored and our days will be long. I don't know if it means that or not.

SZILARD: I would rather agree with Mrs. Roosevelt that if you honor old people, and you benefit from their wisdom, the consequence of this is that those who do it will live to old age.

"B" - SCHUSTER: I've always seen a little more real polite in this than that and you say, well now look here, Jackie, you better honor your father and mother because if the tradition is lost, one of these days you'll be in the same spot and then look what will happen to you.

BILL: The way your children will behave toward you?

SCHUSTER: Yes.

BILL: Except that, again going back to Rabbi Golden, he says that all the commandments were addressed to adults, so that "Honor thy father and thy mother" meant "you adults honor your older father and mother."

SCHUSTER: Most adults are children anyway. It doesn't make any difference.

"C" - BILL: Well, let's translate ^{it} as much as we can today. Do we honor our fathers and mothers, is this a problem in America today?

MRS. R.: We do in our greater concern today with what happens to old people.

It's quite evident that since we have a growing old population, while our concern is largely because of the effect it has on young people, nevertheless, we are concerned for their well being, probably to solve our own consciences, with the idea that there's where we'll be someday.

BILL: You mean we're doing it in an individual way or in a community, ~~in~~ collective way -- through social security and such things? How about individuals? Do we honor our elder citizens as individuals? It seems to me I--

SZILARD: I think America is a very bad country ~~inasmuch~~ as old people are not held in high esteem here. You look at a country like Ireland, for instance. It's a pleasure to grow old in Ireland. I think this is a very bad country. I think that this commandment is violated. Maybe you send money, but you know in this country the mobility is ~~so~~ high that families are torn apart. They move from the West Coast to the East Coast or vice versa. But in this respect, America, is one of the worst countries, I think.

MRS. R. We did this in the days when we lived in a more rural society, where families had more space, where the families lived together and where older people could be useful in the family. Today they can't be useful in the family, they're a great burden, the space is so small, the crowding is so great in the cities, and therefore the community interest in what happens to older people is the only outlet we have for the respect of older people. And the one thing that you object to is the fact that we don't get together with older people, that you find older people forgotten almost in the community care that is given is one of the bad things, I think, about America, but partly you've explained it. People live far away from each other and they don't have the close ties they used to have.

BILL: Isn't it also true that we young married Americans with children rather prefer to have their parents retire to St. Petersburg, let's say, and be at a distance. I would question whether or not we're losing a great deal, whether children who grow up in a household where there are only two generations aren't missing something. That wisdom, the time that a retired grandmother or grandfather has.

MRS. R. I would say that with modern conditions it's much better not to have it in a household. I would say it was an enormous loss that you didn't have it in a family circle. I think all young children who do not know older people rarely are using something very tremendous out of their lives, to live together under modern conditions, no. Not if it can possibly be helped.

SZILARD: But you see there are some other aspects, and let me illustrate. Take for instance a man like Rex Tugwell. What is now going on in Puerto Rico. is essentially, Rex Tugwell. Tugwell lives in Washington, he's retired. No one ever phones him; no one ever visits him. It doesn't occur to anyone that he could be made Ambassador to one of the Latin American countries. He's just forgotten.

BILL: He's not respected in the sense that he should be.

SZILARD: No. He retired; he's written off. This goes beyond necessity and beyond the family; this is not a family affair.

BILL: Let me ask you, Mrs. Roosevelt, because maybe you can say something personal on this. You certainly, of all Americans of your generation are looked up to, asked to participate in things like this, asked to come to speak, appear on television and so forth, your words of wisdom from your generation are listened to. What I'm really asking is, is this something which you have found has merely happened, have Americans merely honored you and wanted this, or is this something that is a function of your own enterprise and your own energy?

MRS. R. No. In my case it's an association with the name of a man and a man that happened to save the country in a very difficult time and it earned for him a respect and a regard which is carried over. I think as far as actually having contact with young people goes, that is something that you can do yourself. That is something which you must do by the effort of understanding, and one trouble with many older people is that they center in themselves and forget that nobody's interested one bit in you. They're only interested in themselves, and so if you want to have the pleasure of contact with younger people you must be interested in them and what they're doing, and that is of your doing.

SCHUSTER: I merely wanted to say that first of all, that Mrs. Roosevelt, as usual, is far too modest. Nobody can testify more brilliantly and eloquently than I can to that simple fact because in over a period of 20 years that Mrs. Roosevelt came to Hunter and there never was a moment when the institution and I mean the youngsters, were not happier to see her than anyone else in the world. I merely want to make this clear. Now I have a little theory about this business, Mrs. Roosevelt, which is this: That if an older person, let's say an older family has a place, a house to which younger people can come, they want to come, and they enjoy this association very much.

Whereas if older people go to live with young people who have no room, this becomes just an ordinary abrasion process. A mother-in-law in days of yore was a sort of special social phenomenon; today she's utterly impossible. And how tragic it is that so many people, by dint of growing old develop economic independence in one form or other. At least they have no means with which they can make young people at home. If I were young I would rather go to jail than go to one of these trailer colonies in Florida. Really, it's a terrible problem. We're trying to do things like senior citizens groups now which may help. But the loneliness of many old people in this country is just tragic.

BILL: Let's digress for just one minute on this point. You said, Mrs. Roosevelt that we are honoring our fathers and mothers to a greater extent than we used to in a social sense, through legislation and so forth. This is a kind of a group morality. Do you think there's a danger in this group morality, in a group morality approach to any of the commandments or to any moral problem? This one is a good one to use as an example, that we will feel absolved as individuals from our individual -- from the injunction as individuals? In other words, when we start taking care of the aged through government, most of us sort of then turn our backs on the whole problem as individuals? Is there a danger here?

MRS. R. Yes, unless it's very wisely done. I've always looked back on something that I once saw in Sweden was being a very wise thing. They do not build housing for old people just by themselves. They put the housing for old people on one side of the square, and both the other sides are housing for young marrieds with children, all of whom have to be within a certain income group, more or less. And you would find that the central square, it stands where there used to be a shopping area, and you would find the central square in the mornings the old people would be sitting with a baby carriage to be watched or a child playing on the sandpile to be watched, and that would relieve the young mother. The young mother came back and there was a nice chat and talk and picked up her *child*.

And this never separated the life of the old from the stream of life of the young. And I think this is something which is what I fear here, where we are trying to build places for older people quite aside without any interest really of holding families together, of keeping a center where they meet and I think this is much more sensible. I've always thought so than what you see happening in many cases here.

BILL: So as we become more moral in a group sense, we better watch out that we don't forget about our individual responsibility. Well, now let's go on to #6, "Thou Shalt Not Kill." Dr. Szilard, if I gave you four hours could you finish talking about this one?

SZILARD: I don't have much to say about this. I just think that one commandment should say, "Thou Shalt not commit a crime against peace, and relate this to the individual, not to the nation.

BILL: This is the kind of killing that is

SZILARD: Most dangerous.

BILL: Most dangerous, and the cloud under which we live every day today. How can we translate this injunction the way you put it to individuals, because everyone seems to think that war, Cuba, all of these things -- Nobody asked me whether we should invade Cuba, nobody's going to ask me whether we should push the red button. How can you make it an injunction to individuals.

SZILARD: Well, you see, after the last war, there was a court which tried these people, and you could set up a court in peactime which could try these individuals provided these individuals would appear in court. If they refused to appear, they have admitted guilt.

BILL: Are you saying that the reverse of what you're saying is true, that if you

say thou shalt not commit a crime against the peace, aren't you also saying that

SZILARD: No, that I cannot say, you see, these are essentially all negative you should work for peace/
in general. I think they are injunctions, and, I think we must keep them in-
junctions.

MRS. R. Yes, but Professor Szilard, isn't it perhaps true that you can set the courts. Perhaps that's what we're moving towards when we talk about the world under law or that if we do manage slowly to build international law which applies in the area of killing in general and functions as law would function in a state, but functions on an international basis, that perhaps that's what we're striving for.

SZILARD: There is some movement in this direction, and it could be even faster. There is no reason really why we couldn't set up a court today. Every nation could delegate a judge. Somehow you could have judges that could set in permanence on any accusation of a crime against peace committee could be heard by them. They couldn't enforce it, you see--they couldn't force a man to go there, but if a man refused to appear, he really has admitted guilt.

BILL: And he could be tried in absentia.

SZILARD: And he could be tried in absentia. It wouldn't be easy, but something could be done. Anyway, I think we could move in this direction.

BILL: No, but I mean that if we were all pacifists within this country, wouldn't we be a setup then for anyone who --

MRS. S.: Of course. We can't have a unilateral disarmament.

DR. SZ.: Well, I don't agree. I think you can. I think nothing would happen to us. I'm not advocating this, because it would not be acceptable--to the American temperament, but, absolutely nothing would happen to us.

BILL: Under these conditions, today.

DR. SZ.: If we were unilateral by pacifist and disarmed, no one would touch us.

BILL: Would you say that this was true in 1940?

DR. SZ.: As far as this country was concerned, probably the same would have been true in 1940.

BILL: What about in Britain? In 1940?

DR. SZ.: It was probably true in Britain in 1940. You see, there is no point in attacking somebody who has no arms, because you attack usually to shift the power pattern and for no other reason. I mean if France had been

unarmed, the Germans would never have moved into France.

BILL: They would have moved against Russia.

DR. SZ.: They would have moved against Russia, yes.

BILL: Are you saying then that there is no drive for territory, for expansion, that wouldn't go on under these...

DR. SZ.: In some regions of the world this may be true, but not when you occupy whole continents.

BILL: Or a desire to enslave people that might not be ...

DR. SZ.: I don't think so. Well, let me again tell you a story. This was in England, it was two years ago, there was a sort of little meeting there and afterwards we had tea, and in came J. B. Priestly and several other Englishmen. And Priestly took the lead in unilateral disarmament in England. And I asked him, "What do you really mean?" Well, he said, what he proposed was that there should be a militia organized for the defense of the British Islands and then England should give up the Bomb and all major weapons and withdraw from international politics and it should not exercise any power, outside of England. And I said, "Now look, I agree with you in everything except I don't see, if you do all, that why you need the militia." I said, "Look outside the window." It was snowing and fog and sleet. I said, "Look outside the window. Who is going to take you.. to come here to conquer this island?"

BILL: You mean, who wants it?

DR. SZ.: Who would want it. I mean...

BILL: I sense that...

DR. SZ.: Pardon?

BILL: I was ~~going~~ to say, I sense disagreement in Mrs. Roosevelt. What would you say?

MRS. R.: I don't think we have reached a point where this is possible, and I think the answer is perhaps in the fact that we never have really.. these Ten Commandments were given to people at a certain point of development, if we lived up to real love of God, then actually there would be no point in having

the Ten Commandments because if we did exactly what God's Will would be, there would be absolutely no reason for war, no reason for anything else. But, unfortunately, I don't think we've ever reached that point. We've never really tried to really carry out on a mass scale, on a mass group of people, the Will of God as we conceived it. Now, whether it would be the Will of God is something again that we have to face. We don't know whether we would be carrying out the Will of God. But, suppose that we conceived what was the Will of God and really tried to live up to it. The few people I know who I think have really tried to live up to what they thought.. to what they had made up their minds to what were the Commandments of God and used Christ as an understanding of what life lived under these Commandments would mean, have not been very popular. Usually, they had a very hard time, probably because it is a very uncomfortable situation to be in, and you make everybody else uncomfortable, and people don't like to be made uncomfortable, so I don't know... I don't think I do agree with you, Professor Szilard, that we have reached a point where, if you had unilateral disarmament, there would be nothing to tempt people at certain points to try to overwhelm the person who would not defend himself.

DR. SZ: Well, then, let me give you another example which is vivid in my mind, and this was a conversation in Germany in 1931 or 1932--before Hitler. And this was in university circles, sort of an aristocracy of university professors, who lived outside of Berlin. And Germany was disarmed at this time, and everybody there agreed that Germany must re-arm, and I said, "Why?" I said, "Now, look. You lost the war; after the war, everybody took away from you what they wanted to take away, and now you are disarmed. Why are you in danger? Nobody will take away anything. They already have taken away everything they want." So, I said, "As long as you remained disarmed, there will be no danger for you. But if you re-arm, there will be danger." They couldn't see it. I would have thought that it was simple enough to see that if they were unarmed...then for 15 years they had been unarmed, and, of

course, nothing happened to them. Nobody was afraid of them.

MRS. R.: Yes, but, professor, suppose that they had proceeded as they undoubtedly would, to economic wealth, and they had put everything they had into regaining a position of strength in the economic field. Do you think that it would not have been a temptation to the Soviet Union to cross the border and taken over some of those factories, or felt that they would profit by doing that.

DR. SZ: Well, look. In the 1930's the Germans were a wealthy nation. They were the wealthiest nation on the Continent. No one thought that the Russians would try to walk in and take it away. No one had this idea. It is very difficult to move in somewhere and take wealth away, you know, unless you actually take the furniture.

BILL: Which is almost literally what happened, at one point.

MRS. R.: I would suggest this. They could move in and their government in and on you.

DR. SZ.: How do you get any goods out of it. Then you have to make Germany a colony. Even if you are disarmed, it is very difficult to make an indoctrination, a colony.

BILL: What happened in East Germany?

DR. SZ.: Well East Germany is a colony, you see. But this was at the end of a war. The war was lost the Russians moved in with their troops. It would never have happened unless it had been for the second World War.

MR. S.: Well, what would have stopped them from taking over the West? I think this is, however, not really the Ten Commandments.

DR. SZ.: I am only giving you disarmament as a general panacea. In certain situations, for instance, like Germany before the second World War. Unilateral disarmament was a very good thing, and they were perfectly secure. And I think that England would be perfectly secure unilaterally disarmed. I think America would, also. Not every other nation, however.

BILL: Poland would not have been, in 1939.

DR. SZ.: Poland would not have been, and it was not secure even though it was armed.

BILL: Well. Other aspects of Thou Shalt Not Kill. I gather none of us feel that absolute passivism is either possible or desired or commanded here.

MRS. R.: I could see it if it was absolutely universal, but I don't think it can be without it being universal.

DR. SZ.: Well, it is possible for individuals.

BILL: Not to defend yourself against personal attack, in the night, against the robber?

DR. SZ.: Well, no, that is not possible. That is something else. I really think that this is meant in the narrow sense of the word, and that Thou Shalt Not Kill should be interpreted in that way. That Thou Shalt Not Murder is its meaning and that any extension...

BILL: Wouldn't you say that as far as the Commandments go, this is one, if you interpret it as Thou Shalt Not Murder, in which we have actually improved over the centuries. We don't have... Well, no.

MRS. R.: Now, we still have murder. Now come.

BILL: Well, we had the murder of 6 million Jews in Germany.

MRS. R.: Not only that, but we have every day...

BILL: But, I was going to say, Capital Punishment is dying out. Many of the... This century has seen more murders, probably than any other century.

MR. S.: I think that this commandment, interpreted in the way in which the professor just suggested is very pertinent. Because one of the other things that becomes more and more evident in the process of technological advancement is the increase in delinquency as part of that homicide. The plain fact of the matter is that the rate of homicide throughout the developing world is much higher than it was even fifty (50) years ago, and this is a real challenge.

BILL: Well...

MR. S.: I would say that the social import of the challenge at the moment is to build into the development of technological process as many social and moral safeguards as you can, against that of which killing is a part.

BILL: Let's go on and then we can come back again. The Seventh Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery. Somewhere in the Interpreter's Bible, the statement is made that this is probably the least kept of the commandments today, one in which there has been greater slacking off, corrosion. Would you agree with that?

DR. SZ.: I'd like to tell you three English stories. The first one is that a club has a social event and invites members to take part, and a man gets an invitation, and at the bottom of the invitation it says that members may bring wives. So he goes to the office and says, "Look here, I'm a bachelor. I have this invitation. Can I bring a girl friend?". And the man in the office says "Certainly, sir. If she's the wife of a member." The next story is a cocktail party, and the host serves whiskey. There's a clergyman. He is offered a glass of whiskey, but he draws himself up, indignantly, and says, "No, thank you. I'd rather commit adultery." And the host says, "Who wouldn't rather and who wouldn't". The third is that there is a clergyman, whose bicycle disappears, and he is very put out about it and on Saturday evening he meets a friend and says, "Do you know, I am going to get that bicycle back." "Well, how will you do it?" "Tomorrow I am giving a sermon. I will preach on the Ten Commandments, and when I come to the Eighth Commandment, I shall watch the audience. I will see. I will really give it to them, and I will see who is fidgeting. I will get my bicycle back." So, the next morning, Sunday comes, and he gives his sermon. That evening he meets his friend again, and the friend says, "Well did it work?" Well, he says, it didn't quite work. I did give a sermon on the Ten Commandments, but, when I came to the seventh Commandment, I remembered where I left my bicycle." So, I move that the Seventh Commandment be abandoned.

MR. S.: Well, I am going to dissent with you. I don't think, really and honestly, that adultery is any more prevalent today than it was. As a matter of fact, I would be willing to wager that among most young married Americans, there is less adultery now, than I knew in the days of my youth.

DR. SZ.: Yes, but divorces is taking its place.

MR. S.: Yes, this is another phenonemon.

BILL: Well, from the Catholic point of view, it's the same thing, isn't it.

MR. S.: Oh, heavens, no.

BILL: Divorce.

MR. S.: Well, divorce is much worse than adultery.

BILL: What I mean is that its a means of committing adultery. Divorce and re-marriage.

MR. S.: Well, divorce is of course, quite a different thing from adultery morally speaking. But the old Eurpean practice of maintaining marriage, while committing adultery, has never been popular in the United States, although undoubtedly indulged in it. But, I...

BILL: You, then, would say that this is more probably more honoured than previously.

MR. S.: I would be prepared to say that provided you removed from consideration certain populations which are urban without having any higher stage of development, that I would be impressed by the fact that there is a great deal more fidelity inside the marriage bonds than there used to be. Now, I base this rather formidable generalization, only on one man's views. I have lived with a lot of young people in my day.

BILL: What -

MRS. R.: I wanted to say that the rise of divorce is probably one of the reasons why you did not have as much adultery, perhaps. Because, I think that with a great many young people in America, the idea has grown, that if something happens that makes life seem unbearable, or not right, they are

looking for something which...they didn't marry with the idea that "For better for worse", no matter how unhappy you were, you stuck. They married with the idea that it was going to be perfection, and then, when it was not perfection, they were much more quick in feeling that it was far better to get a divorce than to lead what they would consider to be a sinful existence.

But, what I think people are beginning to recognize, slowly, is that the psychological impact of infidelity on the injured partner is much greater than normally speaking we had thought about. That you can actually ruin and corrode the human spirits all their lives long by this act, and that you also ruin the children. In short, I think that we have begun to compensate for a loss of seriousness about what is physical in marriage by an acquisition of insight into the psychological factors involved.

BILL: Then this would be the new stress that is needed on this commandment today.

MR. S.: I would say so. I preach all the time, myself, in this sense, to clergymen, and tell them for heaven's sake don't attach so much importance--this, of course, is particularly true in the Catholic group--to what is purely a sexual relationship. But think rather of the other things, which are terrifying. Anybody who has sat for any length of time and watched this process in young men and women knows whereof I speak. And particularly of children. If anybody thinks that adultery, gone into however lightly and however gracefully, cannot completely shatter the life of the other member of the party, they're so mistaken, and it would be impossible to imagine anyone being more mistaken.

BILL: Well, now, getting onto the next one: Thou Shalt Not Steal. What about it?

DR. SZ: I think we should abolish it, because stealing has become quite unimportant.

BILL: Really?

DR. SZ.: Who steals?

MR. S.: Oh boy.

BILL: Well, what would you say about... Wouldn't you say that this has some application to the two giant electrical corporations in the United States today: General Electric and Westinghouse, among others?

BILL: You would not? Or they would not?

DR. SZ.: They would not. I don't know if it's stealing. You see, there are many countries who have no such laws. Anti-trust law is a specialty of the United States, and, well, I don't know.

BILL: Isn't it stealing when you falsify or shade your federal income tax? Aren't you stealing from somebody?

DR. SZ.: Oh, sure, but you see, take the General Electric Company or Westinghouse. It is true that they earned more than they should but the federal government immediately took 52 per cent from corporate income and when the shareholders got their money, they had to pay personal income tax. I don't think it is really important.

BILL: Not in the category with the others, you mean?

DR. SZ.: Certainly not.

MRS. R.: But, it still has a very simple connotation for children.

DR. SZ.: Yes.

MRS. R.: You still teach it to children, and I think it's rather important in teaching children.

MRS. R.: May I tell you a story about this?

BILL: Please do.

MR. S.: This is Perry Miller going to Union Theological Seminary to lecture on Puritanism. When he arrived on the scene they gave him three keys. One was to the outer gate. The second was to the seminary and the third was to his room. And he said, "Now, I can understand perfectly why you give me the key to the outer gate. I can even understand why you give me the one to the house. But, why give

me a key to my room when I'm in a seminary?" And the cleaning woman turned to him and said, "Professor, you may be in the seminary, but you're also in New York."

BILL: Dr. Szilard, if only-- let's apply this for a moment in a very narrow sense. Plagiarism. You're a writer. People do steal things that other people have originated. Ideas, patents, inventions, writings.

DR. SZ.: Yes, yes, they do.

BILL: They do it very often.

MRS. R.: But sometimes unconsciously, I think.

DR. SZ.: Sometimes unconsciously, yes.

BILL: Father LaFarge was telling about a sermon which he had written and had had published, which he fifteen years later read as the doctoral thesis of another Roman Catholic priest. Word for word.

DR. SZ.: This is not meant to say you should not be a burglar. We are not talking of professional stealing. It's a very poor profession. But the Commandment is not meant for stealing an idea.

BILL: Why not?

DR. SZ.: Oh, we were not supposed to have ideas in those days. It was not socially acceptable.

MRS. R.: I think it's a very useful Commandment. I think we still need to teach our youngsters not to take from other people. And they begin by taking things and later take much more from other people if they haven't learned that this you have no right to do. They haven't the right to take somebody else's honour. They haven't the right to take somebody else's weakness, perhaps take advantage of it.

DR. SZ.: But would children generalize in this way?

MRS. R.: I think it grows from the beginning. The little thing at the beginning, you see. If you learn it from the beginning, then it applies in a broader way all your life.

BILL: What about this?

DR. SZ.: When you teach children not to take somebody else's property, you teach them not so much you shouldn't steal. You teach them a very complicated notion of property. It's a very complicated concept, you know.

MRS. R.: It isn't only property. You don't take somebody else's time when you have no right to take it.

BILL: Right.

MRS. R.: You don't take...

BILL: Somebody else's words without quoting them.

MRS. R.: There are a lot of things that are stealing that you teach a child very young. Consideration for others is really nothing more than not stealing certain things from other people.

BILL: I would suggest that maybe this is a very important commandment today, particularly in the United States, since this is really today a credit economy. Everything we do, practically, depends on other people trusting us and our trusting other people and institutions. You couldn't run a grocery store today if the concept of "Thou Shalt Not Steal". I mean, when you sign the bill at the end of the month, nothing would happen. It seems to me that we have a--we, perhaps more than any other nation, depend on the confidence that other people will not steal.

DR. SZ.: Maybe so, but I think the time has come for God to delegate this to the police. It is no longer a concern of God. It is the concern of the police.

BILL: How can we convince you?

MRS. R.: I think it's a concern of personal character and you have to teach it; teach it and have it grown into all kinds of different areas.

MR. S.: You know what one of the most amazing facts of American academic life is today? A simple fact. Is the willingness of young people to ruin library books, by taking safety razors and cutting pages out of them. This is, I confess--

MRS. R.: Well, that is stealing.

MR. S.: And it's a very grave form of stealing.

DR. SZ.: Why do they do that? Do they need it for...?

MR. S.: They want this for notes, probably for writing a thesis, and they're too lazy to sit in the library or perhaps--

MRS. R.: They're too lazy to copy it.

MR. S.: They simply take the safety razor and cut pages out.

BILL: I think among those of us who love books, this becomes probably the ultimate crime.

MR. S.: They deprive everybody else, for months, of the opportunity to use the book, until you can have the pages reproduced, fitted into the volume, you see, nobody else can have it; and you can preach, point all this out; they never learn. The only institution in which this does not exist are the Virginia ones which have the honor system. It's a very remarkable thing, and I was going to say finally, that I think--Dr. SZ. the honor system is a form of unilateral disarmament--

MR. S.: Oh, no. The honor system is the most rigorous legislation that has ever been introduced to enforce a moral code. It's much more rigorous than anything that we adults would impose.

BILL: And it's not passive, either, because you are required to report.

MR. S.: I was going to say finally that I think the real modern significance of the Ten Commandments is that people form honor systems.

BILL: To self impose them, is that what you're saying?

MRS. R.: To self impose them.

BILL: Well, now "Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor." Well, this immediately--the first thing I thought when I began thinking of other applications of this was the whole McCarthy era. And it turns out that in ancient times, this is really what it meant too, What are the dangers here, and what are the pertinent dangers for Americans about bearing false witness against thy neighbor?

What would you say, Mrs. Roosevelt? Does this remind you of the McCarthy era?

MRS. R.: Yes. It reminds me of the UnAmerican Activities Committee.

BILL: Are we still in this era today?

MRS. R.: Yes. We certainly are, but of course, you have to take it with shades, I think. Because you can bear false witness by simply--you don't have to actually say what isn't true, you can just imply it, you can still bear false witness.

BILL: Well, by holding back and not saying what is true, what you know is true.

How do you feel about this, Dr. Szilard?

DR. SZ.: Well, let me think a little bit. I want to give a classical example for what you just said, and that is when--on ship the first officer looks at the log book, and there the captain wrote the first officer was drunk all day, and he goes to the captain and says, "Well, did you write this?" "You were drunk, weren't you?" "Yes, I was drunk." "Well," the captain says, "I have to enter in the log book what is true." A few days pass and the captain looks at the log book. And there is an entry by the first officer. 'The captain was sober all day.' No false statement.

I think this is very important, because this can poison a society.

BILL: This goes back, again, to the whole business of credit and trusting people.

DR. SZ.: This can really poison a society. I mean, Freedom can get lost without concentration camps.

BILL: Is this...Would you say that this is a particular commandment that we are in need of re-studying, re-valuating and re-dedicating ourselves to?

DR. SZ.: Well, I wouldn't say that. I don't think the situation is dangerous. I was never that much afraid of McCarthy as most people were. They all thought this would run on. Because, you see, Hitler-- If McCarthy also had a positive idea, then he would have been exceedingly dangerous. But only with the negative, you cannot get very far, and I think that these things come in periods and disappear again, and I don't regard them as really an enormous dangerous today.

BILL: Except to the individual. It can destroy an individual's --

DR. SZ.: It can destroy an individual's life, yes. But, as far as the nation is concerned, I don't think we're in terrible danger.

BILL: Let me ask this: When we--

DR. SZ.: You see, I think that the inherent tendency to conform is a greater danger.

BILL: When we say that we have never made overflights over the Soviet Union, and this becomes a statement of the administration of the whole country, governmental statement stamped with approval, and we say that we have not encouraged an invasion in Cuba, this conformity that you're talking about, don't we endanger the individual's living up to this when we seem, as a government, not to be living up to this? Wouldn't you call that false witness?

DR. SZ.: Well, I would not. This is-- what I think you say is terribly bad. It shouldn't be done, but it is not exactly this.

MRS. R.: No. It's a lie. But it's not exactly this. It's not false witness.

MR. S.: It's not false witness.

BILL: I suggest, though, that maybe it's only not false witness because we live under an anarchy of nations where no one can swear some nation's president to oath before he makes a statement.

DR. SZ.: Look, let me make here a remark. What we have done is in our invasion of Cuba and then our attempt to cover it up... I'm beginning to take a rather optimistic view of it. I think that one of the very--one of the most tenacious theses which came up after the war, is that there are two kinds of nations. Peace-loving nations and then the bad nations. And that we are in one category and the others are in the other. I think we are beginning to demonstrate now, there are two kinds of nations--that there are certain laws which govern the behavior of the

great powers, and we are a great power. And that, I think, has some usefulness.

BILL: To learn this, you mean.

DR. SZ.: Yes, to demonstrate this. Because all is true, but now it is becoming manifest, and if it is true, it is good that it is becoming manifest.

BILL: What would you say, Dr. Schuster, about bearing false witness.

MR. S.: Well, I think that, while I would agree that the danger is not very great, nevertheless, if you survey the whole scene insofar as the pressure groups are concerned, it isn't very encouraging. There are, for example, the groups that you can identify with the John Birch Society, for better or for worse. There are groups which you can identify with organized labor versus management, in which many, many things are said that are simply not true. Then you have the whole gamut of religion. Some of the attacks have been mitigated, but some have not. Some are probably more violent than they have ever been, so I think the whole area of pressure group of prejudice in the United States is one that does still constitute a great challenge to the republic. I always read the bulletins of the Anti-Defamation League, their optimism. As a matter of fact, I don't think that there's any less anti-Semitism in this country than there has been at any time that I know of. I would say that in this area there is a whole of a lot of false witnessing going on, even though the total volume may not be enough to prop the vote or undermine the nation.

MRS. R.: Relatively, there's a tremendous amount of false witnessing in one way and different or another, through the hate groups and in various ways. I do think that what was said here that we live in a period where we must have great confidence and that false witnessing can destroy confidence. It does destroy confidence in your neighbor, so that you don't believe in anyone anymore, and that is a dangerous thing.

BILL: Skepticism can be healthy, but cynicism, I think, is a very dangerous thing.

DR. SZ.: Well, perhaps the most dangerous thing we could think of is the way it relates to other nations. We paint a picture...in war-time we do this, but, we are also doing it before the war. And that is terrible danger, because you really get a completely - this picture is really accepted by the majority...

BILL: It's a deliberate attempt to distort.

DR. SZ.: To distort, yes. I don't know how deliberate it is, because most people believe it.

BILL: People come to believe it.

DR. SZ.: They come to believe it, yes.

MR. S.: When the British began to, after the first World War, to reveal with what cynical nonchalance they had maligned the Germans, something happened to me at that time; I'll never forget.

BILL: And between nations false witness--it's almost false witness---the Balfour Declaration, at the same time that assurances were given to Egypt is almost false witness. And if you study them certainly all the Nazi-Soviet Pact and all of the pacts that led up to the War with their secret protocols, which were in direct conflict with other ones. This is-- you're not swearing on a bible, I suppose, when you sign a treaty, but this certainly comes very close to being false witness. I should think it's a very dangerous kind of thing. Let's go on to "Thou Shalt Not Covet" all of these various things. I could say that the theologians seemed in agreement on the point that this is a sort of going beyond the other commandments to say that before the deed--the thought precedes the deed. The danger starts with the covetous thought.

DR. SZ.: I assume it means that you should not follow up your coveting by action. Which is probably what it means, doesn't it? I don't see how anyone can censor anyone's feelings.

BILL: We've already said, "Thou Shalt Not Steal". Now we say, "Thou Shalt Not Covet", which means even think about stealing. It would seem to me that this would be the most impossible one of the Commandments to try to enforce.

MRS. R.: It's really in many ways against much that we teach, because if you don't ever want anything, that anybody else has, then you don't make very much effort to change the condition in which you may be where you don't have certain things. So, I don't see whether this was supposed to curtail the ambition of people, or whether it was simply to warn them that the ambition must be a single-minded desire for yourself, but not in comparison to what your neighbor had. It's an almost impossible commandment in the ordinary lives of people.

BILL: Nevertheless, if you could possibly obey this, you would not have to worry about many of the others.

MR. S.: These are habit forming commandments, I suppose. I've always sort of tended to equate them with "Lead us not into temptation". I think that a point where you begin to - Well, Mrs. Smith, who lives across the street from me is a very beautiful woman and I look at her admiringly, every time she comes to the door. But, if I begin to say to myself, "I wonder how I could lure Mrs. Smith over here on some dark night," this is another thing. At this point, my admiration becomes temptation, and the Old Testament is full of this sort of business.

BILL: Covet means a bit more than want, doesn't it?

MR. S.: This means that you really--

BILL: Connive--

MR. S.: Begin to scheme how you're going to get it. And, of course, you see these poor farmers living out here in the Near East with their little few sheep and their cows and their goats, and then somebody suddenly decides, "Now, how could I inveigle one of those to step over and join my herd?" This is where it begins to be dangerous, I think.

DR. SZ.: I was surprised to what extent this describes an affluent society, you see. His neighbor has a manservant and a maidservant. Maybe the tenth commandment was meant only for the upper classes?

BILL: As far as coveting maidservants is concerned this has always been considered fair game in Suburbia. Hiring someone's maidservant away from him.

MR. S.: Yes, I think we probably would not regard this as a serious offense, although it can be a very annoying---

MRS. R.: "Nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's".

BILL: Would you say-- is there general agreement that this is perhaps the least important of the commandments, to reaffirm today?

MRS. R.: The most difficult. How are you going to hail somebody to court for having coveted. You don't know whether he coveted.

DR. SZ.: Yes, but you don't need to bring it to court, because God knows that he is coveting.

BILL: Well, now, would you agree with what the theologians, the ministers, the rabbi seem to agree. That one could, - not on this commandment, but on the commandments as a whole--that one could live one's whole life and never disobey a commandment and still be a thorough wretch. This is a very, very tenuous beginning towards a morality, that it certainly is not all-inclusive.

DR. SZ.: Surely.

BILL: You would agree with that? Would you agree that it's a good start?

DR. SZ.: Fair, I would say.

MRS. R.: It doesn't really give you much suggestion of what you should do. It tells you right along what you shouldn't do. It doesn't help you much in what you should do.

BILL: Of course it was followed in Exodus by a rather well defined system of law, and that was one of the things that they pointed out as well. Tell us about your

commandments, now, Dr. Szilard. I think this is the propitious moment.

DR. SZ.: Let me just tell an analogous story. You see, you ask if somebody abided by all these Ten Commandments, would this insure a good life? And this story Mrs. Roosevelt may or may not have heard. A letter arrived in the White House, when Mr. Roosevelt was in the White House, saying, "Dear Mr. President, I'm sure you would be glad to learn that I am in the possession of the four freedoms. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. But, please note that I'm a prisoner in Leavenworth.

BILL: So that there's always something to be desired.

DR. SZ.: It's very difficult to get these things. These commandments really mean nothing, unless, you see, they are put in their proper language. It has a certain rhythm to it, and I would not like to translate it. I can send you a copy, and maybe you can find somebody who will translate it and I will not try to translate it now. One says, however, "Don't lie without necessity." One says, "Don't covet what you can't get."

MRS. - That's the one I like.

MRS. R.: One says that you should--this one I like.

DR. SZ.: And one says that--instead of saying "Thou Shalt Not murder", it says, "Don't destroy what you cannot create."

BILL: That's rather beauti---That is poetic.

DR. SZ.: The whole thing is poetic, and I'm glad I get the thing in the German edition of this book now.

BILL: It's not in the English edition?

DR. SZ.: No, because, the translation is too difficult. But I will send you a copy.

BILL: Leaping from the Ten Commandments to morality, in general, would you say that we are in need of some kind of re-affirmation, if not of the Ten Commandments, of a general moral code of some kind?

DR. SZ.: What do you mean by re-affirmation? Writing down something, proclaiming something?

BILL: No. I don't know what I mean. Are we in this country? Are we in a state of moral decline? Personal, individual moral decline.

DR. SZ.: No. I wouldn't say so.

BILL: You wouldn't think so?

DR. SZ.: No.

BILL: What would you say, Mrs. Roosevelt? I understand you read the article that I had in Redbook on American morality.

MRS. R.: It's a very difficult thing to say because I think in some curious way I think that we had right after the war a certain moral decline. I think it's going up again now.

DR. SZ.: In what did this manifest itself?

MRS. R.: Well, I found, I think that quite a number of young people who'd been through the war felt for a time that they were entitled to happiness, that they were entitled because they had been through something which demanded a great deal of them and made them unhappy in many ways, they were entitled to a certain amount of happiness. And I think it led to--I don't know whether to call it a lessening of moral sense for a time. But in the younger people today, I don't find this. I find a greater sense of responsibility in the next generation and a--in some cases-- a judgement on their elders for having felt it. Now, whether that's good, I don't know. Because it's less charitable. But in the generation before there was great charity for what other people did. Because you, yourself, had felt this feeling that you were entitled to have a better life.

DR. SZ.: Are you talking about people who were in the war, the second World War?

MRS. R.: I'm talking about people who were in the war or who were of the age to be involved in the war, and not just those who were actually in the war, but those

who were actually in the war, but those who stayed home and went through-- and I think this happened on a fairly broad scale, and I see quite a difference today, so that I think it depends upon the generation that you're looking at. Whether this would happen anyway, generations change in any case, I don't know.

DR. SZ.: But, you see, the people, the boys who came back from the war and studied under the G.I. Bill of Rights, they were very serious. They were a very good group, studied very hard--

MRS. R.: Yes, some of them did, but on the other hand, some that did not take the opportunity to go back to college or that were perhaps a little bit older-- I think you found among them and among the girls they left at home, a sense that they had been through an experience which entitled them to look for happiness, and not--

DR. SZ.: You mean for pleasure, for pleasure.

MRS. R.: Yes, for pleasure, but tied up with a sense that you have had a hard time, and therefore, you have some kind of compensation coming to you, you see. And it allowed you to do things and excuse them by saying, Oh, well, I was in the war and now it's my turn.

BILL: It's very interesting, because, you know, my -- if you'd asked me without saying any of these things, I would have said exactly the opposite. I would have said that people like President Kennedy, people like George McGovern, who came out of the war with a tremendous sort of idealistic fervor, that perhaps wouldn't have been there otherwise. People like Millard Lantel, People like Bill Atwood. There's a whole-- this is my generation too. Maybe it's that these people that have come to notice to me, that have seemed to symbolize this period, but it seems to me there was a great time of fervor and idealism--United World Federalists started at this time.

MRS. R.: Maybe you were a bit younger.

BILL: I was in the war for four years. I'm forty. So this is really my generation. I would have said exactly the opposite. This is when AVC got started. This is

when the United World Federalists got started. This is when there were movements all over. And, you're right about going back to school. I went back to school, and the campuses--the kids who were just getting to be freshmen couldn't get into school because of--

MRS. R.: You had a purpose to do something. I think that's true.

BILL: Yeah.

MRS. R.: I think I was thinking more of people who came back and went right into business that had finished college.

BILL: That felt they had to make up for what had been taken away from them. I suspect both things happened.

MRS. R.: I expect that's quite true.

BILL: Well, is there anything more that we should say or could say about any one of the commandments or the commandments generally? Dr. Schuster?

MR. S.: I don't think I'd want---I might make a few pessimistic remarks at the conclusion. If you credit sociologists with insight, then the prediction is that by 1975 between one fourth and one third of all American children will be classified as juvenile delinquents.

DR. SZ.: I don't accept your premise, but I accept your conclusion.

MR. S.: If this is true...

BILL: Of course, the classification of what juvenile delinquency is, is a very important part of this. Margaret Mead said recently that one of the great dangers in talking about juvenile delinquency was that the upper class group tends to classify delinquency as any behavior which is different of the middle-class group, which is different. Loudness in clothes, loudness in speech, loudness in--

DR. S.: Sociologists of whom I'm speaking are not guilty of this. I think that this is a phenomenon that is quite disturbing.

DR. SZ.: But this is not only in America; what is going on here?

MR. S.: Well, you remember that in Hungary, when things got really bad under _____ he called all the bishops on the telephone and asked them please to hurry up and teach the Ten Commandments all over again. That was the point to which I...

MRS. R.: Well, I take exception, you know, to much of what we call juvenile delinquency. Because--I'm not at present talking of the children who are in gangs and who shoot other children, that I'm not talking about. But I'm talking about the casual thing that may happen when a child may be caught stealing, or a child may do something, which gets him into trouble with the law. I think a great many times it's because that child happens to be in circumstances where he is caught. I think there are innumerable children who were more fortunate, who can look back upon their youth and say, "Golly, if I'd have been caught doing that thing, I'd have been a juvenile delinquent." And I think there should be a very careful line drawn between what most learned people call juvenile delinquents and the children, that if they hadn't been caught might never again have done anything of that kind or who would happen to be in circumstances where they would have been re-proved, but not considered forever damned.

BILL: I suspect that there's another factor here, too, that goes with this whole question of group morality and lessening individual responsibility. I think we have a much greater tendency when we see a child doing something that he ought not to do in our neighborhood, to call the police, than to go out ourselves as we used to, either to him or his parents and talk about it, so that many of these things are reported more than they used to be to authorities, which is where you get your statistics of delinquency.

MR. S.: Well, all that I can say is that I don't think people would agree with this diagnosis. I think that it is a very serious fault in the social--

MRS. R.: I would love to give you an example, but I don't want it on the tape, so I'll wait until you finish the tape to give you an example of what I mean...

DR. SZ.: Stop the tape.

BILL: Stop the tape.

MR. S.: Maybe the total statistic is, but take the intensity statistics, they are very, very impressive.

BILL: The statistics, in New York City, I understand, indicate that ninety some-odd per cent of all delinquent acts in New York City come from about 3% of the families in the city. That seems to me, is an indication. That's what the New York youth board has been---

MR. S.: One of the curious things about this, you can probably see it more easily in smaller print, is that there is no ratio between economic and social groups.

BILL: Right.

MR. S.: There is more delinquency in some cities among the wealthiest population than there is among the poor.

BILL: I'm not saying what kind of families, I'm saying certain families.

MR. S.: Well, if you have as many, suppose I take an illustration of South Bend, where there is now a very high incidence of juvenile delinquency. I'm not talking now about throwing a stone through a school window or anything like that. I think we simply have to realize the fact that one side of modern technological progress is this. And it's true in almost all the countries of the world. It's going to be true here.

BILL: I'm not sure it isn't partly, at least, a function of the feeling that young people have today, which is somewhat new in quantity, if not quality. That they have no control over things. We all live under the threat of a bomb. That nothing they do can really change anything. Certainly, we promulgate this in our phony student governments; we say, you know "Do something". But we don't let them. This whole feeling of no control--I think when you give any group of youth a feeling that they do have control over what happens, you get an entirely different thing. Look at the Negro children in the South since the sit-in movement started. I don't

know if anybody has any statistics, but I would be willing to bet that juvenile delinquency among those, that group of youth, has gone way, way down since the sit-in movement started.

MRS. R.: Why is that?

BILL: Because they have a feeling that they can do something.

MR. S.: They have an honour system.

MRS. R.: They have an honour system.

BILL: Right. Well, I want to thank you all.