1. What is morality?

Morality is behaving in a way that is aligned with the design of our internal makeup and purpose of existence. Think of a machine built for a particular purpose: The "moral" and correct way to use the machine is to realize and actualize the potential, purpose and design of the machine, consistent with the purpose for which the machine was built. This means a series of do's and dont's -- what to do and what not to do to ensure that the machine works efficiently, as specified by the operator's manual written by the engineer who created the machine

Immorality is behaving in ways that are not consistent with the design of the machine, thus causing damage to the machine and misaligning it from its natural and healthy state of being.

A mitzvah thus means connection -- aligning the machine to its healthy nature; and an aveirah (sin) means a disconnection and displacement -- misaligning the machine.

2. Is morality an absolute or a relative term?

Based on the above morality is absolute and not arbitrary and relative, because it is not a man-made and random system based on people's whims, cultures or mutual arrangements, which would render any rules as relative or optional (nothing more than a social contract that we will obey green and red lights); rather, morality is a behavior which align the machine (life) to its design and purpose.

By the same token then, morality is also relative -- or better stated: tailored and customized to the diverse personalities and preoccupations of people worldwide.

3. What is the Torah view on levels of morality?

In general, the Torah defines two overall categories of moral standards: 1) The letter of the law (shurat ha'din), 2) Beyond the letter of the law (l'pnom me'shurat ha'din; midas chassidus). Obviously there are many variations and levels in each of these two general categories, which are most often determined by the status of the individual (e.g. Moses would be held to a higher standard pf morality than a layperson).

The Talmud actually contains an entire tractate, Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Fathers), dedicated to moral ethics. How to be a mentch.

4. What is the Torah view on how people should develop, or strengthen their moral behavior?

The Torah advocates a two-step process, very similar to addressing any medical condition: 1) Awareness and diagnosis, 2) Intervention.

First comes study and learning about the moral expectations of us humans. Awareness of a problem is half the cure. We can call this the cognitive life raft, which allows us to use our minds to identify, comprehend and diagnose our moral state of being and our potential, and define areas that need repair or improvement. Then, after achieving a level of clarity, the Torah has an elaborate system of behavioral and internal interventions aimed at character and personality development. I.e. how to become kinder and gentler, how to manage anger and other vices.

5. What guidelines should a person follow to ensure moral conduct, especially in ambiguous situations?

1. Consult the shulchan aruch -- code of Jewish law and ethics.

2. Always consult an objective mentor or friend for guidance and direction (aseh lecha rav, k'nei licho chaver).

3. Bear in mind that we are accountable to G-d and to each other.

4. Always seek to serve in fulfilling our higher calling, instead of choosing the easiest approach.

5. In love you seek the highest standards of behavior, not the minimum you can get away with.