



Lecture # 1 Part 2

The Ten Commandments, The Laws Governing Man's Duty To Others (Part 6):

Commandment Six Concerns Man's Life—Never Murder, Exodus 20:13

The Sixth Commandment Sanctity of Human Life

“Lo Tirtzah” (Exodus 20:13) “Thou shalt not murder”

Exodus 20:13 (BHS)

¹³ לֹא תִרְצַח: ם

“Lo Tirtzah”

Exodus 20:13 (KJV)

¹³ “Thou shalt not **kill**.”

Exodus 20:13 (NASB)

¹³ “You shall not **murder**.”

To fully grasp the implications of this commandment, a consideration of the biblical abhorrence of bloodshed may be helpful, and for this we must return to the story of the **Deluge** or as we know it **THE FLOOD** and its aftermath as related in the **book of Genesis**.⁴¹²

Having survived the great flood in an ark, Noah and his family were faced by the problem of surviving in an environment in which virtually everything was destroyed. To persevere, mankind would have to modify its relationship with the creatures of the earth that had similarly survived. **The antediluvian (before the flood)** harmony that had existed between man and the animal world would have to be altered. Man, who had before been herbivorous would have to become a carnivore in order to survive.

Unlike Adam, who was nurtured in the Garden of Eden, which abounded with fruits, Noah and his sons found themselves in a place where virtually all edible vegetation had been wiped out, at least temporarily. There was little doubt that their need for food would rapidly outstrip the limited supply available from the earth, for which they would be competing with so many other creatures. Only by becoming meat-eaters, only by consuming their competitors, could they survive.

Accordingly, they were informed “**that every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you**” (Genesis 9:3).

Genesis 9:3 (NASB)

³ “Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as *I gave* the green plant.”

Genesis 9:3 (BHS)

³ “כְּלִי־חַי אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ כְּיֶרֶק עֹשֵׁב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־:”



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Genesis 9:4 (BHS)

4 “אֲדָרְשׁ בְּשָׂרׁ בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ:”

Man, who is capable of killing for the sake of killing, must learn to abhor blood, particularly the taste of fresh blood. He must differentiate himself from the animal as much as possible. Nonetheless, might not brutality to animals breed brutality to humans as well?

Once having permitted the killing of animals, it became necessary to place clear and appropriate restraints on man’s behavior. He might kill only for food. However, man is not food for man. Man is not to be considered in the same category as the creatures of the world, and he must learn to make a basic distinction between his fellow humans and the rest of animate nature. Accordingly, he is warned:

Genesis 9:5 (NASB)

5 “Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.”

Genesis 9:5 (BHS)

5 “יֹוֹאֵד אֶת־דַּמְכֶם לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם אֲדָרְשׁ מִיַּד כָּל־חַיָּה אֲדָרְשׁוּ וּמִיַּד הָאָדָם מִיַּד אִישׁ אָח׃
:אֲדָרְשׁ אֶת־נַפְשׁ הָאָדָם”

Whosoever might dare to shed the blood of another human will have to answer for it to God. Indeed, even the person who would take his own life will have to answer for it. So sacred is human life, that even the perpetrator of an unintentional killing of a human, let alone an intentional killing, will be called to account; at the hand of man, understood to refer to the judicial system, even at the hand of every man’s brother, understood to be referring to the ancient “**avenger of blood,**” will I require the life of man.

Even the beast that kills a human will be called to account. Not that the animal has volition and is capable of a deliberate act, but because man is the central concern of the universe and all of nature is for his benefit. Therefore, anything within nature that acts against man is to be considered dysfunctional, serving no valid purpose and its existence is therefore to be considered forfeit.

Moreover, with regard to those with the “**temerity**” (**confident and unafraid of danger or punishment**) to consciously violate the divine injunction and deliberately take a human life, society must not await divine punishment of the perpetrator but must itself take retributive action.

Genesis 9:6 (NASB)

6 “Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.”

Genesis 9:6 (BHS)

6 “יָדָם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָּךְ כִּי בְצַלְם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם: שִׁפְךְ”



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Man must rationally order his universe and protect its viability and capacity for perseverance. Society must root out that which would endanger it from within. As the God's viceroy on earth, man is charged with the responsibility for meting out justice in human society. Human life is sacrosanct, for in the image of **Elohim** made He man. Thus, the sages taught, **"If one sheds blood it is accounted to him as though he had diminished the divine image."**⁴¹³ A transgression against man is thus also a transgression against God.

The prohibition against felonious homicide is given in the **Decalogue (Ten Commandments)**, and the penalty is made clear in the demand, the murderer shall surely be put to death (**Numbers 35:16-18**).

Numbers 35:16-18 (NASB)

¹⁶ "But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

¹⁷ If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and as a result he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

¹⁸ Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and as a result he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death."

Numbers 35:15-18 (BHS)

¹⁵ "לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִגֵּר וְלַתּוֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹכָם תִּהְיֶינָה שְׁש־הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְמַקְלָט לְיוֹם שָׁמָּה כָּל־מִכַּה־נַּפֶּשׁ בְּשֹׁגְגָה:

¹⁶ הִוּ וַיִּמָּת רֹצֵחַ הוּא מוֹת יוֹמָת הָרֹצֵחַ: וְאִם־בְּכֶלִי בְרִזָּל הִךְ

¹⁷ וְאִם בְּאֶבֶן יָד אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת בָּהּ הִכְהוּ וַיִּמָּת הָרֹצֵחַ הוּא מוֹת יוֹמָת הָרֹצֵחַ:

¹⁸ "וַיִּמָּת הָרֹצֵחַ: אוֹ בְכֶלִי עֵצ־יָד אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת בּוֹ הִכְהוּ וַיִּמָּת הָרֹצֵחַ הוּא מוֹת י