

Lesson 3

RESPECT ONE ANOTHER

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Section #1

prohibition of:

MURDER

**“Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed.”
Genesis 9:6**

INTRO

Adam, the first man and grandfather of mankind, is described as being created in the “image” of G-d. We express ourselves to the world in parallel, so to speak, as G-d does; enabling us to have constructive or destructive impact on our surroundings. A human being is a microcosm of the universe; hence one who destroys a human life has ruined an entire universe. All the potential positive impact that the murdered could have performed in this world comes to a jolting halt, at the murderer's expense. The prohibition of murder refers to premeditated actions; negating accidental or self-defense killing. It protects the sanctity of human life. It shows our true worth as people rather than our outward persona. One is equally guilty for killing someone rich or poor, black or white, genius or simpleton; for the value is in the person himself. It is the most obvious wrong in society; so clear, that mankind would have come to the conclusion of its detriment even if G-d didn't explicitly forbid it.

**Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered
as if he destroyed an entire world.
And whoever saves a life, it is considered
as if he saved an entire world.**

Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a

...SUICIDE

Your own body is a rental. It's on loan to be a house for the soul during your lifetime. The body is meant to be a vessel allowing the soul to express itself and affect its environs. Your own body and life is to be treasured as much as another's. Self murder is just as detrimental as the murder of another.

...ABORTION

Confusion and emotion grip the issue of abortion. Abortion is not tolerated under the Noahide code. Killing a fetus, one convicts himself similarly, as when killing somebody already born. Some like to try and make justifications for this heinous act, but at the end of the day, this is a very serious offense. There are certain rare cases (i.e. the mother's life is in danger if pregnancy will continue, etc.) that one may be allowed to undergo a procedure; however, one must contact a competent Orthodox rabbi, who specializes in these details, for guidance on the particular case.

EUTHENASIA...

The relationship between the soul and G-d, while the soul is IN the body is very unique; therefore, this state of being must be preserved at all cost. The complexity of each case is far beyond the scope of this work; however, it must be stressed the extreme severity of "mercy killing." When it comes to medical ethics each case also needs to be addressed by a competent Orthodox rabbi, who specializes in these details.

Section #2.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING NICE TO SAY.....

Although not liable by a court; embarrassing, gossiping, and slandering are all rooted in the same place as murder. They are murder in the realm of speech; “killing” someones reputation, relationships, and honor. In conjunction with actions, one should always strive for piety in his thoughts and speech, as well.

...embarrassment

...if one publicly embarrasses
another, it is as if he spills his blood.
Talmud Bava Metziah 58b

One who is embarrassed blushes,...then his face
pales as the blood rushes to other parts of
the body, and it takes on the ashen, pallid
appearance of a corpse. The difference
between actual murder and embarrassment
is that in murder, blood actually leaves,
the body, whereas in embarrassment,
the blood changes location
within the body.

Vedibarta Bam

gossip...

**“You shall not go as a talebearer
among your people.”
Leviticus 19:16**

**G-d does not accept the prayers
of one who speaks evilly
against someone.
Zohar Metzora**

**One who recites gossip causes
listeners to sin. “Causing another
to sin is worse than murder.” One
who murders takes away another's life
in this world; one who causes another
to sin, takes away their life in
the next world.
Bamidbar Rabba 21:4**

**“He gossips habitually; he lacks the
common wisdom to keep still that
deadly enemy of man, his own tongue.”
Mark Twain**

slander...

**“Death and life are in the
power of the tongue.”
Proverbs 18:21**

**Tongue is more powerful than the
sword. The sword only kills one
who is close by; but the tongue
can cause death to someone far away.
Erchin 15b**

**The evil tongue kills three people:
the inventor of the slander, the
one who relates it, and the one
who listens.
Baal Shem Tov
Hayom Yom 13 Cheshvan**

Section #3- BASELESS LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

Murder ordinarily is the final explosion of baseless hatred or jealousy. Instead of dealing with the issue within, the murderer's rage climbs and mounts into a seething emotional instability, which overtakes all sense of reason and balance. The murderer often justifies his crime, which is the climax of his inner tension.

One way to counteract this negative trait, is to have a baseless love of other people. Do small favors for people without seeking reciprocation. A random act of kindness goes a long way for both personal development and communal impact.

**“Let's welcome Moshiach with acts
of goodness and kindness.”
The Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**The highest form of wisdom is kindness.
Talmud Brachot 17a**

**In three ways is kindness
greater than charity:**

**Charity is done with money;
kindness can be either with
one's person or one's money.**

**Charity is for the poor;
kindness can be done for
either the poor or the rich.**

**Charity is for the living;
kindness can be done for
the living or the dead
Sukkah 49b**

**It is a phenomenally great benefit when the
Al-mighty-may He be blessed-grants a person
merit, and he acquires a “feel” and sense of
pleasure for doing kindness to another; to
the point where the other person becomes
more precious than his own self...**

**The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Hayom Yom 6 Adar I**

Section #4- SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLES

“Is There Ever a Justification to Kill, or is All Killing Murder?” **by Shlomo Chein** **www.askmoses.com**

First let us differentiate between "killing" and "murder." These two are obviously different. Many decent and moral nations which outlaw murder actually mandate the killing of criminals.

According to the dictionary:

Kill: to deprive of life; cause the death of

Murder: the crime of unlawfully killing a person especially with malice aforethought

Without going into a scholarly examination of these definitions the one striking difference is the word "crime".

Life is a privilege given by G-d -- but with conditions. Here's the first condition: if you don't value the life of others, you lost your privilege.

If you take a moment to think about this you realize that the murderer and executioner kill for two very opposite reasons and since they are opposites one can be evil and one can be good: the murderer murders because he doesn't value life. The executioner kills because he values life, and as such must remove any threat to life.

Many ask who is to determine when someone loses the privilege to live. There are many answers to that; here are three:

- 1) The murderer determines that for himself the moment he criminally murders an innocent victim.
- 2) A society will decide what acts are threatening to the society at large and must therefore be stopped even at the cost of killing the perpetrator of these acts.
- 3) Most importantly in our context, the Jewish context, G-d determines who should live and who should die, and He told us in the Torah that we may NOT murder, but at times we MUST kill.

(Parenthetically, G-d knew that we Jews would use the logic that "all killing is evil" and therefore would have a problem killing murderers -- and He therefore forewarned this thought. When commanding us to execute a murderer, the Torah tells us: "And you shall not pity him, but you shall abolish [the shedding of] the blood of the innocent from Israel." Rashi explains: "And you shall not pity him:" I.e., you should not say, "The first [person] has already been killed; why should we kill this one too and cause two Israelites to be killed?")

The same reasoning regarding an individual can, and should, be applied when discussing nations at war.

A nation that carries out preemptive attacks against a neighbor who poses no threat and wishes no harm to the attacking country is a nation that is committing murder.

A nation who defends itself against such an attack from such a neighbor is justifiably and rightfully fulfilling its duty of killing people who don't deserve to live, thus protecting those who do. According to the Torah we have an obligation to kill anyone who desires to kill us!

Incidentally, a nation who is being attacked constantly but for the sake of good PR does not take all necessary measures to defend its citizens is now an accomplice to the murder committed by its murderous neighbor. The death of innocent civilians in this case is indeed tragic.

What is the Jewish Take on Assisted Suicide?

Askmoses.com

Rabbi Gurkow: Welcome to the Rabbi's one on one chat room, how can I help you today?

jewishscoller: whats the jewish take on assisted suicide

Rabbi Gurkow: it is forbidden to take one;s own life or to help another take theirs

jewishscoller: but why, whats so bad about putting somebody out of there misery

jewishscoller: im sry to argue im am 100% against it i just want to get more details about it

Rabbi Gurkow: let me ask you if you think it is ok to help a young functional man or woman out of their misery because they want you to

jewishscoller: no

jewishscoller: but what if they are not functional

jewishscoller: what if they have no way out, no way to fight it.

Rabbi Gurkow: what is the diffrence to you between one who is old and non functional and young and depressed and therefore non functional?

jewishscoller: there is no difference

Rabbi Gurkow: if there is no difference then would you support killing off a nice thirty year old man who has gotten so depressed as to lose the will to love and now wants to die?

jewishscoller: no but it is he choice, god gave us that ability, unlike the angels

Rabbi Gurkow: so you are saying that you would agree to take this person's life?

if we are repulsed by suicide we ought be repulsed by also by euthenaisa

Rabbi Gurkow: what is your reasoned response?

jewishscoller: i do not agree to take someones life, for it is hashems decision for when a person should rise and perish

Rabbi Gurkow: that is a faith reply

Rabbi Gurkow: now what is your reasoned reply?

jewishscoller: it is wrong to take a life of an innocent man just because he is depressed or sick,

Rabbi Gurkow: why?

Rabbi Gurkow: what if he wants to go

Rabbi Gurkow: we talk about living wills

Rabbi Gurkow: and if we knew that Terri wanted to die we would agree to kill her right?

Rabbi Gurkow: so why is it different for a young man who wills it?

jewishscoller: this is not about Terri this is about jack

Rabbi Gurkow: it is not about anyone

Rabbi Gurkow: it is about the issue

Rabbi Gurkow: I don't know who jack is

jewishscoller: jack Kevorkian. a man who took the life of innocent people in an act of assisted suicide and got sentenced to jail, i am debating to keep him there and not legalize it

Rabbi Gurkow: ah, that jack

jewishscoller: that jack

Rabbi Gurkow: my argument is simply that if an elderly sick person has the right to end his or her life

Rabbi Gurkow: then so does a young vibrant man

Rabbi Gurkow: if we have that right then we all do

Rabbi Gurkow: and if we don't then we all don't

Rabbi Gurkow: so why are we so against killing a young man who wants to give up his life and commit suicide

Rabbi Gurkow: what is the fundamental difference between the two?

jewishscoller: and if there is a legal option for death more people will be doing it

Rabbi Gurkow: the only reason we distinguish the young from the old the healthy from the sick is because we receive feedback from them and when we stop receiving feedback we tend to feel unappreciated and tell ourselves that it is a waste. we are against suicide then for personal selfish reasons not for value of life reasons.

Rabbi Gurkow: when people realize that with a start they tend to understand that there really is no difference between healthy and non healthy living people and if are repulsed by suicide we ought be repulsed by also by euthenaisa

jewishscoller: i thank you rabbi for your advice, i must go now but i respect your opinion and i like how you presented it

What's Wrong With Abortion?

www.askmoses.com

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: Welcome. I'll be with you in a moment...what's on your mind?

Libby: shalom Rav I have an important question to ask you that I know is a difficult one...but is bothering me

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: ok

Libby: I am a law school student studying here in the US and have studied a lot about abortions in Constitutional law

Libby: for years I have been personally against abortions...i mean totally, and for a good reason.

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: ok

Libby: In fact, now that I have studied how abortions are performed, I am even more against it. However, i have one problem...

Libby: It is a known fact that the fetus doesn't start forming until the 9th week, why wouldn't abortion be allowed until then?

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: good question, here are two answers:

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: 1) when you say it is a "known fact" you obviously mean that as of scientific advancement of today it is a "known fact" - technically speaking in ten years from now it could be laughed upon

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: 2) even if that is the fact; the moment the sperm hits the egg (and even before) there is "life" involved - for if there isn't then the egg and sperm die

Libby: but today, the woman could see her baby on a TV screen developing...it is clear that there is nothing there so early on

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: are you saying that in regard to 1 or 2?

Libby: 1

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: true she can see, but absence of evidence is NOT evidence of absence - just because she can't see anything before that, that doesn't mean there is

nothing going on before that

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: as a matter of fact it is quite obvious that something IS going on before that - for from sperm/egg to nine week fetus doesn't happen "overnight" - it happens over nine weeks

Libby: oh i know that the baby is forming, but it has not taken shape yet. Let me explain

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: so if there is something forming that is a sign of life - for dead things don't form

Libby: there is an economic that frames the argument in this way: The longer the woman waits, the more likely the baby is to survive and the greater the opportunity cost of aborting it

Libby: however at 2 weeks...no physical form is shaped yet...or even began to take shape

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: again, 1) we don't yet have the technology to monitor any forming, and 2) even if indeed there is no physical forming, that doesn't mean there is no life there

Libby: there is a life there...but let me ask you a related question

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: ok

Libby: abortion is such a serious issue not only because of the potential life, but also because of the accompanying policy concerns

Libby: for example...a woman could be raped and doesn't want to have the child of her rapist. I read many cases like that in class!

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: Are you talking about in the legal sense or in light of Judaism

Libby: in the light of Judaism

Libby: why not allow this woman to have an abortion let's say 2 weeks in to the pregnancy? why should she have to carry this guy's son?

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: 1) 2 weeks in there is already life as we already established.

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: 2) while we think pregnancies happen by "accident" - G-d doesn't make "accidents" - so if G-d decided this sperm should form into a child (while millions of other sperms on a daily basis don't succeed in making a woman pregnant) then He has a reason for this child, and who are we to interfere with that

Libby: I agree with that statement...but where does that leave the woman? doesn't she factor into the equation? the emotional distress of carrying a rapist's child...

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: that has to be dealt with, but not at the expense of killing the unborn child or interfering with G-d's desire to create a child through this sexual act

Libby: is the morning after pill allowed?

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: I don't believe so, but I am not sure about that

Libby: the reason that i ask is because the foundation of my problem is where do you draw the line between a potential life and mere existence? For example, a lot of things are alive and not dead. Does that mean that having an abortion at 1 week is the same as say masturbation?

Libby: It's hard to draw the line when nothing is yet formed

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: well according to the Torah masturbation is also strictly forbidden. However masturbation is merely the potential for life. Once a sperm is implanted in an egg "life" begins in the sense that it begins forming

Libby: I see your point and it's valid. The problem that i have is that there are many situations where a woman gets pregnant and is simply a bad example for a child...what then?

Libby: what if she takes drugs, drinks, and got pregnant? would it not be better to allow her to have an abortion say 2 weeks in

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: that is why we must, MUST, remember rule number one: G-d doesn't make mistakes. Sex doesn't automatically equal child - you need only to ask thousands of people who are trying to get pregnant - so if a specific sexual act yielded a pregnancy that means it was G-d's will that so be it

Libby: My mind is much clearer now

Libby: thank you very much for your time!

Libby: I really appreciate it

Rabbi Shlomo Chein: my pleasure - all the best

were you paying attention...?

1. What is murder?
2. What is the overall view of abortion?
3. Is killing someone who is near death considered murder?
4. How can one kill besides with physical actions?
5. What are some of the damages done by slander, gossip, etc.?
6. What are some ways to counteract the negative trait of murder?
7. Name some practical steps you can take to avoid getting angry with people, or talking badly against them?