

ASPECTS OF THE LAWS PRESENTED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE – RESTRICTIONS OR FREEDOM ?

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Abstract:

We live in a time of restrictions, and from this perspective the society in which we live is divided into two broad categories, namely some who are subject to restrictions and others who revolt against them.

We do not intend to discuss in particular in this study the motivation of those who are subject to restrictions but the attitude of those who revolt, as well as the attitude of those who remain neutral towards these restrictions. However, in this study we propose to take a look at the Holy Book, to see what the Creator says, at the proactive level, about restrictions. Does the Creator intend to take people's freedom, or does He want to lead them to a bright and happy end?

In all fields, the mentioned laws (Moral, ceremonial, civil, sanitary law, etc.), together form the laws of human education: moral education, religious education, health education, civic education, etc., there can be no human society without laws, namely laws in all fields of activity, but laws that are in accordance with God's thinking, as they are presented in the Holy Scriptures, not interested laws, laws with dedication, etc.

Man must not relate to the law, man must not have to deal with the law, just as he must not have to deal with the fence or the walls, man must have to deal with the space delimited by the law, and in this space, man has to deal only with his relationship with God, a relationship that must be in good conditions, with his relationship with his fellows, which must also be in good conditions and with his relationship with himself, because the system of laws from the Holy Scripture also concerns our own being. Under these conditions man reaches in the position of being free and happy.

Keywords: *laws, restrictions, society, freedom.*

Introduction

We live in a time of restrictions, and from this perspective the society in which we live is divided into two broad categories, namely some who are subject to restrictions and others who revolt against them. We do not intend to discuss in particular in this study the motivation of those who are subject to restrictions but the attitude of those who revolt, as well as the attitude of those who remain neutral towards these restrictions. However, in this study we propose to take a look at the Holy Book, to see what the Creator says, at the proactive level, about restrictions. Does the Creator intend to take people's freedom, or does He want to lead them to a bright and happy end?

Aspects of the laws presented in the Holy Scripture

The Biblical history speaks of various categories of laws, moral laws, ceremonial laws, health laws, civil laws, and when we take a look at the laws, as ordinary citizens, we sometimes end up in a kind of inner revolt and we actually wonder, why? Why did God need to give people laws? We will find the articulated answer in the Holy Scriptures. First, due to the fact that God created man free, and the notion of freedom also presupposes the existence of a legal framework. The idea of freedom without consequences, of an attitude of the fact that man can do what he wants, without enduring any consequences is in fact impossible. Just as in the mineral world, in the vegetable world, in the animal world, as well as in human society, as well as in the whole universe, freedom is guaranteed by the existence of laws therefore there can be no freedom in the true sense of the word, except in a legal framework. Laws have always existed, like the Creator, because God the Creator is a God of order, of rightness, not of disorganization: „For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints”.¹ It has not been invented yet, and I don't think that can ever be invented a system, whatever it might be, that can function outside established laws. Whether we like or whether we don't like those laws, whether they are reasonable or not for us, is a whole other matter, but freedom which is a given fact, which is a fundamental gift, with which God the Creator has

1 1 Cor. 14,33.

endowed earthly or heavenly beings, the freedom of these beings is guaranteed by the existence of the laws.

Due to the fact that, at one point, a creature had in mind the desire to abolish the law, with the intention of being like God: „For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”²

Under these conditions, the laws that differentiate between the Creator and the creatures, which ensure the freedom of existence of all creatures, have been denied, as an idea, and violated at the same time. That respective creature, Lucifer, claimed to be able to offer a different world, a universe where there is no need for laws. It all started with a thought of a creature, which at that time was very attractive. Still remains an incomprehensible matter, an enigma, the fact that in a perfectly created world such thoughts appeared and were so attractive that a third of the created heavenly beings, among the angels,³ adhered to this thinking.

The second moment resides on earth, when God the Creator says to man: „I created you to be happy, here is a garden, here is the earth, I give them all to you, here is one day a week in which to rest and meet me, we meet every day, but all this depends on your attitude: See the two trees in the middle of the garden, from one to eat every day, it is the tree of life, but do not touch the other tree and do not eat of its fruit, and when you shall do, you will die”⁴ and you will destroy the system of security and freedom that was created for you and in which the first people were seated. Man’s attitude to do otherwise than the Creator said is called disobedience or breaking the law, an attitude of opposition to the will of the Creator. Unfortunately, both of these moments mark this twisted and perverse type of thinking that the law is the enemy of man and that it brings with it terrible consequences. Thus, in our world which we see today as it is, environmentalists complain that nature suffers certain consequences, economists speak of the fact that irrational exploitation of resources leads to catastrophes,

2 *Isaiah* 14,13-14.

3 *Revelation* 12.

4 *Genesis* 1-3.

and on the other hand when it comes to man as individual, regardless of his knowledge and field of activity, the restrictions provoke discussions and not a few, but often some of them, quite unnecessary. The simple requirement of wearing a protective mask can mean, without questioning its purpose, that it is a sign of politeness and respect for others, in addition to its health benefits, if there are any.

The Holy Scripture contains several categories of laws. First of all is the Moral Law, which some say is only for the saints, which is what the Holy Book requires: „Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”⁵

The moral law is for the saints, namely the saints are all the creatures, the intelligent beings of God, who have the freedom to choose to remain holy or to become unholy and sinful, it all depends on the individual choice. Thus, the moral law is for all the intelligent creatures of God, because it ensures the freedom of these beings. In an analysis of the stipulations provided in the Moral Law, it can be seen that all these are common sense requirements. The moral law should not be seen as restrictive, but as beneficial because it protects life and its values. Taking the example of a child who is warned by his parents or by third parties not to insert his fingers or certain objects into an electrical outlet, precisely to avoid certain undesirable consequences, we conclude that these restrictions are beneficial and are not in his detriment. Likewise, moral laws must be considered, as being for the benefit of people and not to their detriment, they are not restrictive, but on the contrary are beneficial and protective.

God the Creator knows the course of history and He involves in history, God knows the end from the beginning, both macro and micro or individual, He creates history, He governs history, He is Omniscient, He is the author of creation *ex nihilo*, so in His perfect science, greater and more comprehensive than the human mind, as His creatures, we should also trust Him with regard to the laws, considering that He knows infinitely better than we do about the meaning of the laws. The Moral Law, or as it is also called, the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments, are common sense laws, considered necessary for a normal, beneficial life in a society. There is nothing in their provisions that is in the realm of absurdity. Placing them on two stone tablets, showed that the first 4 commandments or laws on

5 1 Peter 1,16.

the first tablet regulated man's relationship with God the Creator, starting from a unique relationship, because God is unique and ending with a day of rest, which is also unique, which God offers to man for fellowship, introspection, joy, for the strengthening of family and for social relations. The laws on the second tablet, six in number, stipulate the normality of human relations and all together show how a society created after God works, a society in which people are free and happy. People fight a lot for rights and for freedoms, but they fight less for happiness, or in fact it should be the other way around, namely the fact that the guarantee of happiness and of the true freedom is the explicit and implicit agreement to the Moral Law, because the Moral Law of God, given to men, is the expression of His character.

The Moral Law, the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments should not be seen as any code of laws, which needs additions and repeals, comments and interpretations and is not a jurisprudence to refer to as a person, but is the expression of a personal relationship with the Creator. Thus the Ten Commandments protect life and govern the relationships with the others.

The Holy Scripture include another category of laws, namely the Ceremonial Laws, showing that God the Creator is concerned with the way people worship, giving them certain practical aspects of worship. God the Creator does not need Ceremonial Laws. The significance of these ceremonies is clear in God's mind. We, as human beings, we need the ceremonial meanings to understand the content, the essence, to understand what must be seen at the ceremonies, namely beyond the sacrificial animal, the incense, the priestly clothing, the altars and all the ingredients necessary for a such ceremonies.

God the Creator knows very well what is in these ceremonies, namely the fact that all this speaks of Him and of His Son, who even before the foundation of the world It was decided that if man sinned, He would sacrifice himself for man. This great truth must be seen and found in the system of ceremonial laws. Due to the fact that it was not and is not easy for people to understand this fact from ceremonies, then God the Creator resorted to a specific didactic method, that of the system of ceremonial laws, like educators who use models, toys, for didactic purposes, to learn something.

Due to the fact that people have a rather different capacity for abstraction, they were taught exactly how to proceed. For example: someone aware of the fact that he had committed a sin, had to go to choose the most beautiful animal in the herd, an animal that symbolized Jesus Christ, who was the perfect Sacrifice, unable to be brought, under these conditions, any sort of animal, with certain human foibles, because these animals could not serve as a symbol for Jesus Christ, the Supreme and perfect Sacrifice. After the lamb was chosen from the herd, it was to be taken by the sinner, by the perpetrator, to the sanctuary, then to the temple, where man was to sacrifice the sacrificial animal, so that man, the perpetrator of a sin, would understand much better that the wages of sin is death⁶ and if he as a man did not die at that moment, someone else, died for him, symbolically, a substitute, who only Him (Jesus Christ) was able to be, who only Him was able to truly forgive and cleanse sins and not that animal of sacrifice. The whole ceremonial system, which involved sacrifice, blood, altars, priests, confession of deeds, etc., made sense for people to remember, being impressed by what was going on there, their significance beyond the actual appearance of the sacrifice, with clear reference to the Substitute of the sinful man, respectively to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Sacrifice on the Cross. The ceremonial system ended its activity due to the fact that the True Sacrifice appeared on the cross of Golgotha, where the Sacrifice of Sacrifices was brought, to which all the ceremonies over time pointed. All those symbols from the ceremonies can be found in the special work that the Savior Jesus Christ has done and continues to do in order to save people. For the sinner, the Holy Scripture says: „For the wages of sin is death”⁷, namely, the sinner from the moment of committing the sin, when the sentence is given (the wages of sin is death), the man is already on the death row, awaiting the execution of the death sentence. And suddenly the man is released, he is no longer sentenced to death, he is no longer considered guilty and even more, the man is put in the situation as if he had never been guilty, that is, all his criminal record was completely deleted and disappeared. This is exactly what the respective ceremonies showed, and this fact is embodied at the Sacrifice from Golgotha.

6 *Romans* 6,23.

7 *Romans* 6,23.

The Holy Scriptures also include civil laws, which are found throughout the Holy Scriptures, both in the Old and in the New Testament, regarding the relations between people, the relations they must have with the authorities. In Num. 35 it speaks of special cities, called cities of escape, which were some special places, where the one who committed a culpable homicide (not intentionally, not premeditatedly), in order not to be killed, according to the *Law of retaliation*⁸ (And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe)⁹, by the vengeful relatives of the deceased, he fled to one of the cities of escape, a city where he was tried and if it turned out to be a fault and not an intention, he was saved. The legislation of the escape cities said, from that time, that everyone has the right to a fair trial, that everyone has the right to defense, aspects related to the valences of a modern legislation.

Another aspect of the civil law was the law regarding inheritances: „Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. And Moses brought their cause before the LORD. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have

8 *The law of Retaliation*, one of the oldest existing laws, consists in the fair reciprocity of crime and punishment. This law is often symbolized by the phrase „Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.”

9 *Exodus* 21,23-25

no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses".¹⁰

The Holy Scripture speaks of what happens when an heiress, namely, a woman who inherited the property consisting of land, because there were no heirs, marries, explaining what happens to the inheritance:" And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel: And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters. And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance. And when the jubile of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers. And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. Neither shall the inher-

10 *Numbers* 27,1-11.

itance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance. Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad: For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons: And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. These are the commandments and the judgments, which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho."¹¹

Again in these passages some aspects of the law with a very modern character are presented.

The year of joy is linked to the 7th year. We could call these laws social protection laws. Every 7 years the earth had to be allowed to rest: „And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat."¹²

They could use only what was fruitful from itself, which had to be for them too, but also for strangers and for the poor ones. For those in need, every year a corner of the field had to be left, some unharvested trees, and what fell on the ground to remain there, to remain for the poor ones: „And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And

11 *Numbers* 36,1-13.

12 *Leviticus* 25,1-7.

thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.”¹³

States today collect the social contribution, and then give it for unemployment and other needs. This way of doing things in biblical times did not mean waste, but on the contrary a very natural management and at the same time an accepted management, not a forced one. No one was constrained to do so, but only the fear of God caused the owner to behave in this way. At the year of rejoicing, that is, at 7 x 7 years, respectively at 49 years, the land that was sold, returned back to its rightful owner. The sale price of the land was variable depending on the number of years (number of harvests) remaining until the year of rejoicing, respectively the 49th year:

“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.

For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.”¹⁴

On the occasion of the year of rejoicing, the people who had become slaves, due to the fact that they had done debts and sold themselves as slaves, were released, except the one who would say that he felt so good and attached to his master, he could still remain there, after a preliminary

13 *Leviticus* 19,9-10.

14 *Leviticus* 25,8-13

procedure with ear piercing,¹⁵ but after that he was treated as a member of the family. Laws with such depth of thought have been and always remain a landmark for any society.

The laws regarding the location of the camp (without PUG, PUZ, PUDs) are also a landmark. The people of Israel traveled through the wilderness for 40 years, but did not meet during their journey through the wilderness, gridlocks, or a constriction of the free movement of people.

The laws of health are also extremely diverse in the Holy Scripture. First and foremost were the quarantine laws, which, studied, could convey some truths for our time. In those times, in the situation of a person suffering from a contagious disease, in addition to physical isolation (because he had to be taken outside the camp), there were a series of very detailed rules, of hygiene (of clothing, of the house, leprosy on houses, physical distance, etc.). For example, if a leper (contagious disease) met a healthy person he had the obligation to shout from afar and warn him that he is contaminated (then it was said I am *unclean* ..., this being the terminology of the time)¹⁶ and the others knew how to react and proceed. What a difference between what it was then and what it is today ... These laws of health had to be seen not as restrictions, but as laws of freedom, so that the whole camp would be free to move and be able to do their business, it was necessary for the contaminated ones to stay outside the camp for a while.

Making an analogy that the Holy Scripture presents regarding the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross, it will be noticed that He was sacrificed outside the camp, of the city, precisely because he was contaminated with the sin of mankind. Even in a sanitary law there was a spiritual symbolism that worth be analyzed.

Aspects of Food Laws. In Leviticus chapter 11, it is said what food of animal origin is suitable for human health (there it is called with the phrases *clean* or *unclean*). At that time people had no knowledge of food, healthy food, etc., and they were told by the Creator which should be considered to be clean and comestible and which should be considered unclean and uncomestible.¹⁷ It begins with mammals¹⁸, also being given the charac-

15 *Exodus* 21,5-6.

16 *Leviticus* 13,1-45.

17 *Leviticus* 11,1-46.

18 *Leviticus* 11,1-8.

teristic of the difference: „And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.”¹⁹

For aquatic creatures, the characteristic was given: „These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you.”²⁰ The birds have also been listed²¹:

It is also interesting that when these laws were given there were no negative reactions of opposition from the people. In that situation described, God was actually speaking, and He knew what was best to be consumed for human health.

Aspects of education laws. To this day, Jews, who have learned since ancient times, that education is essential, and until this day a Jewish family raises the necessary financial resources to send their children to school. In every locality in Israel, over time, there had to be a school. The Synagogue (religious institution) and the school (educational institution) were two institutions that could not be missing from Israel. To this day, Israel remains a landmark in terms of education, and the consequences of such an education system can be seen to this day (including Nobel laureates).

Conclusions

In all fields, the mentioned laws (Moral, ceremonial, civil, sanitary law, etc.), together form the laws of human education: moral education, religious education, health education, civic education, etc., there can be no human society without laws, namely laws in all fields of activity, but laws that are

19 *Leviticus* 11, 1-3.

20 *Leviticus* 11, 9-12.

21 *Leviticus* 11, 13-25.

in accordance with God's thinking, as they are presented in the Holy Scriptures, not interested laws, laws with dedication, etc.

Man must not relate to the law, man must not have to deal with the law, just as he must not have to deal with the fence or the walls, man must have to deal with the space delimited by the law, and in this space, man has to deal only with his relationship with God, a relationship that must be in good conditions, with his relationship with his fellows, which must also be in good conditions and with his relationship with himself, because the system of laws from the Holy Scripture also concerns our own being. Under these conditions man reaches in the position of being free and happy.

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