

"Do not kill." (20:13)

One may wonder why the prohibition against murder is included in the *Aseres Ha'dibros*, Ten Commandments. An obvious explanation is that we should not tamper with human life. Certain forms of "murder" are overlooked because of our lack of sensitivity to others. The *Ibn Ezra* writes *"Do not kill with your hand or with your tongue by perjuring your testimony against another fellow by blatant or even innocuous forms of slander, or by giving someone harmful advice, knowing fully well the tragic consequences that will occur. One who is privy to a secret which can save another Jew's life, and does not reveal it to him, is viewed as a murderer."*

Indeed, justice cannot be meted out on this world for these crimes since an actual murder has not been committed. Hashem, however, reserves retribution for such a selfish miscreant. The *Ibn Ezra's* remarks are piercing. If one has the opportunity to save another Jew from death and refrains from doing so, he is considered as a participant in an act of homicide.

How are we to know what connotes a lifesaving act? Imagine someone alone in a hospital bedridden with a chronic illness. One who visits him to offer him words of encouragement or just to keep him company is actually participating in saving his life! Do we think about the ramifications of not visiting someone who is ill? Would we find the same excuses for not going out if there was personal gain involved? Unfortunately, by the time we come to our senses and act as Torah Jews, it might be too late!