

## Notes On

### **Our duty to keep and bear arms at all times: to defend ourselves, our families, friends; to preserve life and liberty even unto bloodshed.**

#### **I. Dependence and Work**

The Lord has indicated that our obedience to Him enables Him to give us blessings. If there's a formula for finding the wisdom, knowledge, and salvation we so sorely need, it might be something like this sage advice that has been given of old: Gratefully study, work, and prepare all needful things as though everything depended on you; gratefully pray as though everything depended on the Lord. And so live that the prayers will be heard.<sup>i</sup>

#### **II. We are not left alone. We have reliable guidance.**

1. God has given us the Book of Mormon, later-day revelation, and the inspired constitution. The Book of Mormon was written specifically for us. "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon. 8:34–35). If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, "Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?"<sup>ii</sup>

2. God has given us the Doctrine and Covenants, a voice of warning to the people of His Church and to all men. In them we are warned to "Prepare ye for that which is to come . . ." and "Prepare every needful thing."<sup>iii</sup>

3. We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly.<sup>iv</sup>

a. The Old Testament KJV "thou shalt not *kill*" is a transliteration under bias. The Old testament was in Hebrew where the commandment is "Thou shalt not murder".

Hebraic Insight...

The Jewish sages note that the word "ratsakh" applies only to illegal killing (e.g., premeditated murder or manslaughter) — and is never used in the administration of justice, for killing in war, or provoked self defense. Hence the KJV translation as "thou shalt not *kill*" is too broad.

ו. לֹא תִרְצַח:

tirtsach lo'

you shall murder Not

Murder: to take innocent life.

4. God has given us Prophets, Seers, and Revelators. Yet, "For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward."<sup>v</sup>

5. God has given us the standard: If a principle promotes well-being and initiative and strengthens the morale and character of a person, it is good for man. If it increases self-reliance, moral courage, service, and integrity, it is a principle of truth which will contribute to inward strength and true security. If the course tends toward perfection, as charted by Jesus the Christ, it is indeed desirable and will ultimately free mankind. "Ye shall know the TRUTH and the TRUTH shall make you FREE." In these words the Master pointed out that the fundamental characteristic of TRUTH is FREEDOM.<sup>vi</sup>

6. God has given us the Constitution. "We believe in peace, patriotism, and loyalty, and the fact that America is a chosen land, preserved and discovered under divine inspiration, with a Constitution which we believe was inspired and which we must, under all circumstances, maintain."<sup>vii</sup>

### III. On Defense of Family & Friends

1. "We are to arise in . . . self defense and because we do want to maintain and hand down to our posterity those sacred principles of liberty that have been revealed from on high"<sup>viii</sup>

2. "Fight only for righteous reasons, such as self-defense (Alma 43:8–10, 29–30, 45–47; 48:14)."<sup>ix</sup>

3. "We believe that all men are justified in defending themselves, their friends, and property, and the government, from the unlawful assaults and encroachments of all persons in times of exigency, where immediate appeal cannot be made to the laws, and relief afforded."<sup>x</sup> (Exigency: An urgent need or demand requiring much effort or immediate action.)

4. "The Lord has said that: Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion."<sup>xi</sup> Remember that the Book of Mormon was written for our days and we are to liken the scriptures unto ourselves.<sup>xii</sup>

5. ". . . but no one in Missouri ever seriously believed the charges since they were wholly untrue or grew out of those acts of self defense, and defense of their families against the aggressions of mob violence—a course which all men have a right to take in the protection of their own lives and the preservation of their homes from the hand of the despoiler."<sup>xiii</sup>

6. "It is not right for us to engage in the shedding of human blood for vengeance or retaliation. . . . We are to arise in our might and in our strength and go forth to victory; not with a desire to shed blood, not with the desire to destroy our fellow creatures, but in self defense . . ." <sup>xiv</sup> and because we do want to maintain and hand down to our posterity those sacred principles of liberty that have been revealed from on high"

7. "And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:5–6).

8. "We are people of peace. We are followers of the Christ who was and is the Prince of Peace. But there are times when we must stand up for right and decency, for freedom and civilization, just as Moroni rallied his people in his day to the defense of their wives, their children, and the cause of liberty (see also Alma 48:10)."<sup>xv</sup>

9. "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."<sup>xvi</sup>

#### IV. Our Religious and Constitutional Duty - God Given Right and Responsibility

1. For the physical protection of self and family, one part of the "protection"; it is our duty to keep and bear arms at all times: to defend ourselves, our families, friends; to preserve life and liberty even unto bloodshed. (Yes, even the president of the Church has body guards.)

2. As law abiding citizens, and covenant keepers, we abide by the law of the land. As such we understand that the "police" are not be our personal body guards and cannot be at all places at all times.

3. The Founders of our nation understood the need for individual right and responsibility to be armed. See the second amendment of the U.S. Constitution. (See other founding documents that explain the original intent of the second amendment.)

a. "The best we can hope for concerning the people at large is that they be properly armed." Alexander Hamilton, The Federalist Papers at 184-8

b. "To preserve liberty it is essential that the whole body of the people always possess arms and be taught alike, especially when young, how to use them..." Richard Henry Lee, founding father and signer of the Declaration of Independence, writing in Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republic (1787-1788).

c. "The Constitution shall never be construed to authorize Congress to prevent the people of the United States, who are peaceable citizens, from keeping their own arms." Samuel Adams, debates & Proceedings in the Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 86-87

d. "The Constitution of most of our states (and of the United States) assert that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves; **that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed.**" Thomas Jefferson.

4. The Utah State Constitution- Article I, Section 1. [Inherent and inalienable rights.] **"All men have the inherent and inalienable right to enjoy and defend their lives and liberties; . . ."**

5. Utah Constitution - Article I, Section 6. [Right to bear arms.] **"The individual right of the people to keep and bear arms for security and defense of self, family, others, property, or the state, as well as for other lawful purposes shall not be infringed; . . ."**

6. Law of the state of Utah - Utah Code 76-2-402. Force in defense of person -- Forcible felony defined.

(1) (a) A person is justified in threatening or using force against another when and to the extent that the person reasonably believes that force or a threat of force is necessary to defend the person or a third person against another person's imminent use of unlawful force.

(b) A person is justified in using force intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury only if the person reasonably believes that force is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the person or a third person as a result of another person's imminent use of unlawful force, or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony. . .

(3) A person does not have a duty to retreat from the force or threatened force described in Subsection (1) in a place where that person has lawfully entered or remained, except as provided in Subsection (2)(a)(iii).

(4) (a) For purposes of this section, a forcible felony includes aggravated assault, mayhem, aggravated murder, murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, and aggravated kidnapping, rape, forcible sodomy, rape of a child, object rape, object rape of a child, sexual abuse of a child, aggravated sexual abuse of a child, and aggravated sexual assault as defined in Title 76, Chapter 5, Offenses

Against the Person, and arson, robbery, and burglary as defined in Title 76, Chapter 6, Offenses Against Property.

(b) Any other felony offense which involves the use of force or violence against a person so as to create a substantial danger of death or serious bodily injury also constitutes a forcible felony.

## V. Summary

It is our duty to keep and bear arms at all times: to defend ourselves, our families, friends; to preserve life and liberty. It is our responsibility to use lethal force, if necessary, **to stop** any of the forcible felonies listed in the current laws of the state.

Disclaimer: Consult a competent lawyer on questions relating to the use of force.

Considerations: The Four basic gun safety rules:

1. All guns are always loaded
2. Never allow the muzzle to cover anything that you are not willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you intend to shoot.
4. Be sure of your target.

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<sup>i</sup> Adapted from So Shall Ye Reap, Ezra Taft Benson; Delivered at commencement exercises at University of Utah, June 9, 1953.

<sup>ii</sup> Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," Ensign, Nov 1986, 4

<sup>iii</sup> D&C Section 1

<sup>iv</sup> The Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, History of the Church, Vol. 4, pp. 535-541, Article #8.

<sup>v</sup> D&C 58: 26-28 and D&C 109:8

<sup>vi</sup> Ezra Taft Benson, So Shall Ye Reap, compiled by Reed A. Benson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960], 159 - 160.)

<sup>vii</sup> Hugh B. Brown, The Abundant Life [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965], 347.

<sup>viii</sup> Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 21.

<sup>ix</sup> Lesson 31: "Firm in the Faith of Christ", Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual, (1999),138

<sup>x</sup> D&C 134: 11 (1-12)

<sup>xi</sup> Alma 43: 47 (47-50)

<sup>xii</sup> 1 Ne. 19:23

<sup>xiii</sup> Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951], 3: I - li.)

<sup>xiv</sup> Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 21.

<sup>xv</sup> Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Times in Which We Live," Liahona, Jan 2002, 83–86 Our safety lies in repentance. Our strength comes of obedience to the commandments of God.

<sup>xvi</sup> "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Ensign, Nov 1995, 102