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Shabbat Mishpatim- P. Shekalim

שבת פ' משפטים - פ' שקלים

Sat. 21 - 22 Feb. 2020 - 27th of Sh'vat, 5780

כ"ז בשבט תש"פ

Issue Number 940

Baal Koreh <i>Yom Shabbat Kodesh</i>	Rabbi Asher Sebbag	(Page-416).
Mufteer & Haftarah	Mr Adel Darwish (Pres. by Meir O. Carmelli)	(Page -1212).

Mevarchin Hahodesh

מברכין החודש

Rosh Hodesh Adar on Tue, & Wed. 25-26 Feb.

ראש חודש אדר ביום שלישי ורביעי. 25-26 פברואר.

Mincha, Shir Hashirim, Kabalat Shabbat & Arbit.	17:00
Shabbat Candles.	17:07
Shabbat Shahrit - Followed by Kiddush. (Shema 09:35).	08:30
Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a.	*
Mincha Shabbat - Followed by Seuda Shelishit. (*) (Sunset - 17:27).	16:50
Arbit Motzei Shabbat.	18:17
Shahrit Weekday - (Sunday - 7:30).	06:30
Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a.	16:30
Mincha & Arbit.	17:15
Next Friday: Mincha, Shir Hashirim, Kabalat Shabbat & Arbit.	17:15
Next Friday: Candles. Shabbat. Terumah	17:20

Mishpatim 5780 (Exodus 21-24)

Feb 16, 2020 | by [Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig](#)

GOOD MORNING! The uncomfortable experience of being asked for a loan is so universal that William Shakespeare even refers to it in his play *Hamlet*. Polonius advises his son Laertes, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend."

However, Judaism has a very different perspective. Did you know that it is a *mitzvah* (positive commandment) to lend money to a person who asks for a loan?

Consider the following scenario: Someone comes to your home and asks to borrow some money. This person is obviously in need and is urgently asking for help. At the same time, you remember that you know a person who is quite impoverished and has also asked you for assistance. So you are now conflicted; do you help the person who is asking for a loan or do you give charity to the poor person?

The great medieval codifier of Jewish law known as Maimonides records in his magnum opus the following statement, "It is a positive commandment to lend money to those in need..." and he continues, "this mitzvah

is a higher priority than giving charity" (*Yad Malveh Veloveh* 1:1).

In other words, it is a greater priority to lend someone money (which hopefully you will get back) than to actually gift the same funds to a poor person. Maimonides gives a very compelling (and compassionate) reason for this: A poor person who is asking for charity has already been reduced to begging, while a person asking for a loan still maintains his dignity, and we must do whatever is in our power to preserve it. Therefore, giving a person a loan so that he can help himself is a higher priority than giving charity.

On the other hand, lending money is fraught with future issues. A lender thinks the borrower is trustworthy, and the borrower is of course convinced that he or she will repay the loan. As time goes on, each one will have very different perspective of the terms of the loan. Each person thinks he has the accurate version of what transpired. As Benjamin Franklin put it, "Creditors have better memories than debtors."

This is probably why, according to Maimonides, in Jewish law it is absolutely forbidden to lend money without witnesses and it is more preferable to get a written promissory note (*ibid.* 2:7).

This reminds me of when a close friend made a very large gift commitment to the school. At the time, I was studying with one of the most prominent attorneys in South Florida and I told him of the pledge.

He asked me, "Did you get the commitment in writing?" I responded,

"Why would I need it in writing? He's one of my closest friends!" He answered, quite brilliantly I might add, "Rabbi, if you want to keep your friendship, get it in writing!"

In this week's Torah reading we find the verse upon which Maimonides bases the obligation to lend money to those in need: "If you will lend money...do not pressure him to repay (if you know he doesn't have the means)" (Exodus 22:24). The Hebrew word that the Torah uses is "*im*," which generally means "if."

However, our rabbis have determined that while the Torah uses the language of "if," the Torah really means "when." In other words, it is an obligation to lend to those in need.

(I want to digress for a moment - when reading the Torah via translation, meaning not in the original Hebrew, one has to be VERY careful to have an accurate translation of the Torah. By definition, every translation is an interpretation and one has to rely on the translator's interpretation to understand the subject matter. Unfortunately, the typical translation (e.g. King James Bible) is not an accurate portrayal of the Torah in accordance with Jewish tradition.

There are several sources I can recommend for those interested in an accurate understanding of the Torah that is in line with thousands of years of Jewish scholarship. The best, in my opinion, is *The Living Torah* by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan. If you are interested you may purchase an English only version of it [here](#). If you want to look up a specific

verse, it is also available online for [free](#) here.)

Returning to our discussion, since the Torah wrote "*im* - if," the implication is that lending money is not an obligation. Yet our tradition mandates that one must lend money to someone in need, and that it is very much an obligation. So this begs the question: If the Torah intended it to be an obligation, than why is it written as if it were merely optional?

Anyone who is familiar with Jewish traditional practices knows that when it comes to the performance of *mitzvot* - positive commandments - there is generally a blessing that is said prior to the performance of the said *mitzvah*. For example, before eating matzah on Passover, or blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, or lighting the Chanukah candles, there is always a blessing to recite.

Yet, strangely enough, one category of *mitzvot* does not have any blessings made prior to their performance: that of interpersonal kindness. Thus, even though we are bound to honor our parents, we do not make a blessing prior to complying with that Torah mandated obligation. So too, we have a Torah mandated obligation to give charity, but we do not make a blessing prior.

The reason for this is that these commandments are there to engender relationships between people. If we were required to making a blessing whenever we helped someone or did something for our parents, we would be missing the point. We are supposed to do it because we want to do something for them not

because God commanded it. Worse yet, we would be objectifying them as merely a means to fulfill a commandment.

This is why the Torah writes "if" when the actual intention is that lending money to someone in need is obligatory. The Torah is teaching us how we should treat the borrower. We shouldn't treat the borrower as if it is merely an obligation, and that's the only reason why we are helping them. Rather, we need to take the attitude that it's optional and that we WANT to help them. The Torah writes it this way so that we are sensitive to the emotional wellbeing of the borrower.



TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

Mishpatim, Exodus 21:1 - 24:18

One of the most *mitzvah*-filled Torah portions, containing 23 positive commandments and 30 negative commandments. Included are laws regarding: the Hebrew manservant and maidservant, manslaughter, murder, injuring a parent, kidnapping, cursing a parent, personal injury, penalty for killing a slave, personal damages, injury to slaves, categories of damages and compensatory restitution, culpability for personal property damage, seduction, occult practices, idolatry, and oppression of widows, children, and orphans.

The portion continues with the laws of: lending money, not cursing judges or leaders, tithes, first-born sons, justice, returning strayed animals, assisting the unloading of an animal fallen under its load, Sabbatical year, Shabbat, and the Three Festivals (Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot).

Mishpatim concludes with the promise from the Almighty to lead us into the land of Israel, safeguard our journey, ensure the demise of our enemies, and guarantee our safety in the land -- if we uphold the Torah and do the *mitzvot*. Moses makes preparations for himself and for the people and then

ascends Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.



In loving memory of
Rabbi Kalman Packouz
Kalman Moshe ben
Reuven Avigdor
1950-2019
Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig

Hot Kiddush: sponsored by the Hannuna's family for Tais's Hannuna's birthday. Also in memory of our late hazah **Moshe** Aamram ben Meir Haim Hefetz ז"ל.

Seuda Shelishit: in memory of our late hazah **Moshe** Aamram ben Meir Haim Hefetz ז"ל & **Eliyahu** Naim ben Khdouri & Flora ז"ל. And also in memory of **David** ben Hanukka ז"ל.

Security Alert: Please be very vigilant when you leave the Synagouge. Do not stand in groups and chat, go home without gathering on the main road. Be safe and alert.

Kolel every Sunday: We are still having a Kolel every Sunday at the Synagogue hall from 09.30am - 12.00pm. Everyone is welcome.

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE" TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

02 Shevat	Mrs Esther Ezekiel	07 Shevat	Mr Nadhim N. Mouallim
03 Shevat	Mr Cesar Sassoon	07 Shevat	Mr Reuben Isaac Ezekiel
03 Shevat	Mr Joe Sassoon	10 Shevat	Mr Ezra H. Eddie Cohen
03 Shevat	Mr Robert M. E. Sassoon	16 Shevat	Mrs Iran Michael Yadeger
06 Shevat	Chacham Joe David	20 Shevat	Mr Joseph Lawee
06 Shevat	Mr Jack David	20 Shevat	Mr Maurice Lawee
06 Shevat	Mr Haim L. Eida	26 Shevat	Mr Raphael Mansour
06 Shevat	Mr Benny Benaiah	26 Shevat	Mr Samy Dallal
07 Shevat	Mr Joseph Lawee	27 Shevat	Mr Moshe Nahari
07 Shevat	Mr Maurice Lawee	29 Shevat	Mr Ivan Ezekiel

DID YOU KNOW?

It is forbidden for men or women to perform any work on Saturday night before:
Either The Evening Service Or Havdalah Or Reciting the following:

ברוך המבדיל בין קדש לחול

(Blessed he who separates between holy and secular) (See Shulchan Aruch O.H. 299:10)

Quote of the Week

He that is of the opinion that, money will do everything may well be suspected, of doing everything for money.