**SEPTEMBER 10, 2022** 

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Chaim ben Avraham. "May his Neshama have an Aliya!"

**VOLUME 12, ISSUE 49** 

14 ELUL

Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

PARSHAS KI SEITZEI

# Being True to One's Nature

You shall not see the ox of your brother or his lamb go astray, and hide yourself from them, you shall surely return them to your brother [...] so you shall do for any lost article of your brother that you have found, you cannot hide yourself. You shall not see the donkey of your brother or his ox falling on the road whilst you hide from them, you shall surely raise it with him (22:1, 3, 4).

In this week's parsha, we find laws character relating to the obligation of returning compassionate 2) bashful and 3) do acts lost objects and helping fellow Jews with of kindness. In fact, Rava says, that animals that are struggling under a heavy anyone who has those three identifying burden. Clearly, the Torah is teaching us marks you will know is from the children how much care and concern we must of Avraham Avinu. In other words, these have not only for our fellow Jews, but for character traits are part of the spiritual their property as well.

is a prohibition against ignoring your it may be more convenient. friends lost object or the fact that his animal is struggling under a heavy burden.

Yet the Torah teaches us this prohibition in an odd manner: Instead of focusing on the requirement of the situation, the Torah focuses on one's act of pretending he doesn't see the situation. Surely, the Torah could have simply said, "you cannot ignore the needs of your friend." Why does the Torah teach us this prohibition in such a poetic manner as "you cannot hide yourself"?

people have three distinguishing the Almighty.

They 1) DNA of the Jewish people.

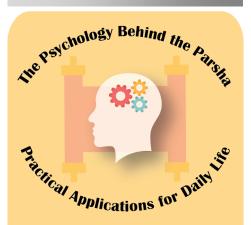
Yet the Torah communicates these laws We have such an instinct for chessed to us in an unusual manner; in both the that the only way we could ignore the case of returning a lost object and plight of our fellow Jew is by pretending helping a struggling animal, the Torah not to see it. For this reason, the Torah states that you shall not hide from this phrases the prohibition as "you shall not obligation. Rashi (22:1) explains that hide." The Torah is telling us that we hiding refers to "concealing the eye, as if must be true to ourselves, and not he doesn't see it." This means that there construct a false sense of reality, though

> This message is relevant in all aspects of our lives, whether it be professional or personal, and particularly as we enter a period of self-reflection in preparation for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

After all, the first step in effecting positive change within ourselves is to behaviors that improvement. Here, the Torah teaching us that we must stop deluding ourselves ("you shall not hide") in order to justify what we want to do (ignoring someone else's misfortune). Only when The Gemara (Yevamos 79a) quotes Dovid we are honest with ourselves can we Hamelech as saying that the Jewish truly have an honest relationship with



#### Miami Edition



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# Family Interest

You shall not lend upon interest to your brother [...] to a stranger you may lend upon interest; but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest (23:20-21).

prohibition against lending money he is already asking for a big favor he is receiving charity by not paying with interest to another Jew. It is because he knows that Shimon is interest. The Torah is teaching us that prohibited to charge interest or pay taking a bigger risk by withdrawing it the reason you aren't allowed to interest to another Jew. Yet, at the from the bank and lending it to him. charge interest isn't because one same time, the Torah makes it very Moreover, by Shimon lending Reuven shouldn't take advantage of another; clear that it is permissible to lend the money and thereby losing his two the reason is because one Jew is money to non-Jews and charge them percent earned interest, Reuven now obligated to treat another as family. interest. In fact, Maimonides (Yad-Malveh Veloveh 5:1) rules that it is a positive commandment to charge non -Jews interest. This dichotomy in lending practices has often been used as a pretext to attack Jews all over the world during the last two millennia.

In truth, the laws against charging interest? interest and paying interest require a deeper understanding. As an example: Reuven needs money to pay for his daughter's wedding, and he happens to know that his friend Shimon has a lot of money sitting in the bank Let's say that a person's mother reasonable that they are happy to earning 2% interest. Reuven wants to borrow some of that money but he person charge their own mother they aren't family and they, in fact, Shimon, especially Shimon would be losing that two families are devoted to each other otherwise it would be like receiving percent interest that the bank is even at a cost. Moreover, a son asking charity.

feels like a charity case.

In reality, Reuven would MUCH prefer to pay interest so that he isn't uncomfortable asking Shimon for the loan and isn't made to feel like he is receiving charity; so why should Reuven not be allowed to pay

The answer is that the Torah is teaching us that paying interest between two Jews isn't appropriate. Why not?

This week's parsha contains the paying him. Reuven also realizes that his parents for a loan doesn't feel like This is why the Torah characterizes the borrower as family (23:20-21), "You shall not lend upon interest to your brother; [...] to a stranger you may lend upon interest; but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest."

> This also explains why it is not only okay to charge non-Jews interest but actually a mitzvah to do so. We need to internalize that they aren't our family. Obviously, we shouldn't charge exorbitant interest, just something needed money; would a healthy accept. Non-Jews understand that uncomfortable asking interest? Or their son, or their are more comfortable asking for a knowing that brother? Of course not. Functional loan and paying interest because

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1 Tehilim 104:15

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