



Parashah Ki Teitzei **August 26, 2023 – 9 Elul 5783**

In this week's parashah are 74 Mitzvot, yes seventy-four commandments. The list is a long one. There are many parshiot that do not contain even one commandment.

There is one mitzvah in this parashah that has to do with loans. When a loan is interest-free, and if the lender wants collateral, the Torah gives specific rules as to how it should be done. The lender may not enter the house of the borrower to gain access to the collateral; he must wait outside unless invited in.

If the borrower is a poor person and uses his blanket for collateral the lender must return the blanket to the poor borrower, so he can sleep in comfort at night. The pattern could continue until the loan is paid off, and the collateral is no longer needed.

When the lender is sensitive then the borrower will bless him. The Torah specifically says, "it will be tzedakah before HaShem your G-d." Rashi says: "if the borrower doesn't bless the lender for his sensitive manner, there need not be concern for HaShem will consider it 'tzedakah' and bless the lender."

Shakespeare's Polonius counsels his son Laertes in Hamlet: "neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend." This thought is an anathema to the Torah.

The message here is explained by Rabbi Levi Yitchak of Berdicher. The poor borrower will bless you, the lender, for your kindness, but the lender in performing the mitzvah of the loan should loan because it is the right thing to do.

Doing the "right thing" may be "painful" at the moment, but the spiritual and emotional rewards are great. The blessing of bliss and serenity is beautiful however as the old saying goes, "no pain, no gain." Blessings carry with them hope and gain.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer