

If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden, would you refrain from helping him? – You shall help repeatedly with him. (23:5)

Azov taazov imo; “You shall help repeatedly with him.” The *Talmud Bava Metzia* 32 uses *imo*, “with him” to teach an important lesson concerning helping one’s fellowman. It must be *imo*, with him. If the intended beneficiary of one’s assistance decides to sit back while he is being helped by others, he is not obliged to help him. We should reach out to those in need, but only when they are willing to work alongside, when they have exhausted every other means of income-generating endeavor.

The **Kli Yakar** adds that this *Chazal* serves as a response to those *aniyim*, poor people, who place a heavy burden upon the community, without indicating that they are willing to do something to earn their way. Indeed, they expect to receive alms, and, if they do not receive what they expect when they expect it, they complain bitterly, alleging that the benefactors are lazy or uncaring. Hashem commands that we work with the one in need. This does not permit the beneficiary to sit back and watch as others toil to supply him with his needs.

Horav Shlomo Amar, Shlita, acknowledges that we must help the poor man to help himself. Many a person who has been supported by others has lost his self-esteem, and, as a result, is depressed and no longer able to do much in his own behalf. The benefactor must understand, however, what goes through the mind of the individual who is in need. He is ashamed. He must be helped to the point that he is willing to help himself. We do not ignore the fellow that is doing nothing; rather, we must reach out to him and show him that he can support himself, that he can be a contributing member of society. We are prepared to work with him to help himself, and then we will add to his shortfall. We do not ignore someone in need. We also do not allow him to ignore himself – or take advantage of others.