

## **If your brother becomes impoverished.....you shall strengthen him.....Do not take from him interest and increase.....and let your brother live with you. (25:35,36)**

The prohibition against paying or receiving interest is beyond comprehension. Why should it be forbidden? If it is normal for one to make use of his tools, his animals and his home, why can he not make use of his money? Logically speaking, "renting out" money should be no different than renting out a house. Moreover, interest should be the logical payment to one who has lent his own money to someone who was unable to use his money. Also, if interest is forbidden, why is it permissible to receive interest from a non-Jew? If it is wrong, it is wrong in all instances.

**Horav Shimon Schwab, zl**, offers a noteworthy insight. He maintains that taking interest is not a breach in society as we know it, in deed, it might even be good business to "rent out" ones' money. It is not the correct thing to do in regard to a brother. One simply does not take interest from his brother. The framework of business is different. What is permissible and even correct in the context of a business deal becomes reprehensible in regard to a brother.

The *Torah* wants brothers to act as brothers. Those who demand interest destroy the very fiber of *achdus*, unity, among *Klal Yisrael*. That is why the Torah emphasized, "If your brother becomes impoverished"..... and let your brother live with you." Different rules apply in regard to family. It behooves us to take stock every once in a while and reflect upon the way we treat our fellow Jew. Is he like family, or have we lost that type of sensitivity --also?