

If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden, would you refrain from helping him? (23:5)

Rashi places a question mark, *bitmiya*, after the word *v'chadalta*, “would you refrain” (from helping him)? **Horav Yechiel Michel Feinstein, zl**, was wont to say that this is the only instance in the Torah that the Torah turns to the person with a question. This means that the Torah is incredulous concerning a person that would ignore another Jew in his time of need – even if he is a person whom one is permitted to hate. Turning away from helping a fellow Jew is not in the Jewish DNA. How could a person act so callously? A person who was created *b'tzelem Elokim*, in the image of G-d, cannot possibly close his heart to the plight of his fellow/brother. It is simply not Jewish behavior.

Horav Moshe Rosenstein, zl, was *Mashgiach* of *Lomza Yeshivah* and one of the premier *Mussar* leaders of Pre-World War II. Prior to taking the position as *Mashgiach*, and beset with the responsibility of providing for the material sustenance of his family, *Rav* Moshe had opened a small pharmacy – which did fairly well. After a short while, he decided that his own spiritual subsistence could use some reinforcement. He traveled to Kelm to study in its famous *Talmud Torah*. The mere fact that he was readily accepted speaks volumes of his own eminence. In his absence, his family attended to the pharmacy. Whenever he came home, he filled in. This arrangement, however, did not last. Shortly thereafter, he closed the pharmacy and sought another business venture.

When questioned concerning his decision to change businesses, *Rav* Moshe explained that, while a pharmacy provides a physical and emotional benefit to the community, it is quite possible that it could lead him to cruelty. After all, it is a business venture, and any successful retail venture depends upon customers. By nature, every businessman prays for customers. He feared that, by owning a pharmacy, he might subtly pray for a larger retail market, for more customers. This would mean that, by extension, he was praying that people should be sick in order to be healed by the drugs in his pharmacy. He was not taking a chance on being part of such cruelty.

What a far cry from contemporary business practices, where everything revolves around the bottom line, the holy dollar. All scruples go by the wayside; ethics are thrown out the door, together with friendships, relationships and allegiances. Everything is justified in order to achieve the goal of success – earning more and more money. Why is this? Is it the money – or the *kavod*, prestige, that is a primary fringe benefit of business success? Of course, there is always the all-too-common excuse that, with greater material success, one is able to enable others, to support Torah growth, and to enhance *Yiddishkeit*. What a beautiful and meaningful reason to drive oneself to the bone in order to achieve material success. It would truly be saddening if, in the course of pursuing one's monetary goals, he loses sight of his “reason.”