

RICH MAN POOR MAN THE FERRIS WHEEL OF LIFE

Background

One of the *mitzvos bein adam l'chavero* is to lend money without interest. Rashi is bothered by an expression used in the *posuk*. Instead of saying, "When you lend money to the poor man amongst you," the Torah says, "to the poor man within you," almost as if to imply that you are the poor man.

Rashi explains that the Torah is conveying to us the correct attitude when loaning money. You should view it as though you are the poor man.

ספר שמות פרק כב

כד) אִם בָּסֵף תִּלְוֶה
אֶת עַמִּי אֶת הָעֲנִי עִמָּךְ
לֹא תִהְיֶה לוֹ בְּנִשְׁאָה לֹא
תִשְׁיִמוּן עָלָיו נֶשֶׁף:

When you lend My nation money, to the poor man within you, do not act as a creditor, and do not charge interest.

רש"י על שמות פרק כב פסוק כד

את העני עמך - הוי
מסתכל בעצמך כאלו
אתה עני:

The poor man within you - You should view yourself as if you are poor.

Questions

If the Torah was speaking in flowery or allegorical terms, we might learn a nice lesson in being concerned for our fellow Jew: give with feeling.

But it is clear that this is actually a step in the fulfillment of the *mitzvah*. When I loan money, I should actually view myself as though I am poor.

Assuming that I am wealthy, how can the Torah expect me to delude myself? The Torah can command me to give. The Torah can even command me to be a *mentch* when I give. But how can the Torah expect me to fabricate in my mind a state which is completely false?