

Who Takes Precedence When Giving a Loan?

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Question: There are typically two types of loans: loans given to poor people who need the money to live, and loans given to people of means who need liquid assets at the moment. Is the *mitzvah* of lending money only applicable when one is lending to a poor person, or does one also get a *mitzvah* when he lends to a rich person?

Answer: The *halacha* is that there is a *mitzvah* to lend to a rich person as well.

Although the *pasuk* specifically speaks about lending to a poor person, and the *Rambam* only says that it is a *mitzvah* to lend to a poor person, the *Poskim* conclude that lending to a rich person is also a *mitzvah*.

Question: If one is approached by both a rich person and a poor person, and they both ask for a loan, should one give precedence to the poor person?

Answer: The *Gemara* says that since the *Torah* does specifically mention an *ani*, a poor person should be given precedence to a rich person.

Question: Does the way the borrower plans to spend this money impact the lender's requirement to prioritize a poor man over a wealthy one?

Answer: The *Peleh Yoetz* says that a poor person only takes precedence if he needs the money for pressing expenses. If he wants to borrow money for luxuries, and a rich man requires a loan to pay a debt that he currently owes, the rich man would take precedence, as he is considered the "poor one" in this instance.