

## Ki Teitzei: Friends Don't Charge Interest

As we approach the end of the Torah, the last few *parshiot* are jam-packed with practical mitzvot that I'm sure most of us are familiar with. The mitzvot in this week's parsha, Ki Teitzei, include a man's obligation to wear *tzitzit*, the prohibition of adultery and kidnapping, the laws of marriage and divorce, the obligation to care for orphans and widows, and many more. The mitzvah on which I've chosen to focus is the law stating that a Jew is forbidden to charge interest on a loan to his "brother." This is one of the many ways (there are several written in various places in the Tanach) that Hashem has emphasized the bond not only between Him and His people, *מוקמל מדא יב*; but also *ורבחל מדא יב*, between man and his friend.



It is important for all Jews to remember that the reason that the Temple was destroyed and the Jewish people were exiled was not because they didn't keep kosher or Shabbat--it was because they did not treat each other respectfully. As we close in on Rosh Hashanah and a time for new beginnings, we must remember the importance of being kind and not embarrassing one another. Placing interest on something borrowed is a formal, business-like arrangement. Jews are more than just business partners. We, the Jewish people, are all brothers and sisters, so let's act like it.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rina Sobel, Grade 11  
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*Rabbi Reuven Travis, AJA Upper School Judaics faculty member, adds:*

*One way to "act like it," as Rina so beautifully states, is to consider a donation to Jewish Free Loan of Atlanta (JIFLA). JIFLA provides interest free loans to Jewish people in the Atlanta area and surrounding communities. Its goal is to assist fellow Jews in maintaining or achieving financial stability, and to this end, it is in the middle of a new fundraising campaign. Your gift to [JIFLA](#) will make a real difference in the lives of our fellow Jews!*