

RETURNING A BORROWED BOOK

by Rabbi Yisroel Belsky ztl

QUESTION 58: RETURNING A BORROWED BOOK

If I borrow a book from someone, and both of us forget about it, is that a transgression? How much an obligation do I have to go through my bookshelves to find books that I borrowed, and return them? After a certain amount of time, let's say a year, can we assume the original owner has despaired of it, and that eliminates my need to return it? Can we assume that most people are fairly casual about this, or is it an area that people should be much more careful about?

RABBI BELSKY

There's no such thing as a statute of limitation on borrowing. If you borrow something, and you have it for 110 years, you're obligated to return it. There's no such concept of a lender having given up hope for the object that he lent.

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION 59: COPYING A TAPE IN CASE IT GETS LOST

I own a set of Rabbi Reisman tapes. I wanted to have a friend listen to one of the tapes that I particularly liked. As an insurance against his losing the tape, can I make a copy of the tape and put it in the closet? I won't use the copied tape unless my friend, or someone else I lend it to, happens to lose it. Then at least I will have a copy that I can listen to again. I assume copying of tapes in general is not allowed, but would this be a case where it would be allowed?

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