

PAYING ON TIME PART 2

by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

There are no less than six Torah commandments that deal with paying a worker his wages. Three prohibit the employer from refusing to pay the worker at all. The other three direct us not to delay paying him after he finishes his work. These are the Torah sources of these mitzvos.

"You shall not cheat your fellow[2]."

"Do not steal[3]."

"Do not keep a worker's wage with you overnight until morning[4]."

"Do not cheat a poor or destitute hired person among your brothers[5]."

"You must pay him on that day[6]."

"The sun shall not set upon him[7]."

It should be noted that the mitzvos that command us to pay on time, only apply the first time that the employer is obligated to pay the worker. If he is exempt from paying on time[8], then the Torah prohibitions to not pay on time no longer apply. Therefore, the employer does not continuously transgress these mitzvos all the time that he does not pay the employer. However, there is a Rabbinical prohibition to withhold payment when requested[9].

In the coming weeks we will discuss the details of these Mitzvos.

1. Much of the information for this essay is taken from "Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner.

2. Vayikra, 19:13.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Devarim, 24:14.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8.Examples of exemptions will be discussed in the coming weeks.

9.Shulchan Aruch, Simun 339.

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