

# PAYING ON TIME PART 1

*by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen*

This week, we begin the set of mitzvos involving the obligations to pay wages and rentals on time. These are known as 'bal tolin', which means, 'do not delay'. As an introduction to this topic, it is instructive to quote a passage from the great Rabbi, the Chofetz Chaim zt"l<sup>[2]</sup> with regards to 'bal tolin'.

"There are many ethical people of excellent character, who meticulously observe the other mitzvos of the Torah, yet are very weak in their observance of 'bal tolin'. I have concluded that this is simply the result of a lack of knowledge, because if they would be aware of these laws they would be extra careful to pay within the required time. Just as they are extra careful with other time-related mitzvos such as shofar, sukkah, lulav etc. However, when it comes to 'bal tolin', which is not only a positive Torah commandment but is also subject to negative Torah commandments, the yester hara<sup>[3]</sup> is quite strong in misleading us."<sup>[4]</sup>

In the coming months we will delve into the details of these mitzvos, and see how often they occur in our daily lives.

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1. Much of the information for this essay is taken from "Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner.
  2. He lived in the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century. His real name was Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, but he was known by the title of his famous work on the laws of forbidden speech, 'Chofetz Chaim'.
  3. Evil inclination.
  4. Ahavas Chesed, introduction to Chapter 9. Quoted in 'Halachos of Other People's Money', p.95.
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