

MITZVAH 33: LAWS OF COMMERCE

by Rabbi Moshe Goldberger

"When you make a sale to your friend or make a purchase from him... [you shall buy and sell fairly]."
(Vayikra 25: 14-15)

In Parshas Behar, we are given a number of guidelines on how we should buy and sell assets. Land is acquired by money, a document, or the physical act of working the field (chazakah). It is a mitvah to follow the Torah's guidelines in all transactions of buying and selling.

We can ask, why does the Torah provide all these guidelines? Why can't people just do what they want?

We are taught that everything in Hashem's world has a purpose, and each person has his time and place (Avos 4:3). Thus, there are Torah methods of establishing ownership which attach an item to its owner in a meaningful way and make it part of his responsibility in life.

Upon one's entrance to the World to Come, the first question he will be asked will be, "Were you honest in your business dealings?" (Shabbos 31a)

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